



pravahini

Monthly Compendium

SUCCESS MANTRA (GTB Nagar)

PREFACE

It gives us great pleasure to release the monthly edition of the PRAVAHINI – Monthly e-Compendium & Weekly e-Periodicals of Current Affairs. The magazine's members have shown considerable cooperation as well as devotion. We at successmantra.in work tirelessly to create this magazine and bring it to you with a great sense of gratitude.

The PRAVAHINI April-2022 eBook covers the current events that happened in the month of April. Current Affairs is a crucial component of any competitive exams including CLAT, AILET, DU-LLB, HM, CAT, IAS, PCS, SSC, Banking, MBA and various other competitive examinations.

Current Affairs play the bigger role in many competitive and government exams. It holds the power of making or breaking your chance of success. Therefore, the candidates should cover the Current Affairs thoroughly and smartly.

The PRAVAHINI April-2022 eBook is divided into different sections keeping in mind the need of various exams. The sections covered namely International, National, Economy, Ecology and Environment, Science & Technology, Legal Affairs, Sports, States News Makers and few others.

We would also be pleased to receive any suggestion that could assist us with the upcoming editions.

Success Mantra (GTB Nagar, Delhi)

Website: www.successmantra.in

Mail Id: info@successmantra.in

Our Goal

Our goal at Success Mantra is to provide Quality education at rational price and thereby to create an environment that guides students towards the path of the success. Along with designing the curriculum and delivering the lectures, we work upon the ways the students think and approach problems asked.

B. S. Shanti



Success Mantra (Delhi) is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out, for your accomplishment. Delhi, GTB Nagar, branch of SUCCESS MANTRA Coaching is considered as the paramount choice of Law and Management aspirants, across country. Because, at the end of the day, it is our results which speak !

Since a decade, we have delivered thousands of 'Gems Students' to the nation and persistent in doing so. It is the platform where student's ideology is developed and their dreams take the face of reality. This act is splendidly demonstrable on our result chart of applicable courses. Students from numerous junctions of India come to GTB Nagar to avail best coaching classes at rational price. The vision, of making the quality education accessible to all, is furthermore augmented by the launch of EASE VIDYA Mobile application.

While Success Mantra (GTB Nagar) is the epitome to the classroom coaching program, EASE VIDYA Mobile Application (available on Android) is an online podium, available on the web and mobile application both. It is familiarized to ease up the high growing pressure of competition among students preparing for CLAT | AILET | DU-LLB | MHCET | SLAT | BHU | AMU | and other Major Law Entrance Examinations in India. Just in a couple of months of its launch, EASE VIDYA App has been proven to be the best solution for students who are preparing for various academic and competitive entrance examinations.

Enquiry Office Center
113, Ground Floor, Mall Road,
Kingsway Camp, GTB Nagar, Delhi- 110009
(Landmark: Oriental Bank of Commerce, GTB Nagar Metro Gate No. 1)
+91 8588 876 885

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

APRIL 2022



INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

#INDIA & USA 2+2 MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE

- The **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** and the **External Affairs Minister of India S. Jaishankar** will be holding talks with their US counterparts on April 11 as part of India-US 2+2 Talks.



- On the other hand, Prime Minister Modi and US President Joe Biden are also set to hold virtual talks on the April 11 ahead of **India-US 2+2 Dialogue**.
- During **India- US 2+2 Dialogue**, **Rajnath Singh** and **S. Jaishankar** will hold talks with the **US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin** and **US State Secretary Antony Blinken** while participating in different meetings.

India-US 2+2 Dialogue- All you need to know

- The **ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia** is likely to be a prominent topic of conversation at the India US 2+2 Dialogue.
- As per the White House, during the virtual meeting between **PM Modi and US President, Biden** will also press Prime Minister Modi to take a hard line against Russia and its invasion of Ukraine.
- India US 2+2 Dialogue will enable both the US and India to undertake a comprehensive review of cross-cutting issues in the India-US bilateral agenda that is related to defence security, foreign policy with the objective of providing the strategic guidance and a vision for consolidating the relationship.
- **2+2 Dialogue between India US** will also provide an opportunity to exchange views about significant regional and global developments and how they can work together to address the issues.

India-US 2+2 Dialogue: Why Russia-Ukraine conflict will be the focus?

- Apart from other regional and global issues, the 2+2 India US Dialogue will see a major focus on the ongoing **Russia-Ukraine conflict** which **started with Russia's special military operation in the neighbouring country**.
- As the dialogues between Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his US counterpart and EAM S. Jaishankar

with the US Secretary of Defence will take place, the pressure will be on making India take a stand on the ongoing conflict.

- Till now, India has maintained a **neutral position and has abstained from voting against Russia on numerous occasions.**
- India's neutral stance in the Russia-Ukraine war has raised concerns in Washington DC, while has earned praise from Russia, **who lauded the country for judging the situation in its entirety and not just in a one-sided way.**
- **Background:** 2+2 India-US Dialogue was held between the two countries in September 2021 in Washington. **The bilateral 2+2 inter-sessional meeting** saw the exchange of assessments on the developments taking place in **South Asia, the Western Indian Ocean, and the Indian-Pacific Ocean.**

'2+2' Dialogue

- 2+2 Ministerial is the highest-level institutional mechanism between the two countries.
- It is a format of dialogue where the defence/foreign ministers or secretaries meet with their counterparts from another country.
- India holds such talks with **Australia, Japan and the USA.**

#RELATED: 1ST EVER 2+2 DIALOGUE HELD B/W INDIA & AUSTRALIA

Recently, the foreign and defence ministers of India and Australia held the first India-Australia 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue in New Delhi. (Sept.2021)

- The inaugural dialogue is held in pursuant to the elevation of India-Australia bilateral relations to **comprehensive strategic partnership** during the India-Australia **Leaders' virtual summit** in 2021.
- **Focus on Indo-Pacific:** To maintain an open, free, prosperous and rules-based Indo-Pacific region (in line with the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**).
- To support India's **Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative.**
- In this context, they welcomed the launch of the **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative** by the Trade Ministers of India, Australia and Japan.
- **Keeping-up with the Momentum:** Decided to meet at least once every two years in this format to keep up the momentum.

Shared Vision on Afghanistan:

- Displayed a common approach to the Afghan crisis, after the recent **Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.**
- India held that the policy is summed up by the **United Nations Security Council** Resolution 2593.
- **Defence Relationship:** Australia has invited India for participation in future **Talisman Sabre exercises** which will raise interoperability while both sides explore longer term reciprocal arrangements in logistics support.

Economic Agreements:

- There was renewed support expressed for finalization of bilateral **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement.**
- Apart from this, both countries also pitched for early resolution of the issue of taxation of offshore income of Indian firms under the India Australia **Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement.**

- **Others:** While reaffirming support for the Indian candidacy for permanent membership of the UNSC, grants of Australian \$ 1 million to the **International Solar Alliance**, and Australian \$10 million to the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient infrastructure** (both India-led initiatives).

