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## **Monthly Compendium (INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS)**

of Current Affairs by **SUCCESS MANTRA** (GTB Nagar)

# INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

**AUGUST 2022**

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# INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

## #INDIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH NEIGHBOURHOOD

Recently, Indian External Affairs Minister met with Maldives President stating that India's '**Neighborhood First**' policy and the Maldives' '**India First**' policy complement each other, advancing the special partnership.

### What is India's Neighbourhood First Policy?

- Under its '**Neighbourhood First**' policy, India is committed to **developing friendly and mutually beneficial relations** with all its neighbours.
- India is an **active development partner** and is involved in several projects in these countries.
- India's policy of 'Neighbourhood First' focuses on **creating mutually beneficial, people-oriented, regional frameworks** for stability and prosperity.
- India's engagement with these countries is based on a consultative, non-reciprocal and outcome-oriented approach, which focuses on delivering benefits like **greater connectivity, improved infrastructure, stronger development cooperation** in various sectors, **security and broader people-to-people contacts**.



### How has India's Relations with its Neighbours been?

#### India - Maldives:

- **Security Partnership:** Recently, the **National College for Policing and Law Enforcement (NCPLE)** was inaugurated by India's External Affairs Minister during his two day visit to Maldives in 2022.
- **Economic Cooperation:** **Tourism** is the mainstay of Maldivian economy. The country is now a **major tourist destination** for some Indians and a job destination for others.
- In August 2021, **Afcons, an Indian company**, signed a contract for the **largest-ever infrastructure project in Maldives** which is the **Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP)**.

#### India - Bhutan:

- Indo-Bhutan Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 1949: The Treaty provides for, among other things, **perpetual peace and friendship, free trade and commerce** and equal justice to each other's citizens. In 2007 the treaty was re-negotiated, and provisions were included to **encourage Bhutan's sovereignty**, abolishing the need to take India's guidance on foreign policy.
- **Hydropower Cooperation:** This **hydropower cooperation** comes under the **2006 Agreement on Cooperation in Hydropower**. Under a protocol to this agreement, India has agreed to assist Bhutan in the development of a minimum of **10,000 MW of hydropower and import of surplus electricity** from the same by 2020.

### India - Nepal:

- **Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950:** The treaty talks about **reciprocal treatment of Indian and Nepali citizens** in the two countries, in residence, property, business and movement. It also establishes **national treatment for both Indian and Nepalese businesses** (i.e. once imported, **foreign goods would be treated no differently than domestic goods**).

### India - Sri Lanka:

- **Hybrid Power:** India & Sri Lanka signed a MoU that provided India to **set up hybrid power projects in three Islands** (Nainativu, Delft or Neduntheevu, and Analaitivu) off Jaffna.

## #WHAT IS TOBACCO ENDGAME?

To fulfil its plan to be **smokefree by 2025**, the New Zealand Parliament recently tabled the **Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products (Smoked Tobacco) Amendment Bill**.

Emulating New Zealand, **Malaysia is also considering a ban on smoking** and the sale of all tobacco products, including **e-cigarettes**, to people born after 2007.

### What is the New Zealand's Bill on Tobacco Endgame?

- The Tobacco Endgame **refers to a policy approach that focuses on ending the Tobacco Epidemic**, aiming at a 'tobacco-free future'.
- The Bill seeks three Strategies to reduce Smoking significantly or ending it.
- If implemented, it will be the world-first legislation that will **stop the next generation from ever being able to legally buy cigarettes**.



### What is the Status of Tobacco Consumption?

#### Globally:

- The tobacco epidemic is **one of the biggest public health threats the world has ever faced**, killing more than 8 million people a year (as per the **World Health Organisation**), including around 1.2 million deaths from exposure to second-hand smoke.
- Nearly one in four people across the globe use tobacco.
- All forms of tobacco are harmful, and there is **no safe level of exposure to tobacco**.
- Cigarette smoking is the **most common form of tobacco use worldwide**.
- Other tobacco products include waterpipe tobacco, various smokeless tobacco products, cigars, cigarillos, roll-your-own tobacco, pipe tobacco, bidis and kreteks. Tobacco use is a major risk factor for many chronic diseases, including **cancer, lung disease, cardiovascular disease** and stroke.

### Status in India:



- 38% men and 9% women **above 15 years of age use tobacco products**, as per the **National Family Health Survey 5 (2019-21)**.
- Women (19%) and men (51%) belonging to **Scheduled Tribes are more likely to use tobacco** than those from any other caste/tribe groups.
- Among men as well as women, the use of **tobacco is higher in rural areas** (43% for men and 11 % for women) than in urban areas.
- Nearly three-fifths of men and 15% of women with **no schooling or less than 5 years of schooling** use tobacco.

### **What Measures have been Taken to Tackle High Tobacco Consumption?**

#### **Global Initiatives:**

- **WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC):** It was developed in response to the **globalisation of the tobacco epidemic and is an evidence-based treaty** that reaffirms the right of all people to the highest standard of health. **India has adopted** the tobacco control provisions under the WHO FCTC.
- **World No Tobacco Day:** 31<sup>st</sup> May is observed as '**World No Tobacco Day**' every year to spread awareness around the deadly effects of tobacco consumption.

#### **India's Initiatives:**

- **Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003:** It replaced the **Cigarettes Act of 1975** (largely limited to statutory warnings- '**Cigarette Smoking is Injurious to Health**' to be displayed on cigarette packs and advertisements. It did not include non-cigarettes). **The 2003 Act also included cigars, bidis, cheroots, pipe tobacco, hookah, chewing tobacco, pan masala, and gutka.**
- **Promulgation of the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Ordinance, 2019:** It prohibits Production, Manufacture, Import, Export, Transport, Sale, Distribution, Storage and Advertisement of e-Cigarettes.

## **#ONE YEAR OF TALIBAN 2.0**

It has been a year since **American Troops withdrew** and **Taliban took over the regime in Afghanistan in August 2021**.

Over the last two decades, **foreign powers including India** helped Afghanistan to rebuild roads, dams, government offices, hospitals, rural infrastructure, the economy, and education.