#US REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDIA

Recently, the US State Department released a strong and critical report on **human rights in India in 2021**.

- The report is **submitted each year to the US Congress** which is **retrospective and contains a country-wise discussion** of the state of internationally recognised individual, civil, political and worker rights, as set forth in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and other international agreements.
- In December 2021, data related to human rights violations in states was provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs in **Rajya sabha**.



What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- **Arbitrary Arrest and Detention:** Indian law “**prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention** but both occurred during the year”, with police using “special security laws to postpone **judicial reviews** of arrests”.
- Pretrial detention was **arbitrary and lengthy**, sometimes exceeding the duration of the sentence given to those convicted.
- **Violations of Privacy:** Citing media reports on journalists being targeted for surveillance through the **Pegasus malware**, the report **flagged violations of privacy by government authorities**, “including the use of technology to arbitrarily or unlawfully surveil or interfere with the privacy of individuals”.
- **On Freedom of Association:** The report **highlighted the cases of Amnesty International India**, whose assets were frozen by the **Enforcement Directorate**, and the suspension of the **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA)** license of **Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)** for alleged violations.

What are Human Rights?

- These are **rights inherent to all human beings**, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status.
- These include the **right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture**, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more.
- **Nelson Mandela had stated** ‘To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity’.

Human Rights Related Provisions in India:

- **Fundamental Rights: Articles 12 to 35** of the Constitution. These include the Right to Equality, Right to Freedom, Right Against Exploitation, Right to Freedom of Religion, Cultural & Educational Rights, Saving of Certain Laws and Right to Constitutional Remedies.
- **Directive Principles of State Policy:** Article 36 to 51 of the Constitution.
- These include 'right to social security, right to work, to free choice of employment, and protection against unemployment, right to equal pay for equal work, right to existence worthy of human dignity, right to free & compulsory education, equal justice & free legal aid and the principles of policy to be followed by the State.

Statutory Provisions:

- **Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA)**, 1993 (as amended in 2019) provided for the constitution of a **National Human Rights Commission** at the Union level, which steers State Human Rights Commission in States and Human Rights Courts for better protection of Human Rights and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- **Section 2(1)(d) of the PHRA defines Human Rights** as the rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants and enforceable by courts in India.
- India took an active part in drafting of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**.
- These **30 rights and freedoms include civil and political rights**, like the right to life, liberty, free speech and privacy and economic, social and cultural rights, like the right to social security, health and education, etc.

RELATED: HUMAN RIGHTS DAY: 10TH DECEMBER

- Every year **Human Rights Day** is celebrated on **10th December** all around the world.
- **Freedom in the World 2021** report released earlier this year had **downgraded India's status** from 'Free' to 'Partly Free'.

World Human Rights Day:

- On that day, the **United Nations General Assembly** adopted, in 1948, the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**.
- The UDHR **established a set of common basic values** both with regard to the view of human beings and to the relationship between the state and the individual.
- **Theme 2021:** "EQUALITY – Reducing inequalities, advancing human rights".

International Human Rights Conventions and Bodies:

- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):** The 30 rights and freedoms include civil and political rights, like the right to life, liberty, free speech and privacy and economic, social and cultural rights, like the right to social security, health and education, etc.
- **India took an active part** in drafting of the UDHR.
- The **UDHR is not a treaty**, so it does not directly create legal obligations for countries.
- The **UDHR**, together with the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** and its two Optional Protocols (on the complaints procedure and on the death penalty) and the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and its Optional Protocol**, form the so-called International Bill of Human Rights.
- **Other Conventions:** These include the **Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948)**, the **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)**, the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)**, the **Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)** and the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)**, among others.
- India is a party to all these Conventions.

- **Human Rights Council:** The Human Rights Council is an **inter-governmental body** within the **United Nations** system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights. It is made up of **47 United Nations Member States** which are elected by the UN General Assembly.
- The most innovative feature of the Human Rights Council is the **Universal Periodic Review**. This unique mechanism involves a review of the human rights records of all 192 UN member states once every four years.
- The **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** serves as the secretariat for the Human Rights Council.
- **Amnesty International:** An **international organisation** of volunteers who campaign for human rights. This organisation brings out independent reports on the violation of human rights all over the world.

National Human Rights Commission

- **Statutory Body:** NHRC was established on 12th October, 1993. The statute under which it is established is the **Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993** as amended by the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act, 2006.
- The PHRA Act also provides for the creation of a State Human Rights Commission at the state level.
- **In Line with Paris Principles:** **Paris Principles** were adopted for the promotion and protection of human rights in October 1991, and were endorsed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1993.
- **Watchdog of Human Rights in the country:** The NHRC is an embodiment of India's concern for the promotion and protection of human rights.
- **Section 2(1)(d) of the PHRA defines Human Rights** as the rights relating to **life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual** guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants and enforceable by courts in India.
- **Composition:** The commission is a multi-member body consisting of a chairman and four members. **A person who has been the Chief Justice of India or a judge of the Supreme Court is a chairman.**
- **Appointment:** The chairman and members are **appointed by the President on the recommendations of a six-member committee** consisting of the Prime Minister as its head, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, leaders of the Opposition in both the Houses of Parliament and the Union Home Minister.
- **Tenure:** The chairman and members **hold office for a term of three years or until they attain the age of 70 years**, whichever is earlier.
- The **President can remove the chairman or any member** from the office under some circumstances.

#UK PM BORIS JOHNSON TO VISIT INDIA

- **UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson** will pay an official visit to India from April 21-22, 2022. This will be Boris Johnson's maiden visit to India as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.
- **Significance**
- **The UK PM's visit to India has been overdue for a long after being canceled twice due to the COVID-19 outbreak.** He was first invited as a Chief Guest of India's Republic Day celebrations in early 2021 but it was canceled due to a massive COVID-19 spike in the United Kingdom.
- He was then scheduled to visit India in April 2021 but it again was canceled due to the pandemic situation in India around the time.

UK PM India Visit: Things You Should Know

- The UK Prime Minister will visit **Delhi and Gujarat for the first-ever time as Prime Minister**, as a part of the UK's Indo-Pacific tilt.



- His meeting with PM Narendra Modi is expected to focus on boosting **defence, security, economic and tech cooperation amid shared global challenges.**
- The two leaders will discuss the strengthening of bilateral ties against the backdrop of the ongoing India-UK Free Trade Agreement negotiations.
- They are expected to review the **implementation of the Roadmap 2030** and set their vision for further intensifying cooperation across the full spectrum of bilateral ties.
- They will also exchange views on regional and global issues of mutual interest.
- The UK PM is expected to announce new science, health and technology projects in Gujarat.

Free-Trade Deal Negotiations

- The UK PM and Indian PM will also discuss the **strengthening of bilateral ties against the backdrop of**

ongoing India-UK Free Trade Agreement Negotiations.

- Prime Minister Boris Johnson said, "Investment from Indian companies already supports 95,000 jobs across the UK, which is expected to be boosted by upcoming announcements and a future free trade deal."
- The Russia-Ukraine conflict is likely to be discussed during the meeting of the two leaders.

Background

- India and the United Kingdom adopted a **10-year roadmap (Roadmap 2030)** in the India-UK virtual summit held in May 2021 to expand ties in the key areas of trade and economy, defence and security, climate change and people-to-people connections.

India-UK Trade Relations

- India and the UK are vibrant democracies, with a **partnership built on our shared history and rich culture.**
- The diverse **Indian diaspora in the UK, which acts as a "Living Bridge"**, adds further dynamism to the relations between the two countries.
- The **UK is one of the largest investors in India**, among the **G20 countries**.

Significance of FTA between India & the UK:

- **Increasing Exports of Goods:** Trade deals with the UK could boost exports for large job-creating sectors such as **textiles**, leather goods, and footwear.
- India is also expected to register a **quantum jump in the export of Marine Products** through the recognition of 56 marine units of India.
- **Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs)** on Pharma could provide additional market access.
- There is also great potential for increasing exports in service sectors like IT/ITES, Nursing, education, healthcare, including **AYUSH** and audio-visual services.
- Visa restrictions have been a key issue for India to boost services trade.
- **Exit from RCEP:** India opted out of the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership deal** in November 2019.
- Therefore, there is a renewed focus on trade deals with the US, the European Union and the UK, which are key markets for Indian exporters and are keen to diversify their sourcing.

#RELATED ARTICLE: RUSSIA BARS ENTRY OF UK

- Russia's foreign ministry said on Saturday it had barred entry to the country for British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, Defence Secretary Ben Wallace and 10 other British government members and politicians. The move was taken "in view of the unprecedented hostile action by the British Government, in particular the imposition of sanctions against senior Russian officials," the ministry said in a statement, adding that it would expand the list soon. The Kremlin has described Johnson, who has been one of Ukraine's staunchest backers, as "the most active participant in the race to be anti-Russian".
- A week ago, Johnson visited Kyiv where he and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy praised each other for their cooperation since the Russian invasion, which Moscow calls a "special operation". "The UK and our international partners stand united in condemning the Russian government's reprehensible actions in Ukraine and calling for the Kremlin to stop the war," a British government spokesperson said in

response to Moscow's decision to bar Johnson and other British politicians.

#POLITICAL CRISIS IN PAKISTAN

- On 10th April 2022, Imran Khan's term as Pakistan's Prime Minister ended after days of constitutional chaos in Pakistan that left him with no choice but to be voted out of the office or to resign.
- The lower house of **the Pakistani parliament will be meeting on 11th April 2022 to vote for a new acting prime minister of the country.**
- In Pakistan, this is the first time that a no-confidence motion against a prime minister of the country has been successful.
- In 2018, **Imran Khan was elected as the Prime Minister of the country.**



- Since Pakistan's independence in 1947, no prime minister of the country has been able to complete a five-year term in office.

How was Imran Khan voted out?

- Imran Khan was voted out after he blocked a similar attempt earlier.
- The no-confidence motion that was passed in the parliament requires 172 votes out of the 342-seats to be given the green light.
- The no-confidence motion against Khan was supported by 174 parliamentarians.
- The motion was passed after Pakistan's Supreme Court ruled that Khan acted in an unconstitutional manner after blocking the earlier process and dissolving parliament. On 7th April 2022, the Supreme Court restored the country's parliament after it was dissolved by **President ArifAlvi on the recommendation of Imran Khan.**
- Khan has accused the opposition of conspiring with the **US to depose him and has urged his followers to protest against his removal.**

#SHEHBAZ SHARIF ELECTED AS 23RD PM OF PAKISTAN

- **Shehbaz Sharif, the 70-year-old younger brother of former Pakistani PM Nawaz Sharif, has been elected as the 23rd Prime Minister of Pakistan.**
- Sharif was elected unopposed as the new Pakistani PM with 174 votes in favour amid a walkout by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) MLAs. The ousted Pakistan PM Imran Khan announced his resignation as a member of the National Assembly saying that he will not sit in the assemblies with 'thieves'.
- **Shehbaz Sharif was the Leader of Opposition** in the National Assembly since August 2018.
- He is also the **President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)**. His candidature for Prime Minister was revealed by PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari during a joint press conference of the opposition parties earlier.
- His election comes after **Imran Khan lost the no-confidence motion** tabled against him in the assembly, becoming the first Pakistan PM to do so.
- The Imran Khan-led coalition government lost the no-trust vote with 174 votes in favour of the motion in the 342 member assembly.

Who is Shehbaz Sharif?

- **Shehbaz Sharif is the younger brother of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who served as Pakistan PM for three terms.** Born in Lahore in 1950, Sharif is a graduate of Government College University, Lahore.
- Shehbaz Sharif had been serving as the Chief Minister of the crucial Punjab province of Pakistan for the previous three terms.
- He had last staked a claim for the position of the PM in 2018 but **PPP's decision to abstain from the PM vote had paved the way for the election of PTI's Imran Khan as the Prime Minister.**
- Shehbaz Sharif was nominated as the leader of the **opposition in the National Assembly**.
- He initially joined his family's steel business and then become the president of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industries in 1985.
- His **elder brother Nawaz Sharif** was inducted into the **Punjab Provincial Cabinet as Finance Minister in 1983 under the dictatorship of Zia-ul-Haq.**
- He entered the Punjab Provincial Assembly in 1988 and was elected to the National Assembly in 1990. He became the leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly in 1993.
- He became the Chief Minister of Punjab for the first time in 1997 but his term was cut short by Pervez Musharraf's military coup of 1999. He became the Punjab CM again in 2008, returning from political exile after almost a decade.
- Shehbaz Sharif was elected as the President of PML-N unopposed in February 2018 after his brother, then Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was disqualified from key positions after being named in the 'Panama Papers'.

Corruption Charges

- **Shehbaz Sharif** also faces serious corruption charges similar to his elder brother.
- The **National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had frozen 23 properties** belonging to Shehbaz Sharif and his son, Hamza in December 2019 accusing them of money laundering. The NAB arrested him in the same case in September 2020 and he was released on bail in April 2021 by the Lahore High Court.

Pakistan Supreme Court Verdict

- **Pakistan's Supreme Court in a historic judgment** on April 8th had declared Imran Khan's decision to advise the President to dissolve the National Assembly as unconstitutional and had also set aside the ruling of the Deputy Speaker rejecting the no-trust vote against Imran Khan Government.
- The top court had called for the convening of the session of the National Assembly.

#RUSSIA AS 'STATE SPONSOR OF TERRORISM'

Recently, Ukraine has requested US to **designate Russia as a "state sponsor of terrorism"**.

- The designation would **activate perhaps the harshest suite of sanctions available with the US** against Russia.

What is Terrorist Designation?

- The US Secretary of has the power to designate countries that **"have repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism"** as **"State Sponsors of Terrorism"**.
- The US can **place four categories of sanctions on countries** that are on this list:
 - Restrictions on US foreign assistance
 - A ban on defence exports and sales
 - Certain controls over exports of dual use items
 - Miscellaneous financial and other restrictions
- Sanctions can **also be placed on countries and persons** that engage in certain trade with designated countries.