### **How did the Taliban Take Over the Regime in Afghanistan?**



- **About Taliban:** The Taliban, or students in the Pashto language, **emerged in the early 1990s in northern Pakistan** following the **withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan**.
- It is an **Islamic fundamentalist political and military organisation** operating in Afghanistan. They have dominated Afghan polity for quite some time and feature regularly in international affairs.
- The Taliban have been fighting against the U.S.-backed government in Kabul for around 20 years. They seek to **reimpose their strict version of Islam in Afghanistan**.

#### **Background:**

**Terrorist Attack: on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001**, terrorist attacks in America killed nearly 3,000 people. A month after 9/11, the **US launched airstrikes against Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom)**.

**Transitional Government in Afghanistan:** After the attacks, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) coalition troops declared war on Afghanistan.

The US dislodged the Taliban regime and established a transitional government in Afghanistan.

The US had reached the conclusion long ago that the war was unwinnable and approached for peace talks.

### Peace Talks:

- **Murree Talks:** In 2015 the US had sent a representative to the first-ever meeting between the Taliban and the Afghan government that was hosted by Pakistan in Murree in 2015.
- **Doha Talks:** In 2020, before the Doha Talks started, the Taliban had maintained that they would hold direct talks only with the US, and not with the Kabul government, which they did not recognise. In the agreement, the US administration promised that it would withdraw all American troops from Afghanistan by 1st May, 2021. The deadline has been pushed to 11<sup>th</sup> September 2021.
- **US Exit:** By July 2021, the US claimed that it had withdrawn 90% of the troops and Taliban claimed that it had controlled over 85% of the Afghan Territory.
- **Taliban Takeover:** Taliban took control of the regime in Afghanistan in August 2021. This was the first time since their ouster 20 years ago in the wake of the 9/11 strikes that Taliban fighters had entered the city — they first seized the Capital in 1996.

## #TALKS BETWEEN INDIA & NATO

- It was recently reported India held its first political dialogue with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in Brussels on December 12, 2019.

### What is NATO?

- **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** is a military alliance established by the North Atlantic Treaty (also called the **Washington Treaty**) of April 1949, by the United States, Canada, and several Western European nations to provide collective security against the **Soviet Union**.
- There are currently **30 member states**.

### Original Members:

- **Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States.**
- Other Countries: Greece and Turkey (1952), West Germany (1955, from 1990 as Germany), Spain (1982), the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland (1999), Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia (2004), Albania and Croatia (2009), Montenegro (2017), and North Macedonia (2020). France withdrew from the integrated military command of NATO in 1966 but remained a member of the organization, it resumed its position in NATO's military command in 2009.
- Recently, **Finland and Sweden** have shown interest to join NATO. **Headquarters:** Brussels, Belgium.

### What is the NATO-India Political Dialogue?

- India held its first political dialogue with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Brussels on December 12, 2019.

## Significance:

- NATO has been engaging both China and Pakistan in bilateral dialogue. While Engaging NATO in a political dialogue would provide India an opportunity to bring about a **balance in NATO's perceptions** about the **situation in regions and issues of concern to India**. There is convergence in the perspectives of both India and NATO on China, terrorism, and Afghanistan, including **Pakistan's** role in Afghanistan.
- **NATO'S View:** Dialogue with India would further enhance the cooperation among NATO countries and India's geo-strategic location shares a unique perspective and **enhances international security in India's own region and beyond**.

## #CHINESE VESSEL IN SRI LANKA

Recently, China's **satellite tracking vessel Yuan Wang 5** has arrived at **Sri Lanka's southern Hambantota Port**, despite **India and the U.S. voicing concern with Colombo over the military ship's visit**.



### What do we know about Yuan Wang 5 & Hambantota Port?

- **Yuan Wang 5:** It is a **third-generation vessel of the Yuan Wang series** that entered service in 2007. This series of ships include "**space tracking ships involved in supporting the manned space programme**". It has the ability to **track satellites and intercontinental missiles**.
- **Hambantota Port:** **Hambantota International Port Group** is a **Public Private Partnership** and a **Strategic Development Project** between the **Government of Sri Lanka** and **China Merchants Port Holdings (CMPort)**. This port was **given to China by Sri Lanka on a 99-year lease** after Sri Lanka failed to repay Chinese loans. It is seen as a case of Chinese "**debt trap**" Diplomacy.

### Why is China's Presence in Sri Lanka a Concern for India?

- **Recently, China's presence in Sri Lanka has increased on a large scale.**
- China is the **largest bilateral creditor to Sri Lanka**.
- Its loans to the Sri Lankan public sector amount to **15% of the central government's external debt**.
- Sri Lanka heavily relies on Chinese credit to address its **foreign debt burden**.
- China extended about **USD 2.8 billion to Sri Lanka** soon after the **pandemic** hit but has not stepped in much in 2022, even as the **island's economy collapsed** rapidly.
- China has invested about **USD 12 billion in Sri Lanka's infrastructure projects between 2006-19**.
- China enjoys **friendlier waters in South Asia** and the **Indian Ocean** than it does in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.
- China faces opposition from Taiwan, territorial disputes in the South China Sea and East Asia, and myriad frictions with the US and Australia.

## #CRITICAL MINERALS ALLIANCE

There is growing concern in the Government over India not finding a place in the **Minerals Security Partnership**.

Minerals Security Partnership is an **ambitious new US-led partnership** to secure supply chains of **critical minerals**, aimed at reducing dependency on China.

**Demand for critical minerals**, which are essential for **clean energy** and other technologies is projected to **expand significantly in the coming decades**.



### What are Critical Minerals?

Critical minerals are elements that are the **building blocks of essential modern-day technologies** and are at **risk of supply chain disruptions**.

These **minerals are now used everywhere** from making mobile phones, computers to batteries, **electric vehicles** and green technologies like **solar panels** and wind turbines.

### Major Critical Minerals:

- **Graphite, Lithium and Cobalt** are used for making EV batteries.
- **Aerospace, communications and defence industries** also rely on several such minerals as they are used in manufacturing **fighter jets, drones, radio sets** and other critical equipment.
- While **Cobalt, Nickel and Lithium** are required for batteries used in electric vehicles, rare earth minerals are critical, in trace amounts, in the **semiconductors** and **high-end electronics manufacturing**.

### What is Minerals Security Partnership (MSP)?

- **About:** It is an initiative by the United States to bolster critical mineral supply chains.
- **Partners:** Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Commission.