Countries on the List:

- As of now, there are **four countries on the list** of state sponsors of terrorism.
- **Syria** (Designated on 29th December 1979)
- **Iran** (Designated on 19th January 1984),
- **North Korea** (Designated on 20th November 2017).
- **Cuba was re-designated** as a state sponsor of terrorism on 12th January 2021
- What are the Statutes which authorise Designation?
- There are currently **three statutes that authorise the Secretary of State to designate a foreign government** for repeatedly providing support for acts of international terrorism:
 - **Foreign Assistance Act of 1961**: It prohibits the transfer of most aid,
 - **Arms Export Control Act (AECA)**: It **prohibits exports, credits, guarantees, other financial assistance, and export licensing** overseen by the State Department.

RELATED: US RE-DESIGNATED CUBA IN THE SAME LIST

- USA State Department has designated Cuba as a **State Sponsor of Terrorism** for repeatedly providing **support for acts of international terrorism** in granting safe harbour to terrorists.
- Cuba was delisted in 2015 and has been blacklisted again.
- **Cuba Designated as a State Sponsor of Terrorism:**
- The USA government had been accusing the Castro regime for:
- Illegitimate interference in internal politics Venezuela.
- Oppressing the people of Cuba.
- Supporting international terrorism.
- Subversion of the USA justice.

USA-Cuba Relationship:

- The United States and Cuba have had a strained relationship for more than sixty years, rooted in Fidel Castro's overthrow of a USA-backed government in 1959.
- Presidents Barack Obama and Raul Castro took several steps to normalize bilateral relations, including restoring diplomatic ties and expanding travel and trade.
- The Trump administration has reversed aspects of the past agreements by reimposing restrictions on tourism and other commerce.

Havana Syndrome:

- In late 2016, USA diplomats and other employees stationed in Havana (capital of Cuba) reported feeling ill after hearing strange sounds and experiencing odd physical sensations.
- The symptoms included nausea, severe headaches, fatigue, dizziness, sleep problems, and hearing loss, which have since come to be known as the **Havana Syndrome**. The USA had accused Cuba of carrying out "attacks", but Cuba denied any knowledge of the illnesses.

Historical Reasons for Strained Relationship:

- **Cuban Revolution:** The tumultuous USA-Cuba relationship has its roots in the Cold War. In 1959, Fidel Castro and a group of revolutionaries seized power in Havana (city capital of Cuba). They overthrew the USA-backed government of Fulgencio Batista.
- **Cuban Missile Crisis:** The United States **severed diplomatic ties with** Cuba and began pursuing covert operations to overthrow the Fidel Castro regime in 1961.
- The missile crisis arose after **Cuba allowed the Soviet Union to secretly install nuclear missiles** on the island following an attempt by the USA agencies to topple Cuban Government, known as the **Bay of Pigs invasion**.
- In the end, Soviet Union head Khrushchev agreed to withdraw the missiles in exchange for a pledge from Kennedy (USA) not to invade Cuba and to remove the USA nuclear missiles from Turkey.
- **Trade with Soviet Union:** After the Cuban Revolution, the United States recognized Fidel Castro's government but began imposing economic penalties as the new regime increased its trade with the Soviet Union, nationalized American-owned properties, and hiked taxes on the USA imports.

- **Embargo by Kennedy Government (1962):** After slashing Cuban sugar imports, the USA instituted a ban on nearly all its exports to Cuba, which President John F. Kennedy expanded into a full economic embargo that included stringent travel restrictions.

India's Stand:

- **Supports Lifting Economic Blockade of Cuba:** Recently when the **USA opposed Cuba's membership in UNHRC** in 2019, India joined the majority of countries from all continents that raised their voices in the UN General Assembly to demand an end to the unjust and long economic blockade of the United States against Cuba.
- **Criticised the USA Embargo:** In the UN General Assembly, India stressed that the continued existence of this siege by the USA against Cuba contravenes world opinion, undermines multilateralism and the credibility of the United Nations.

#INDIA VOTE AT UNHRC (RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT)

- 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.
- 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

RUSSIA SUSPENDED FROM UNHRC

- Russia has been suspended from the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) after there were allegations that its soldiers violated human rights in Ukraine. The member nations of the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** voted to suspend Russia.
- The UNHRC is an inter-governmental body under the United Nations. It is responsible for the protection and promotion of human rights across the world.
- The UNHRC also **investigates human rights breaches and addresses various human rights issues**.
- On 15th March 2006, this council was established by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).
- The UNHRC replaced the earlier formed United Nations Commission on Human Rights.
- There are **47-member states in the UNHRC** and they serve for three years. They cannot be re-elected immediately after serving two consecutive terms. Federico Villegas is the current president of the UNHRC.
- ***The process of removal of a country***
 - The UNGA can suspend any Council member that committed human rights violation during its membership term. A two-thirds majority vote is required by the General Assembly to suspend a member.



Suspension of Russia

- The United States first moved the resolution to suspend Russia over its military aggression in Ukraine.
- The resolution to remove Russia was titled '**Suspension of the rights of membership of the Russian Federation in the Human Rights Council**'.
- Under this resolution, grave concerns regarding human rights abuses committed by Russia in Ukraine were highlighted.
- The campaign to suspend Russia started after photos and videos of **civilians killed by the Russian army in Bucha came to the fore**.

India and UN Human Rights Council:

- Recently, a group of **Special Rapporteurs to the United Nations (UN)** has written to the Indian government **expressing concerns over the draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification 2020**.
- In 2020, India's **National Human Rights Commission** submitted its mid-term report to the Council as a part of the third round of the **Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process**.
- India **was elected to the Council** for a period of three years beginning 1st January 2019.

Background:

- 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**.

Cause of Conflict:

- **Balance of Power:** Ever since Ukraine split from the Soviet Union, both Russia and the West have vied for greater influence in the country in order to keep the balance of power in the region in their favour.
- **Buffer Zone for Western Countries:** For the US and the **European Union**, Ukraine is a crucial buffer between Russia and the West.
- As tensions with Russia rise, the US and the EU are increasingly determined to keep Ukraine away from Russian control.
- **Russian Interest in Black Sea:** The **unique geography of the Black Sea region** confers several geopolitical advantages to Russia.
- Firstly, it is an **important crossroads and strategic intersection** for the entire region.
- Access to the Black Sea is **vital for all littoral and neighboring states**, and greatly enhances the projection of power into several adjacent regions.
- Secondly, the region is an **important transit corridor for goods and energy**.

Ukraine's NATO Membership:

- **Ukraine has urged the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to speed up his country's membership in the alliance.**
- **Russia has declared such a move a "red line", and worried about the consequences of the US-led military alliances expanding right up to its doorstep.**
- **The Black Sea is bordered by Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine. All these countries are NATO countries.**
- **Due to this faceoff between NATO countries and Russia, the Black sea is a region of strategic importance & a potential maritime flashpoint.**

Minsk Agreements:

- **Minsk I:** Ukraine and the Russian-backed separatists agreed a **12-point ceasefire deal in the capital of Belarus** in September 2014.
- Its provisions included prisoner exchanges, deliveries of humanitarian aid and the withdrawal of heavy weapons.
- The agreement quickly broke down, with violations by both sides.
- **Minsk II:** In 2015, an open conflict was averted after the 'Minsk II' peace agreement was signed, under the mediation of France and Germany.
- It was **designed to end the fighting in the rebel regions** and hand over the border to Ukraine's national troops.
- It was signed by Representatives of Russia, Ukraine, the **Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)** and the leaders of two pro-Russian separatist regions.
- OSCE is the world's largest security-oriented intergovernmental organisation. Its mandate includes issues such as arms control, promotion of human rights, freedom of the press, and fair elections.

#RUSSIA WITHDRAWN ITSELF FROM UNWTO

- UNWTO announced that Russia has withdrawn from the **United Nation's tourism body ahead of a vote to suspend Russia's membership over its invasion of Ukraine.**
- Moscow has announced its intention of withdrawing from the **United Nations World Tourism Organisation and added that Russia's suspension is 'effective immediately'.**



Will there still is voting?

- **UN World Tourism Organization** said that the voting by the member states of the body will go ahead even though Russia has said that it is withdrawing from it to give member states their say.
- **Why UNWTO is suspending Russia?**
- **Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili** said that UNWTO's statutes are clear: universal respect for human rights and promotion of tourism for peace. Only the member that abides by these two rules can be part of the UN World Tourism Organisation.

Russia-Ukraine war: What will be the impact on global tourism?

- As per UNWTO, **the conflict in Ukraine with Russia** will delay the global tourism sector's uneven recovery from the impact of the COVID pandemic.
- The organization estimates that the disruption of the Russian and Ukrainian outbound travel alone can cause losses of up to \$14 billion in tourism revenues in **2022 and the impact will be felt most strongly in the island and coastal destinations.**

UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization)

- **UNWTO is an intergovernmental body** that promotes tourism and also facilitates international trade between nations around the world. =
- The UN's tourism body has been placed in Madrid ever since it was founded in 1975. The agency employs nearly 150 people.

United Nations World Tourism Organization

- It is the **United Nations Specialized Agency** responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.
- It was **established in 1975** with **headquarters at Madrid, Spain.**
- UNWTO encourages the implementation of the **Global Code of Ethics for Tourism**, to maximize tourism's socio-economic contribution while minimizing its possible negative impacts.

#RELATED: INDIA ELECTED TO 4 MAJOR BODIES OF UN-ECOSOC

- India has been elected to the **four major bodies of the United Nations Economic and Social Council**, including the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.
- India's Permanent Mission to the United Nations thanked all the member states for **electing India to four key bodies of UN ECOSOC**.
- Ambassador Preeti Saran has also been re-elected to the Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Senior Indian diplomat Saran, earlier in December 2018 was elected unopposed to the Asia Pacific seat on the UN's Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Her first four-year term started on January 1, 2019. Saran had joined the Indian Foreign Service back in August 1982.



India elected to four UN ECOSOC bodies

- According to India's Permanent Mission to the UN tweet, **India has been elected to 4 UN ECOSOC bodies**:
- Committee on NGOs, Commission for Social Development, Commission on Science and Technology for Development and Ambassador Preeti Saran has been re-elected to the Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Commission of Social Development (CSocD)

- Since the **World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen**, the Commission for Social Development (CSocD) has become the key body of the United Nations which is in charge of the follow-up and the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme for Action.
- The **purpose of CSocD is to advise ECOSOC on social policies** of a general character, and in particular on all the matters in the social field that are not covered by specialized inter-governmental agencies.

Committee on Non-Governmental Organisations

- It is a standing Committee of the Economic and Social Council which was established in 1946. The main tasks of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organisations are the consideration of applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification submitted by the non-governmental organisations.

UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development

- CSTD is a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council which holds an annual intergovernmental forum for the discussion on timely and pertinent issues affecting technology, science, and development.
- Outcomes of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development include **providing the UNGA and ECOSOC with high-level advice on the relevant science and technology issues**.

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

- CESCR is a body of 18 independent experts that monitors the implementation of the **International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights** by its State Parties.
- Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights enshrines the rights to adequate food, adequate education, health, housing, water and sanitation, and work.

#CONTROVERSY OVER JERUSALEM'S AL-AQSA MOSQUE

- Over the decades, this site in **Jerusalem's Old City** has frequently been a **flashpoint for violence between Palestinians and Israeli forces** and hardline groups and is at the **heart of for historical claims**.
- These recurring clashes are part of the ongoing **Israeli-Palestinian conflict**.



What is al-Aqsa Mosque & Associated Conflict?

- The al-Aqsa Mosque is **one of Jerusalem's most recognized monuments**.
- The site is part of the **Old City of Jerusalem, sacred to Christians, Jews and Muslims**.
- The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**, has classified the Old City of Jerusalem and its walls as a **World Heritage Site**.
- The mosque's complex is the reason for the conflict **between Israel & Palestine (Islam & Judaism)**.
- **Al-Aqsa Mosque is one of Islam's most revered locations**, and the **Temple Mount is the holiest site in Judaism**.
- The Temple Mount is a walled compound inside the Old City in Jerusalem, and is the site of two structures:
- The **Dome of the Rock to the north and the Al-Aqsa Mosque to the south**.
- To the **southwest of the Temple Mount, is the Western Wall**, a remnant of the Second Temple and the **holiest site in Judaism**.
- **In Islam**, the **Dome of the Rock** is a seventh-century structure, **an important Islamic shrine**, believed to be where the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven.
- Before modern borders were drawn up in the region, **pilgrims to the Muslim holy cities of Mecca and Medina** would stop over in Jerusalem to pray at this mosque.
- **In Judaism**, it is believed to be the site where **God gathered dust to create Adam**.
- According to the Bible, in **1000 BC King Solomon built the First Temple** of the Jews on this mountain, which **Babylonian troops** tore down some 400 years on the orders of the **Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar**.
- In the first century BC, Jews returned from their banishment and **built the Second Temple**.

What are the Geopolitics of Conflict over Jerusalem?

- Jerusalem has been at the center of the **Israeli-Palestinian conflict**.
- According to the original 1947 **United Nations (UN) partition plan**, Jerusalem was proposed to be an **international city**.
- However, in the first **Arab Israel war of 1948**, the Israelis captured the western half of the city, and Jordan took the eastern part, including the Old City that houses Haram al-Sharif.
- Following the **Six-Day War in 1967**, an armed conflict between Israel and a coalition of Arab states primarily comprising Jordan, Syria and Egypt, the Waqf Ministry of Jordan that had till then held control of the al-Aqsa Mosque, **ceased to oversee the mosque**.
- Israel captured East Jerusalem from Jordan in the **Six-Day War 1967** and annexed it later.