### What has India done regarding Critical Minerals?

- **Lithium Agreement:** In mid-2020, India, through a newly floated state-owned company, **had signed an agreement with an Argentinian firm** to jointly **prospect lithium in the South American country** that has the third largest reserves of the metal in the world.
- **India-Australia Critical Minerals Investment Partnership:** India and Australia decided to strengthen their partnership in the field of **projects and supply chains for critical minerals**.
- **Australia has the resources** to help India fulfil its ambitions to **lower emissions** and meet the **growing demand for critical minerals** to help **India's space and defence industries, and the manufacture of solar panels, batteries and electric vehicles**.



## #DROUGHT IN EUROPE

After the **record-breaking summer heat**, 2022 may be the **worst drought year in Europe in 500 years**. Large rivers have been reduced to shallow streams, hitting power generation. **China and the US too are facing drought situations.**

### What is a Drought?

- Drought is generally considered as a **deficiency in rainfall /precipitation over an extended period**, usually a season or more, resulting in a **water shortage causing adverse impacts on vegetation, animals, and/or people.**

### How bad is the Drought Situation in Europe?

- Present Scenario:** The drought is considered the worst in 500 years. The European summer was this dry last in **1540**, when a **year-long drought killed tens of thousands of people**. However, earlier European droughts such as those in **2003, 2010, and 2018** too were compared to the 1540 event.
- Some of Europe's biggest rivers — **Rhine, Po, Loire, Danube** — which are usually formidable waterways, are unable to support even mid-sized boats. As per an analytical report by the **Global Drought Observatory (GDO)**, an agency of the **European Commission**, about **64% of the continent's landmass was experiencing drought** conditions.
- Nearly **90% of the geographical area in Switzerland and France**, about **83% in Germany**, and close to **75% in Italy**, was facing **agricultural drought**.
- The **situation is unlikely to improve** substantially in the coming months.

### Types:

- Meteorological Drought:** It is based on the degree of dryness or rainfall deficit and the length of the dry period.
- Hydrological Drought:** It is based on the impact of rainfall deficits on the water supply such as stream flow, reservoir and lake levels, and ground water table decline.
- Agricultural Drought:** It refers to the impact on agriculture by factors such as rainfall deficits, soil water deficits, reduced groundwater, or reservoir levels needed for irrigation.
- Socioeconomic Drought:** It considers the impact of drought conditions (meteorological, agricultural, or hydrological drought) on supply and demand of some economic goods such as fruits, vegetables, grains and meat.

### What is understood by Heat Waves?

- A heat wave is a **period of abnormally high temperatures** typically occurring between the months of March and June, and in some rare cases even extending till July.
- According to **India Meteorological Department (IMD)**, a heat wave is declared when the **maximum temperature of a station reaches at least 40°C for Plains** and at least **30°C for Hilly regions**.

## #USA-CHINA TENSIONS

Recently, the Speaker of the House of Representatives of US visited Taiwan, the highest level American official to go to the island since 1997. This visit has raised tension between US and China.

### What is the Taiwan-China issue?

**About: Taiwan** is an island about 160 km off the coast of southeastern China, opposite the Chinese cities of Fuzhou, Quanzhou, and Xiamen.

#### History:

- It was administered by the **Qing imperial dynasty**, but its control was passed to the Japanese in 1895. After the defeat of Japan in **World War II**, the island passed back into Chinese hands.
- After the communists led by Mao Zedong won the civil war in mainland China, **Chiang Kai-shek**, the leader of the **nationalist Kuomintang party**, fled to Taiwan in 1949.
- Chiang Kai-shek set up the **government of the Republic of China on the island and remained President until 1975.**
- **Following the split of China** and Taiwan in the civil war, the Republic of China (ROC) government was relocated to Taiwan. On the other hand, The Communist Party of China (CPC) established the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the mainland.
- Since then, the PRC observes Taiwan as a traitor province and awaits reintegration with Taiwan, if possible, by peaceful means.

#### Present status:

- China has never recognized the existence of Taiwan as an independent political entity, arguing that it was always a Chinese province.
- But China and Taiwan have had economic ties.
- Many migrants from Taiwan work in China, and China has investments in Taiwan.

### What is USA's Policy toward Taiwan?

- It has maintained a '**One China**' policy since the 1970s, under which it recognizes Taiwan as a part of China.
- '**One China**' policy means that the nations who want to have diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC) have to recognize the PRC but not the ROC as China, breaking the relations with **Republic of China (ROC).**
- It established that the communist government in mainland China was the legitimate representative and Taiwan was a breakaway part of it.
- But it also has unofficial ties with Taiwan.
- And do support Taiwan in the form of defending the island from external aggression by providing military equipment and intelligence.

### What is Indian Policy towards Taiwan?

- India also follows One China Policy and it doesn't have formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan. But it has an office in Taipei for diplomatic functions.
- **India-Taipei Association (ITA)** is headed by a senior diplomat.

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Whereas, Taiwan has the **Taipei Economic and Cultural Center (TECC)** in New Delhi.

The Indo-Taiwanese ties basically **focused on trade, commerce, culture, and education.**

The Indian government had handpicked diplomat to become its envoy in Taipei.

- Whereas, Taiwan has the **Taipei Economic and Cultural Center (TECC)** in New Delhi.
- The Indo-Taiwanese ties basically **focused on trade, commerce, culture, and education**.
- In recent times, after China's belligerence in **Galwan**, India has stepped up its relationship with Taiwan.
- The Indian government had handpicked diplomat to become its envoy in Taipei.
- Also, the ruling party's two MPs attended the swearing-in ceremony of Taiwan President through virtual mode.

### What is the Importance of Taiwan?

- Semiconductors are critical components that power electronics from computers and smartphones to brake sensors in cars. The production of chips involves a complex network of firms that design or make them, as well as those that supply the technology.
- The majority of semiconductors are produced in Taiwan and it dominates the outsourcing of semiconductor manufacturing.

## #THE DEVELOPED COUNTRY GOAL

Recently, the **Prime Minister** in his Independence Day Speech laid out **Panch Pran (Five Vows)** to be completed by 2047 when India celebrates 100 years of Independence, The first vow is for India to become a **Developed Country in the next 25 years**. The remaining pledges for 2047 are - **removing any sign of servility, pride in heritage, unity and fulfilling our duties**.