- Since its annexation, Israel has **expanded settlements in East Jerusalem**.
- Israel sees the whole city as its **"unified, eternal capital"**, whereas the Palestinian leadership across the political spectrum have maintained that they would not accept any compromise formula for the future Palestinian state unless East Jerusalem is its capital.

India's Policy Towards Israel and Palestine:

- The **Israeli-Palestinian conflict** dates back to the end of the nineteenth century. It is linked to the **age-old tussle over identity and land** starting with Jerusalem.
- In 1947, the **United Nations (UN)** adopted **Resolution 181**, known as the Partition Plan, which sought to divide the **British Mandate of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states**.
- This led to unresolved conflict between Israel and Palestine.
- Traditionally, India's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine has been a **hyphenated foreign policy**.
- However, **hyphenating the ties with Israel – linking them to ties with the Palestinian Authority** – essentially **prevented** India from pursuing a pragmatic policy of what was in **India's best interests**.
- In recent times, India is being seen shifted towards a **Dehyphenation of Policy**.

#ABRAHAM ACCORD

- The **Abraham Accord** between **Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain** is mediated by the USA. It is the **first Arab-Israeli peace deal in 26 years**.
- **Previous Agreements:** There were the **only two peace deals** between Israel and the Arab States in more than a quarter of a century.
- Egypt was the first Arab State to sign a peace deal with Israel in 1979.
- Jordan signed a peace pact in 1994.

The Agreement:

- As per the agreements, the UAE and Bahrain will establish:
 - Embassies and exchange ambassadors.
 - Working together with Israel across a range of sectors, including tourism, trade, healthcare and security.
- The Abraham Accords also open the door for Muslims around the world to visit the historic sites in Israel and to peacefully pray at Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, the **third holiest site in Islam**.
- In the Islamic tradition, **the Kaaba in Mecca** is considered the holiest site, followed by **the Prophet's Mosque** in Medina, and **Al-Aqsa Mosque** in Jerusalem.
- **Reason:** Bringing Israel, the UAE and Bahrain together reflects their shared concern about **Iran's rising influence** in the region and development of ballistic missiles. Iran has been critical of both deals.

Arab-Israel Relation

- Since Israeli independence in 1948, it has fought several wars with Arab neighbouring countries.
- The persecuted Jews saw Israel as their promised home while Arabs saw it as an occupation.

#CHINA'S GLOBAL SECURITY INITIATIVE

Recently, a new **Global Security Initiative (GSI)** was put forward by Chinese President. The GSI looks to counter the US **Indo-Pacific strategy** and the **Quad (India, US, Australia, Japan grouping)**.



- However, China did not provide much clarity or details about the proposed global security initiative.

What is GSI, as Envisaged by China?

- **Principle of Indivisible Security:** With growing threats posed by **unilateralism, hegemony and power politics, and increasing deficits in peace, security, trust and governance**, mankind is facing more and more intractable problems and security threats.
- Thus, China held that the Global security initiative is envisaged to uphold the **principle of "indivisible security"**.
- **The principle of "indivisible security"** means that **no country can strengthen its own security at the expense of others**.
- **Asian Security Model:** GSI calls for a **"common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable"** security and building an Asian security model of mutual respect, openness and integration".
- **Opposing Sanctions:** This would oppose the use of unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdiction, appearing to refer to Western sanctions.
- **Tackling New Cold War:** Indo-Pacific' strategy to divide the region and create a 'new **Cold War**', and the use of military alliances to put together an '**Asian version of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**'.
- According China, the Quad grouping was equivalent to the **"Five Eyes" intelligence alliance** involving Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the U.S. and U.K. and the **AUKUS pact**, as a key element in what he called U.S. plans to build an "Asian NATO".

What are Reactions of Quad Members?

- **Quad is not a Military Alliance:** The members of the Quad have **rejected the notion that it is an Asian NATO or a military alliance**, and pointed to its broad-based cooperation, including on vaccines and technology.
- **Double Standards of China:** Chinese criticism of unilateralism, hegemony and double standards is usually aimed at the US.
- **Impact of Russia-Ukraine War:** China's new advances in the Pacific could be related to the stagnation of the **Belt and Road Initiative**, due to the **Ukraine war**.

What are Events Signaling a New Cold War?

- **China's Development:** For several decades, **China's aggressive development** under the relatively enlightened authoritarianism of Deng Xiaoping and his successors was seen positively in the United States.
- However, under Xi Jinping (President), China has evolved from a **soft to a hard authoritarianism**.
- There is now a president-for-life with a **budding personality cult**.

- **US' Counter:** In order to contain rising China's assertiveness, the US under its '**pivot to Asia policy**' Has launched a **Quad initiative & Indo pacific narrative**.
- Most recently, the US proposed to **expand G7 to G-11 without including China in it**.
- **China's Stance on South China Sea:** China's actions in the **South China Sea**, first by land reclamation and then constructing artificial islands for extending extra-territorial claim, has seen sharp criticism from the US and its allies.
- **Challenging Economic Hegemony:** China has come out with alternative governance mechanisms to the U.S.-dominated **International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Trade Organization**, with its all-encompassing **Belt and Road Initiative** and institutions like **Asia infrastructure investment bank**, Contingency Reserve Agreement (CRA) of **New Development Bank**.

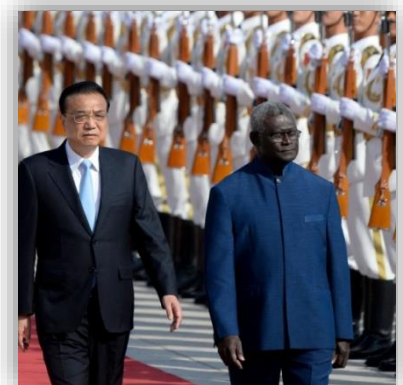
What should be Role of India?

- India is a rising global power and citing its importance both the US and China sought to attract India in its camp. **Foreign policy experts in the US argue India Is a Natural US Ally in the New Cold War**.
- On the other hand, Chinese's Ambassador in India has suggested writing "**together a new chapter**" with "**a shared future for mankind**". In this context:
- India can promote new **multilateralism** under the aegis of **VasudhaivaKutumbakam**- which relies on restructuring both the economic order and societal behavior for equitable sustainable development.
- India must take up **intensified diplomacy with global powers so that Asian Century** can be defined in terms of peaceful co-existence and global interest.
- Apart from it, India should acknowledge that **national security now relies on technological superiority in Artificial Intelligence (AI), cyber and space, and not expensive capital equipment**.
- Thus, India should become self-sufficient in the domain of **critical technologies**.

#SECURITY DEAL B/W CHINA & SOLOMON ISLANDS

A recent leaked document has revealed that the **Solomon Islands in the South Pacific has reached a deal with China** which outlines an unprecedented level of security cooperation.

- This is the **first deal of its kind for China in the region**, which is not yet signed and it is not fully known whether the provisions mentioned in the leaked document are present in the final draft.



What are the Key Highlights about Solomon Island?

- The Solomon Islands is **part of the ethnically Melanesian group of islands** in the Pacific and lies between Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu.
- The islands were initially controlled by the **British Empire during the colonial era**.
- It went through the **hands of Germany and Japan** and then back to the U.K., after the Americans took over the islands from the Japanese during **World War II**.
- The islands became **independent in 1978 to become a constitutional monarchy** under the British Crown, with a parliamentary system of government.

- Still, the country, a **member of the Commonwealth**, is independent, and the governor-general is appointed on the advice of the unicameral National Parliament.

What are the Provisions under the Proposed Deal?

- The document **explicitly enables China to send its “police, armed police, military personnel and other law enforcement** and armed forces” to the islands on the latter government’s request, or if the former sees that the safety of its projects and personnel in the islands are at risk.
- It also provides for China’s naval vessels to **utilise the islands for logistics support**.
- What are the Reasons for China’s Interest in the Solomon Islands?

Role of Taiwan:

- The Pacific islands are among the few regions in the world **where China has competition from Taiwan for diplomatic recognition**.
- **China considers Taiwan to be a renegade territory** awaiting reunification, and opposes its recognition as an independent state on the international stage.
- Hence, any country which has to officially establish relations with China will have to break diplomatic ties with Taiwan.
- The Solomon Islands **was one among the six Pacific island** states which had official bilateral relations with Taiwan.
- However, in **2019, the Solomon Islands, along with Kiribati, switched allegiance to China**. Now, **only four regional countries backing Taiwan**, mostly belonging to the **Micronesian group of islands** which are under the control of the US.

What are the Implications for Geopolitical Configuration in the Region?

- All Pacific countries have a stake in protecting the stability and security of the region.
- Pacific Islands Forum members, including Australia, agreed in the 2018 **Boe Declaration to address regional security challenges collectively**.
- A bilateral agreement such as the one proposed between China and Solomon Islands **undermines that sentiment and shows a limited appreciation for the security of the region** as a whole.
- Earlier, the **US announced plans to open an embassy in the Solomon Islands**, laying out in unusually blunt terms a plan to increase its influence in the South Pacific nation before China becomes “strongly embedded”.
- The smaller island nations of the region are heavily dependent on them, **especially Australia as it is a resident power**.

Related: Conflict between China and Taiwan (Background):

- China and Taiwan **separated amid civil war in 1949** and **China considers Taiwan part of its territory** to be taken control of by force if necessary.
- But **Taiwan’s leaders** say that **Taiwan is a sovereign state**.
- After decades of hostile intentions and angry rhetoric, relations between China and Taiwan **started improving in the 1980s**.
- **China put forward a formula, known as “one country, two systems”**, under which Taiwan would be given significant autonomy if it accepted Chinese reunification.

- In Taiwan, the offer was rejected, but the **government did relax rules** on visits to and investment in China.
- There were also limited talks between the two sides' unofficial representatives, though Beijing's insistence that Taiwan's Republic of China (ROC) government is illegitimate prevented government-to-government contact.
- China's implementation of a **national security law in Hong Kong** in 2020 was seen by many as yet another sign that Beijing was becoming significantly more assertive in the region.

#CONTROVERSY OVER 'KURIL ISLAND'

- Japan has said that four islands near the Kamchatka Peninsula have been illegally occupied by Russia. The Japanese call these **islands 'the Northern Territories'** while **Russia calls them 'Kurils.'**
- The islands stretch north across the Pacific Ocean from Japan's Hokkaido to Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula's southernmost tip.
- These islands have been in the midst of a **longstanding issue between Japan and Russia.**
- The Japanese government led by Fumio Kishida has upped its ante over these islands' ownership. **For the first time in around 20 years Japan has called the islands to have been illegally occupied.**
- This term was last used in 2003 by the foreign ministry of Japan.



About the dispute

- This **dispute dates back to the end of the Second World War** when the Soviet Union, a part of the allied forces, won the war against the Axis powers of Japan, Italy, and Germany.
- Russia believes that since they won the **Second World War the ownership of the islands is theirs as Japan lost the territory due to its loss in the war.**
- Japan argues that the Japanese travelled to these islands in the 16th century **which is nearly 200 years before the arrival of the Russians and hence, the islands are rightfully theirs.**
- **After the end of the Second World War, Japan signed the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty** with the Allied Forces where Japan renounced all right, claim, and title to the Kuril Islands.
- This did not solve the issue as Russia was not a part of this treaty and the **government of Japan has never recognised the four islands occupied by Russia as part of the Kuril chain.**

Proposal of returning the islands

- In the 50s, Russia had proposed returning the two islands that are closest to Japan but the country rejected the offer. The islands that are considered by Japan as their own are named Etorofu, Kunashiri, Habomai islets, and Shikotan.
- **Military Drills:** Russia has performed military drills on these islands intensifying fears that the peace of the Indo-Pacific region will remain threatened due to the Kuril Islands dispute.

#EMMANUEL MACRON RE-ELECTED AS PRESIDENT OF FRANCE

- On 24th April 2022, **Marine Le Pen** has been defeated by Emmanuel Macron to be re-elected as the President of France. Leaders across the world welcomed his re-election.
- Marine Le Pen is a far-right leader who was defeated by Macron. **Macron is the first French sitting president in the past 20 years to have been re-elected.**
- Both candidates did not receive any vote from one out of three voters. The turnout of the election was just under 72 percent which is the lowest since 1969.
- Over three million **people had cast blank or spoilt votes. Macron received 51.5 percent of the votes while Le Pen received 41.5 percent.**



About Emmanuel Macron

- Since 14th May 2017, **Emmanuel Macron has been serving as the president of France.**
- During his presidency, he has overseen many reforms to taxation, labour laws, and pensions. **Renewable energy transitions were also pursued by him.**
- A proposed fuel tax by him resulted in the yellow vests protests in 2018. Since 2020, he has been leading the response of France to the COVID-19 pandemic and the rollout of vaccination.
- In his foreign policy, he asked for reforms in the European Union and also signed bilateral treaties with Germany and Italy.
- He also presided over a dispute with Australia and the United States over the AUKUS security treaty and continued French involvement in the civil war of Syria. He also severely criticized and responded against the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

What are the Areas of Cooperation in India-France Relations?

- Background:** France was one of the first countries with which India signed a "strategic partnership" after the end of the **Cold War**, in January 1998.
- France was one of the very few countries to **support India's decision to test nuclear weapons in 1998.**
- Today, France has emerged as **India's most reliable partner** on issues relating to terrorism and Kashmir.
- Defence Cooperation:** Both countries have a defence dialogue at the Ministerial level.

The three services have regular defence exercises, viz.