### What is a Developed Country?

- A **Developed Country** is industrialized, has a high quality of life, a **developed economy** and advanced technological infrastructure relative to less industrialized nations. Whereas developing countries are **those in the process of industrialisation or are pre-industrial and almost entirely agrarian**. The most common criteria for evaluating the degree of economic development are:
- **GDP: The Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**, or the monetary measure of all goods and services produced in a country in a year. Countries with a high GDP and **per capita income** (the amount of money earned per person) are considered developed.
- **Dominate Tertiary and Quaternary Sector:** The Countries in which the **tertiary** (companies that provide services such as entertainment, financial, and retailers) and **quaternary sectors of industry** (knowledge-based activities such as **information technology**, research, and development, as well as consulting services and education) dominate are described as developed.

- **Post-Industrial Economies:** Also, the developed countries generally have **more advanced post-industrial economies, meaning the service sector provides more wealth than the industrial sector.**

### Human Development Index:

- Other criteria are the scale of infrastructure, the general standard of living, and the **Human Development Index (HDI).**
- As the HDI focuses on indices for life expectancy and education and **does not take into account factors** such as **the net wealth per capita or the relative quality of goods in a country.**
- This is why even some of the most advanced countries, including the **G7 members** (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, the US, and the European Union) and others, do not do too well on HDI. That's why countries like

### Where Does India Stand?

- India is currently far behind both the developed countries, as well as some developing countries.
- **In terms of GDP, India is the sixth largest economy** but in the case of **per capita income**, India is **behind even Bangladesh.**
- Further, **China's per capita income is 5.5 times that of India, and the UK's is almost 33 times.**
- To map this inequality and match the scores of India and other countries we look at Human Development Index (HDI),
- India has performed fairly well.
- **The life expectancy at birth in India has gone from around 40 years in 1947 to around 70 years now.**
- India has also taken giant strides in education enrolment at all three levels — primary, secondary, and tertiary.
- To be called a developed country there is a **need to grow the per capita income as the people as a unit matters more.**
- The disparities in per capita income often show up in the overall quality of life in different countries.

## **#STRONGER CLIMATE TARGETS BY 2030**

Recently, India has enhanced its climate change targets for 2030. In **UNFCCC COP 26** at Glasgow in 2021, the Prime Minister of India had made a series of **new promises to strengthen climate action from India.**

### What are India's Revised Targets?

**Emission Intensity:** India is now committing itself to at least **45% reduction in emissions intensity of GDP (emissions per unit of GDP)** from 2005 levels. The existing target was a **33% - 35% reduction.**

**Electricity Generation:** India is also promising to ensure that at least **50% of installed electricity generation capacity in 2030** would be based on **non-fossil fuel-based sources.** This is an increase from the **existing 40% target.**

### **Other NDCs:**

- Increase **non-fossil energy capacity** to 500 GW (gigawatts) by 2030.
- Reduce the **total projected carbon emissions** by 1 billion tonnes (BT) by 2030.





- Achieve **net zero carbon** by 2070.

### What are India's Initiatives towards Climate Change?

#### Reforms in Transport Sector:

- India is accelerating its **e-mobility transition** with the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (**Hybrid & Electric Vehicles Scheme**).
- A voluntary **vehicle scrapping policy** to phase out old and unfit vehicles complements the existing schemes.

#### India's Support to EVs:

- India is among a handful of countries that support the **global EV30@30 campaign**, which aims for at least 30% new vehicle sales to be electric by 2030.
- India's advocacy of five elements for climate change "**Panchamrit**", at the **UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow** is a commitment to the same.

#### Role of Government Schemes:

- The **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana** has helped 88 million households to **shift from coal-based cooking fuels to LPG connections**.
- **Role of Industries in Low-Carbon Transition:**
- The **public and private sectors** in India are already playing a key role in **meeting the climate challenge**, helped by growing customer and investor awareness, as well as increasing regulatory and disclosure requirements.

**Hydrogen Energy Mission:** Focus on generation of hydrogen from green power resources.

### What are the Important Highlights of UNFCCC COP 26?

The **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties 26** was held in Glasgow, UK in 2021.

#### Minutes of the meeting:

- **New Global and Country Targets:** The Glasgow Summit has urged countries to consider **strengthening their 2030 targets by COP27 to be held in Egypt in 2022**.
- The summit targeted **global warming not to exceed +1.5°C** and got about 140 countries to announce target dates for bringing emissions down to net zero.
- The achievement is significant as in the Paris Agreement, the **developing countries did not agree to reduce emissions** but just the "emissions-intensity" of GDP.
- India has also **joined the consensus and announced its net-zero target of 2070**.
- **Glasgow Breakthrough Agenda:** A potentially important development which emerged out of COP26 (but outside the COP process) is the **Glasgow Breakthrough Agenda** endorsed by 42 countries (including India).

## #TREATY ON OCEAN BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Recently, the **United Nations** organised the Intergovernmental Conference to draft the first-ever treaty on the **Ocean's Biological Diversity to conserve marine diversity in the High Seas**.

The conference was held in **New York, USA**.

A series of conferences was set in motion in 2018 to draft **international legislation under the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in these areas.

### What are the Objectives of the New Treaty?

- The treaty seeks to address the **conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas of the ocean which are beyond the limits** of national maritime zones.
- It will also address marine genetic resources, including questions on benefit-sharing, measures such as area-based management tools, environmental impact assessments, and the **transfer of marine technology**.
- The agreement will be **deciding on the rights of companies that undertake exploration for biological resources in the high seas**.
- With advances in biotechnology and genetic engineering, several companies see potential in exotic microbes and other organisms – several of them undiscovered – that abide in the deep ocean and could be used for drugs, vaccines and a variety of commercial applications.
- Since marine life is **already reeling from the impact of industrial fishing**, climate change and other extractive industries, the treaty seeks to protect our global oceans.



### What are the High Seas?

- Countries can **protect or exploit waters under 200 nautical miles (370 kilometres)** to their shorelines, but **everything outside these 'exclusive economic zones' is considered international waters: the high seas**.
- The high seas **make up two-thirds of Earth's oceans**, providing 90% of its available habitat for life and **accounting for up to USD 16 billion a year in fisheries catch**.
- They are also **prime territory for the discovery of valuable mineral deposits**, potent pharmaceuticals and oil and gas reserves.
- International law identifies **four global commons namely:**
  - The High Seas, the Atmosphere, Antarctica, Outer Space.
- Global commons **refer to resource domains that lie outside the political reach** of any one nation.

## United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

- The 'Law of the Sea Treaty', formally known as the United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS) **was adopted in 1982** to establish jurisdictional limits over ocean areas.
- The convention defines **a distance of 12 nautical miles from the baseline as Territorial Sea limit and a distance of 200 nautical miles distance as Exclusive Economic Zone limit.**
- It provides for technology and wealth transfer from developed to underdeveloped nations and requires parties to implement regulations and laws to control marine pollution.
- India became a signatory to the UNCLOS in 1982.
- **UNCLOS created three new institutions:**
  - **International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea:** It is an independent judicial body established by UNCLOS to adjudicate disputes arising out of the convention.
  - **International Seabed Authority:** It is a UN body set up to regulate the exploration and exploitation of marine non-living resources of oceans in international waters.
  - **Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf:** It facilitates the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (the Convention) in respect of the establishment of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles.

## **#CEASEFIRE BETWEEN ISRAEL & PALESTINE**

- After three days of violence between Israel and Palestine, which resulted in killing of dozens of populations in both the countries, a ceasefire took place recently. Earlier this year as well, tensions flared up at **Jerusalem's al-Aqsa Mosque** between the **Palestinians and Israeli police.**
- These recurring clashes are part of the ongoing **Israeli-Palestinian conflict.**



## What do we know about the Recent Conflict?

### Reason for Conflict:

- **Israeli aircraft** pummelled targets (**Islamic Jihad Leaders**) in **Gaza**. In response, **Iran-backed Palestinian Jihad militant group** fired hundreds of rockets at Israel. Islamic Jihad has fewer fighters and supporters than **Hamas**.
- **Actions from Israel:** Israel launched its operation with a **strike on a leader of the Islamic Jihad**, and followed up on with **another targeted strike** on a second prominent leader.
- **Actions from Gaza:** As per the Israeli army, **militants in Gaza fired about 580 rockets toward Israel**. Israel had intercepted many of them, with two of those shot down being fired toward Jerusalem.
- **UNSC Meeting:** The **U.N. Security Council** scheduled an **emergency meeting** on the violence. **China**, which holds the council presidency for August 2022, scheduled the session in response to a request from the **United Arab Emirates, which represents Arab nations on the council, as well as China, France, Ireland and Norway.**

## What is Conflict between Israel and Palestine?

- **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**.

### Recent Developments:

- **Al-Aqsa Mosque & Sheikh Jarrah:** In May 2021, **Israeli armed forces attacked Al-Aqsa Mosque** in the **Haram esh-Sharif in Jerusalem**, ahead of a march by **Zionist nationalists** commemorating Israel's capture of the eastern half of the city in 1967. The threatened **eviction of dozens of Palestinian families in the East Jerusalem** neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah escalated the crisis further.
- **West Bank Settlement:** Israel's Supreme Court has rejected a petition **against the eviction of more than 1,000 Palestinian inhabitants** of a rural part of the occupied **West Bank in an area which Israel has designated for military exercises**. The judgment paved the way for the **demolition of eight small villages** in a rocky, arid area near Hebron known to **Palestinians as Masafer Yatta** and to **Israelis as the South Hebron Hills**.

### India's Stand on the Crisis:

- India in the recent years has been **following a dehyphenation policy between Israel and Palestine**.
- India's policy on the longest running conflict in the world **has gone from being unequivocally pro-Palestine** for the first four decades, to a **tense balancing act with its three-decade-old friendly ties with Israel**.
- In 2017, in an unprecedented move, **India's PM visited only Israel** and not Palestine.
- Then, the recent visit of the **Prime Minister to Palestine (2018)**, **Oman and the UAE** is again a continuation of similar policy.

## #AIRSPACE VIOLATION NEAR LAC

- Recently, India and China held a special round of military talks on **Air space Violations** at the **Chushul-Moldo border meeting point in Eastern Ladakh**.
- The talks were held against the backdrop of the **"provocative behaviour"** by Chinese fighters flying close to the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** often violating the 10-km no-fly zone Confidence Building Measure

### What is the Picture of India China Recent Conflicts?

- The **June 2020** clash in the Galwan Valley - fought with sticks and clubs, not guns - **was the first fatal confrontation between the two sides since 1975**.
- The most recent conflict was - in **January 2021** - left troops on both sides injured. It took place along the border in India's Sikkim state, which is **sandwiched between Bhutan and Nepal**.
- Lately, the Chinese have been **complaining about the IAF upgrading its capability to detect Chinese Air Force aircraft operating within the territory** controlled by them in the Tibet region.
- The two sides have been **able to resolve three friction points in eastern Ladakh** and are holding discussions to find solutions for the **Hot Springs** area also.
- The two have conducted 16 rounds of Corps commander-level talks to de-escalate the situation and tensions which began after the Chinese tried to alter the status quo on the LAC in 2020.



(CBM).

### What is Line of Actual Control?

- The Line of Actual Control (LAC) is **the demarcation that separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory**.
- LAC is different from the **Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan**:
- The LoC was designated so in 1972, following the **Shimla Agreement** between the two countries. **It is delineated on a map.**
- The **LAC, in contrast, is only a concept – it is not agreed upon by the two countries**, neither delineated on a map or demarcated on the ground.
- **Length of the LAC:** India considers the LAC to be 3,488 km long, while the Chinese consider it to be only around 2,000 km.

### Sectors across the LAC:

- **It is divided into three sectors:** the eastern sector which spans Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim (1346 km), the middle sector in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh (545 km), and the western sector in Ladakh (1597 km).
- The alignment of the LAC in the eastern sector is along the 1914 McMahon Line.
- The McMahon line marked out previously unclaimed/undefined borders between Britain and Tibet. The middle sector is the least disputed sector, while the western sector witnesses the highest transgressions between the two sides.

## #INNER-PARTY DEMOCRACY

Recently, **Boris Johnson (Former UK's Prime Minister)** has been ousted as leader of the **British Conservative Party** in a series of coups periodically mounted by the party's **Members of Parliament** against him. This calls for India to seriously consider empowering its elected representatives, to ensure accountability for party leadership.