- Exercise Shakti (Army)**
- Exercise Varuna (Navy)**
- Exercise Garuda (Air Force)**
- Recently, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has inducted **French Rafale multi-role combat aircraft.**
- India entered into a contract with a French firm to build **six Scorpene submarines in India's Malegaon dockyards** through a **technology-transfer arrangement in 2005.**
- The two countries also signed the Agreement regarding the **Provision of Reciprocal Logistics Support.**

- **Bilateral trade and Economic relations:** The India-France Administrative Economic and Trade Committee (AETC) provides an appropriate framework to assess and find ways to further promote bilateral trade and investment as well as to speed up the resolution of market access issues to the benefit of economic operators
- **Global agendas:** Climate change, biodiversity, renewable energy, terrorism, cybersecurity and digital technology, etc:
- There have been joint efforts to limit climate change and develop the **International Solar Alliance**.
- Both countries have agreed on a road map on cybersecurity and digital technology.

#PM OF NEPAL VISITED INDIA

The Prime Minister of Nepal visited India and held a summit meeting with the Indian Prime Minister. Earlier, the Union Cabinet had cleared a plan to build a **new bridge connecting India and Nepal** over the **Mahakali River** and link Dharchula in Uttarakhand with Nepal's Dharchula.



What are the Highlights of the Visit?

- **Connectivity:** Launched the **35-km cross-border railway line linking Jaynagar in Bihar to Kurtha in Nepal**.
- This is the **first broad-gauge passenger rail link between the two sides** and it **will be extended to Bardibas in Nepal** under a project supported by an Indian grant of Rs 548 crore.
- **Solu Corridor:** The Indian side handed over the Solu Corridor, a **90-km, 132 kV power transmission line** built for Rs 200 crore under an Indian line of credit.
- The line **will help bring electricity to several remote districts in northeastern Nepal** by connecting them to the country's national grid.
- **RuPay card:** Launched India's RuPay card in Nepal.
- The domestic variant of the RuPay card will now work at 1,400 point-of-sale machines in Nepal, and the move is expected to facilitate bilateral tourist flows.
- Nepal is the **fourth country, after Bhutan, Singapore and the UAE**, where RuPay is live.

MoUs:

- Nepal signed a **framework agreement to join the India-led ISA** (becoming the 105th member country).
- Signed three more pacts – a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on **enhancing technical cooperation in the railways sector**, and **two agreements between Indian Oil Corporation and Nepal Oil Corporation for the supply of petroleum products** for five years and for sharing of technical expertise.

What are the Key Points of India - Nepal Relations?

- **Historical Ties:** Nepal is an important neighbour of India and occupies special significance in its foreign policy because of the geographic, historical, cultural and economic linkages/ties that span centuries.
- India and Nepal share similar ties in terms of **Hinduism and Buddhism** with Buddha's birthplace Lumbini located in present day Nepal.

- The two countries **not only share an open border and unhindered movement of people**, but they also have close bonds through marriages and familial ties, popularly known as **Roti-Beti ka Rishta**.
- The India-Nepal **Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950** forms the bedrock of the special relations that exist between India and Nepal.
- Rivers originating in Nepal feed the **perennial river systems** of India in terms of ecology and hydropower potential.
- **Trade and Economy:** India is Nepal's largest trade partner and the largest source of foreign investments, besides providing transit for almost the entire third country trade of Nepal.
- **Connectivity:** Nepal being a landlocked country, it is surrounded by India from three sides and one side is open towards Tibet which has very limited vehicular access.
- India-Nepal has undertaken various connectivity programs to enhance people-to-people linkages and promote economic growth and development.
- MOUs have been signed between both the governments for laying an electric rail **track linking Kathmandu with Raxaul in India**.
- India is looking to develop the inland waterways for the movement of cargo, within the framework of trade and transit arrangements, providing additional access to sea for Nepal calling it linking **Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) with Sagar (Indian Ocean)**.

Defence Cooperation:

- Bilateral defence cooperation includes assistance to Nepalese Army in its modernization through provision of equipment and training.
- The Gorkha Regiments of the Indian Army are raised partly by recruitment from hill districts of Nepal.
- India from 2011, every year undertakes joint military exercise with Nepal known as **Surya Kiran**.

▪ Border Dispute Between India and Nepal

- Currently, India and Nepal have border disputes over **Kalapani - Limpiyadhura - Lipulekh trijunction between India-Nepal and China** and **Susta area (West Champaran district, Bihar)**.
- **Kalapani Region:**
 - Kalapani is a valley that is administered by India as a part of the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand. It is situated on the Kailash Mansarovar route.
 - Kalapani is advantageously located at a height of over 20,000 ft and serves as an observation post for that area.
- The **Kali River** in the **Kalapani region** demarcates the border between India and Nepal.
- The **Treaty of Sugauli** signed by the **Kingdom of Nepal and British India** (after **Anglo-Nepalese War**) in **1816** located the Kali River as Nepal's western boundary with India.
- The discrepancy in locating the **source of the Kali river** led to boundary disputes between India and Nepal, with each country producing maps supporting their own claims.

Susta Region:

- The **change of course by the Gandak river** is the main reason for disputes in the Susta area.
- Susta is located on the bank of the **Gandak river**.
- It is called Narayani river in Nepal.
- It joins Ganga near Patna, Bihar.

Nepal's Stand:

- Kali river originates from a stream at Limpiyadhura, north-west of LipuLekh. **Thus Kalapani, and Limpiyadhura, and LipuLekh, fall to the east of the river and are part of Nepal's Dharchula district.**
- **Lipulekh was deleted from the country's map by the kings to get favours from India.**
- **The territory of Kalapani was offered to India by King Mahendra after the 1962 India-China war who wanted to help India's security concerns due to perceived lingering Chinese threats.**
- **Kalapani was not a part of Nepal-India dispute. It was Nepal's territory that the king had allowed India to use temporarily**
- **The new map is in fact a document that was in circulation in Nepal till the 1950s.**

India's Stand:

- Kali river originates in springs well below the **Lipu-lekh pass**, and the **Sugauli Treaty does not demarcate the area north of these streams.**
- The administrative and revenue **records of the nineteenth century also show that Kalapani was on the Indian side**, and counted as part of Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand.

Efforts to Solve Border Dispute:

- In the 1980s, the two sides set up the **Joint Technical Level Boundary Working Group** to delineate the boundary.
- The group demarcated everything except Kalapani and Susta area.
- Officially, **Nepal brought the issue of Kalapani before India in 1998.** Both sides agreed to demarcate the outstanding areas (including Kalpani) by 2002 at the prime ministerial level talk held in 2000. But that has not happened yet.

**SUCCESS
MANTRA**

CLAT 2022 Express Batch

Improve your chance to crack CLAT and study from top NLUs.

50%off

—INR 19,999.00—

9,999.00

Mode of Teaching- Online

100+
Teaching
hours

2000+
Practice
questions

25+
Mock test

150+
Practice
tests

20+ Live
practice
sessions (LPS)

Subscription of our
monthly magazine
'Pravahini'

PRAVAHINI

COMMON LAW ADMISSION TEST (CLAT)

**SUCCESS
MANTRA**

CLAT 2023 CLASSIC

Program for Class XII Appearing or Passed Students.

Through this program you have more time to clear your fundamentals and practice extensively for CLAT, your ultimate goal!

Best Faculty

Best Study Material

Best Result



Call For Counseling



8588876885