### How are Members of Parliament elected in the United Kingdom?

**To become an MP** representing a main political party, a candidate must be **authorised** to do so by the **party's nominating officer**. They must then **win the most votes** in the constituency.

**They do not owe their nomination to the party leader**, but are selected by the **local constituency party**.

- The UK is divided into **650 areas called constituencies**.
- During an election, everyone eligible to cast a vote in a constituency selects one candidate to be their MP.
- The candidate who gets the most votes become the MP for that area until the next election.
- If an MP **dies or retires**, a **by-election** is held in that constituency to find a new MP for that area.
- At a general election, **all constituencies become vacant and a Member of Parliament is elected for each** from a list of candidates standing for election.
- General elections happen **every five years**.

### How are Members of Parliament elected in India?

- **Parliament of India** consists of two houses and members are elected for each one of them.

### Lok Sabha:

- It is also called **The House of the People. Election of Representative:** For electing representatives, each state is divided into **territorial constituencies**.
- Representatives are elected from **each constituency** using the **First-past-the-post system**, the candidate who secures the **majority of votes is declared elected**.
- **By the Union Territories (Direct Election to the House of the People) Act, 1965**, the members of Lok Sabha from the UTs are chosen by direct election.

### Rajya Sabha:

- It is also called **The Council of States**.
- **Election of Representative:** The representatives of states are elected by the **members of state legislative assemblies**.
- The representatives of each **Union Territory** in the Rajya Sabha are **indirectly elected by members of an electoral college specially constituted for the purpose**.
- Only three UTs (**Delhi, Puducherry and Jammu & Kashmir**) have representation in Rajya Sabha (others don't have enough population).
- **The members nominated by the President** are those who have special knowledge or practical experience in art, literature, science and social service.
- The rationale is to provide eminent persons a place in the house without going through elections.

### What Powers does an MP have in the UK against the Prime Minister?

- A Prime Minister **has to be able to maintain the confidence** of his ministers at all time to run a stable government.
- If there is a sense that the **leader is no longer acceptable to the country**, then a well-structured mechanism come **into action to protect the party's electoral gains** by providing fresh leadership.
- **Individual Conservative MPs** write to the **1922 Committee (which comprises backbench MPs, and looks out for their interests)** expressing that they have "**no confidence**" in their leader.
- If a numerical or percentage threshold (**15% of the party's MPs in the U.K.**) is breached, **an automatic leadership vote is triggered**, with the party leader **forced to seek a fresh mandate from the parliamentary party**.

### What Powers does an MP have in India against the Prime Minister?

#### **No Confidence Motion:**

A no-confidence motion **is a parliamentary motion** which is moved in the **Lok Sabha** against the **entire council of ministers**, stating that they are **no longer deemed fit to hold positions of responsibility due to their inadequacy in some respect or their failure to carry out their obligations**.

- No prior reason needs to be stated for its adoption in the Lok Sabha.
- A motion of "No Confidence Motion" against the Government can be introduced **only in the Lok Sabha under rule 198**.
- The Constitution of India **does not mention about either a Confidence or a No Confidence Motion**.
- Although, **Article 75** does specify that the Council of Ministers shall be **collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha**.
- A motion of No Confidence can be admitted when **a minimum of 50 members support the motion in the house**.
- The Speaker then, once satisfied that the motion is in order, will **ask the House if the motion can be adopted**.
- If the motion is passed in the house, the **Government is bound to vacate the office**.
- A no-confidence motion needs a majority vote to pass the House.
- **If individuals or parties abstain from voting**, those numbers will be **removed** from the overall strength of the House and then the majority will be taken into account.

## #INDIA-UK RELATIONSHIP

- Trade between **India and the UK** is expected to double by 2030 driven by the proposed **free trade pact**, investment in technology, diversification of **global supply chains** and ease of doing business, according to Britain Meets India (BMI) Report by Grant Thornton Bharat in partnership with **The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)**.
- **Business services** is the **top sector being eyed by the UK companies** in India, with **Maharashtra** the **leading investment destination** followed by **National Capital Region and Karnataka**.

### What do we know about the Proposed Free Trade Agreement?

- The proposed FTA is expected to **boost Indian exports in labour-intensive sectors** such as leather, textile, jewellery, processed agri-products and marine products, education, pharma, and health care.
- **The UK is likely to look at reducing tariffs on products** such as apples, UK-manufactured medical devices and machinery.
- UK companies also expect **India to take measures** to strengthen **data privacy and enforce contracts**.

### India's Trade with UK:

- The UK remained the **sixth largest investor in India**, with a cumulative investment of approximately **USD 31.92 billion during FY 2000-22**.
- This constituted around **5.4% of the total Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** into India.
- India's **trade in goods and services** with the UK amounted to **USD 31.34 billion in FY 2022**, as against USD 19.51 billion in 2015.
- 618 UK Companies have been identified in India, they together employ approximately **4.66 lakh people** and have a combined **turnover of Rs 3,634.9 billion**.

### What is a Free Trade Agreement?

- It is a **pact between two or more nations to reduce barriers** to imports and exports among them.
- Under a free trade policy, goods and services can be bought and sold across international borders **with little or no government tariffs, quotas, subsidies, or prohibitions** to inhibit their exchange.
- The concept of free trade is the **opposite of trade protectionism or economic isolationism**.

### India and FTAs:

- **India - Australia ECTA:** India will benefit from **preferential market access** provided by Australia on 100% of its tariff lines. India will be **offering preferential access to Australia on over 70%** of its tariff lines.

### What are other Trade Agreements signed by India?

- **India-UAE CEPA:** The **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** provides for an **institutional mechanism** to encourage and improve trade between the two countries. **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA)** between India and Mauritius. It is a **kind of free trade pact** that aims to provide an **institutional mechanism** to encourage and improve trade between the two countries. Under this agreement, **countries reduce or eliminate the duties on the products**. The countries also **relax** in the norms to promote the services trade.
- **South Asia Preferential Trading Agreement (SAPTA):** It is for **promoting trade amongst the member countries** which came into effect in 1995.
- **Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA):** Previously the **Bangkok Agreement**, it's a preferential tariff arrangement that aimed at **promoting intra-regional trade through the exchange of mutually agreed concessions** by member countries.

## #IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL TALKS

Recently, there has been a fresh round of talks over **Iran's nuclear programme** in Vienna to revive the 2015 nuclear deal which is also known as the **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)**. Officials from various countries including Iran were meeting for the first time since March 2022.

### What is the Iran Nuclear Deal?

- The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action aims to guarantee the civilian nature of Iran's nuclear programme in **exchange for a gradual lifting of sanctions**.
- Iran signed the agreement with the **five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council — the U.S., Russia, France, China, and the United Kingdom — as well as Germany and the European Union**.
- Under the deal, **Iran agreed to significantly cut its stores of centrifuges, enriched uranium and heavy-water**, all key components for nuclear weapons.
- Iran also agreed to implement a protocol that it would **allow inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** to access its nuclear sites to ensure Iran would not be able to develop nuclear weapons in secret.

**Opposing countries:** **Israel**, America's closest ally in the Middle East, strongly rejected the deal, and other countries like Iran's great regional rival **Saudi Arabia**, complained that they were not involved in the negotiations even though Iran's nuclear programme **posed security risks for every country in the region**.



### What is the significance of JCPOA for India?

- **Enhance regional connectivity:** Removing sanctions may revive **India's interest in the Chabahar port**, Bandar Abbas port, and other plans for regional connectivity. This would **further help India to neutralize the Chinese presence in Gwadar port**, Pakistan. Apart from Chabahar, **India's interest in the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC)**, which runs through Iran, and will improve connectivity with five Central Asian republics, may also get a boost.
- **Energy Security:** Due to the pressure linked to the **US Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)**, **India has to bring down oil imports to zero**. Restoration of ties between the US and Iran will **help India to procure cheap Iranian oil and aid in energy security**.



## #WHAT IS NEW START TREATY?

- Recently, Russia suspended United States of America's on-site inspections under **New START Treaty** with Washington due to Western sanctions and coronavirus infections.



### What is New START Treaty?

- New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty)** was the last remaining arms reduction pact between the former Cold War rivals and caps to 1,550 the number of nuclear warheads that can be deployed by **Russia and United States of America**.
- It entered into force on 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2011.
- It continues the bipartisan process of verifiably reducing U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear arsenals by limiting both sides to 700 strategic launchers and 1,550 operational warheads.
- Its duration was **for ten years** that is till 2021, but it was extended by five more years till 2026.

### What are the various Treaties signed Between USA & Russia?

- Strategic Arms Limitation Talks-1(SALT):** It began in 1969, Under the Interim Agreement, **both sides pledged not to construct new Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM)** silos, not to increase the size of existing ICBM silos significantly, and capped the number of **Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM)** launch tubes and SLBM-carrying submarines.
- Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty-1 (START):** Signed in 1991, the agreement required the destruction of excess delivery vehicles which was verified using an intrusive verification regime that involved on-site inspections, the regular exchange of information (including telemetry), and the use of national technical means (i.e., satellites).
- Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty-2:** Signed in 1993, called for reducing deployed strategic arsenals to 3,000-3,500 warheads and banned the deployment of destabilizing multiple-warhead land-based missiles.
- Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT):** Signed in 2004, under which the US and Russia reduced their strategic arsenals to 1,700-2,200 warheads each.
- Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START):** Signed in 2010, a **legally binding, verifiable agreement that limits each side to 1,550 strategic nuclear warheads deployed on 700 strategic delivery systems** (ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers) and limits deployed and nondeployed launchers to 800.

## #MARITIME SECURITY

Recently, **Sri Lanka's envoy in India** said India-Sri Lanka should build a **framework to discuss maritime concerns** like the **Chinese satellite and missile tracking ship, the Yuan Wang 5** in Hambantota Port.

### What is the need for Maritime Security in India?

- Maritime security **doesn't have a commonly agreed definition**. It classifies issues in the maritime domain comprising **national security, marine environment, economic development, and human security**. Besides the world's oceans, it also deals with **regional seas, territorial waters, rivers and ports**.

### What is Yuan Wang 5?

- **Yuan Wang 5:** It is a third-generation vessel of the **Yuan Wang series** that entered service in 2007. This series of ships include "space tracking ships involved in supporting the manned space programme".
- It has the ability to **track satellites and intercontinental missiles**.
- **Hambantota Port:** Hambantota International Port Group is a **Public Private Partnership** and a Strategic Development Project between the **Government of Sri Lanka and China Merchants Port Holdings (CMPort)**.
- This port was **given to China by Sri Lanka** on a 99-year lease after Sri Lanka failed to repay Chinese loans.
- It is seen as a case of Chinese "**debt trap**" Diplomacy.

### What are India's Initiatives for Maritime Security?

- **Security and Growth for All (SAGAR) Policy:** India's SAGAR policy is an integrated regional framework, unveiled by Indian Prime Minister during a visit to Mauritius in March 2015. The pillars of SAGAR are:
- India's role as a **net security provider in the Indian Ocean region (IOR)**.
- India would continue to **enhance the maritime security capacities and economic resilience** of friendly countries in IOR.
- A more integrated and cooperative focus on the future of the IOR, which would enhance the prospects for the sustainable development of all countries in the region.
- The primary responsibility for peace, stability and prosperity in the IOR would be on those "who live in this region".

### Mission SAGAR:

- Launched in May 2020, 'Mission Sagar' was India's initiative to deliver **Covid-19** related assistance to the countries in the Indian Ocean Littoral states. The countries included were **Maldives, Mauritius, Madagascar, Comoros and Seychelles**.
- Under 'Mission Sagar', the **Indian Navy has been deploying its ships to send medical and humanitarian aid** to the counties in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)** and beyond.
- **Abiding by the International Law:**
- India accepted an **United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** tribunal award on the maritime boundary arbitration between India and Bangladesh.
- It envisaged contributing a new impulse to effective international economic cooperation among the littoral states of the **Bay of Bengal (BIMSTEC)**.

## **#DEVASTATING FLOODS IN PAKISTAN**

India will be extending humanitarian assistance to Pakistan to deal with the **Devastating Flood** that occurred because of Pakistan's **Monster Monsoon**.

The climate crisis is the prime reason for the devastating scale of flooding in Pakistan, which has killed more than 1,000 people and affected 30 million.

### What is the Indian Assistance to Pakistan?

- The aid will be the first time since 2014 that India will be extending aid to Pakistan on account of a natural disaster.
- In the past, India **extended assistance to Pakistan for the floods in 2010**, and for the earthquake in



2005.

- **How has been the Bilateral Trade between India and Pakistan?**
- In 2021, Pakistan allowed the import of cotton and sugar from India, partially reversing a two-year old decision to suspend all trade with India. The decision to cancel trade was taken by the Pakistan government in August, 2019, days after the Indian government **amended Article 370 and reorganised Jammu and Kashmir**.
- Over the years, India has had a **trade surplus with Pakistan, with much less imports than exports** and trade has always been linked to politics.
- India's exports to Pakistan fell around 16% to USD 1.82 billion in 2016-17 as compared to 2015-16 after relations deteriorated **in the aftermath of the Uri terror attack and the Indian Army's surgical strikes** on militant launchpads in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in 2016.
- Despite continuing tensions, trade between the two countries **grew marginally in subsequent years**.

**ENSO:** The **El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO)** appears to be in its La Niña phase. "La Niña is behaving very strongly in some metrics and is a significant factor for enhancing monsoonal rains.

## #FALKLAND ISLAND

Recently, India extended support to **Argentina's campaign to restart international negotiation on the Falklands Territorial Issue**.

### Where is Falkland Island?

- Falkland Islands, also called **Malvinas Islands or Spanish Islas Malvinas**, internally self-governing overseas territory of the United Kingdom in the South Atlantic Ocean.
- It lies **about 300 miles northeast of the southern tip of South America** and a similar distance east of the Strait of Magellan.
- The capital and major town is **Stanley, on East Falkland**, there are also several scattered small settlements as well as a Royal Air Force base that is located at Mount Pleasant.
- The two main islands, **East Falkland and West Falkland, and about 200 smaller islands**.
- The government of the Falkland Islands **also administers the British overseas territory of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands**, including the Shag and Clerke rocks.



### What is the History of the Falkland Islands?

- The British, in 1765, were the **first to settle West Falkland**, but they were driven off in **1770 by the Spanish**, who had bought out the French settlement about 1767.
- The British outpost on West Falkland was restored in 1771 after threat of war, but then the British



withdrew from the island in 1774 for economic reasons, without renouncing their claim to the Falklands.

- Spain **maintained a settlement on East Falkland** (which it called Soledad Island) until 1811.
- **In 1820** the Argentina Government, which had **declared its independence from Spain in 1816**, **proclaimed** its sovereignty over the Falklands.
- In 1831 the **US warship destroyed the Argentine settlement on East Falkland** in reprisal for the arrest of three US ships that had been hunting seals in the area.
- **In early 1833**, a British force expelled the few remaining Argentine officials from the island without firing a shot. In 1841, a British civilian lieutenant governor was appointed for the Falklands, and by 1885 a British community of some 1,800 people on the islands was self-supporting.
- Argentina regularly protested Britain's occupation of the islands.
- **After World War II (1939-45)** the issue of sovereignty over the Falkland Islands shifted to the **United Nations (UN)** when, in 1964, the islands' status was debated by the UN committee on decolonization.
- In 1965, the UN General Assembly approved a resolution inviting Britain and Argentina to hold discussions to find a peaceful solution to the dispute.
- These protracted discussions were still proceeding in February 1982, but in April Argentina's military government invaded the Falklands. This act started the Falkland Islands War, which ended 10 weeks later with the surrender of the Argentine forces at Stanley to British troops who had forcibly reoccupied the islands.
- Although Britain and Argentina reestablished full diplomatic relations in 1990, the **issue of sovereignty remained a point of contention**.
- **In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain continued to maintain some 2,000 troops** on the islands.
- In January 2009 a new constitution came into effect that strengthened the Falklands' local democratic government and reserved for the islanders their right to determine the territory's political status. In a referendum held in March 2013, islanders voted nearly unanimously to remain a British overseas territory.

## #INDIA-IRAN PACT ON SEA-FARERS

- India and Iran signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to smoothen movement of seafarers from both the countries as per the provisions of **International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) for Seafarers (1978)**.

### What is the International Convention on STCW for Seafarers?

- It sets **qualification standards for masters, officers and watch personnel** on seagoing merchant ships.
- STCW was adopted in 1978 by a conference at the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** in London and entered into force in 1984. The Convention was **significantly amended in 1995**.
- The 1978 STCW Convention was the first to establish basic requirements on training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers on an international level.
- It prescribes **minimum standards relating to training, certification and watchkeeping** for seafarers which countries are obliged to meet or exceed.
- One especially important feature of the Convention is that it applies to ships of non-party States when visiting ports of States which are Parties to the Convention.

### How have been the India-Iran Relations?

- **India and Iran** share close civilizational ties since the times of the Persian Empire and Indian kingdoms. Iran is an important **nation in India's neighborhood and in fact, the two countries shared a border until India's partition** and independence in 1947.
- The "Tehran Declaration" signed during former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to Iran affirmed the **shared vision of the two countries for an "equitable, pluralistic and co-operative international order"**.
- It recognized the then Iranian President Mohammad Khatami's vision of a "dialogue among civilisations" as a paradigm of international relations based on principles of tolerance, pluralism and respect for diversity.

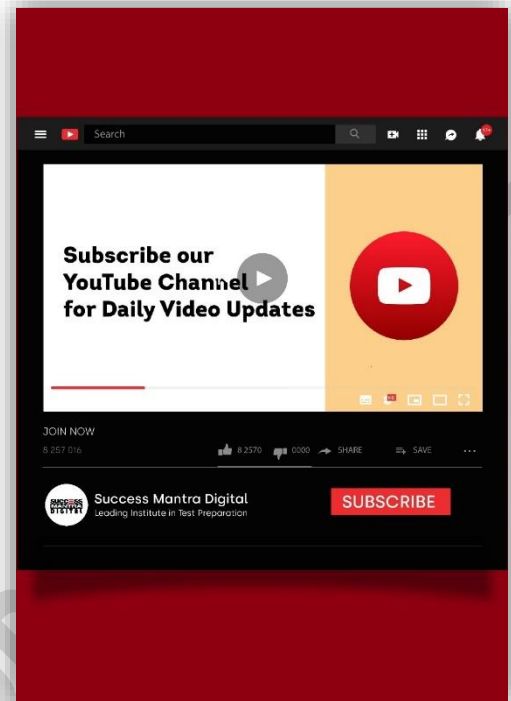


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