GSSCORE

An Institute for Civil Services

MAINS TEST SERIES 2023

GS MAINS Q&A

REVISION TEST - 10

(10 QUESTION)

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Complete Syllabus

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GS Q&A (Answer Writing) 2023

TEST - 68

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS REVISION TEST

Time Allowed: 90 Min. *Max. Marks: 125*

Section - A

1. **Island nations of the Indian Ocean hold immense strategic value in shaping the geopolitical contours of the region and ensuring maritime security of India. Discuss.**
2. **Is India's simultaneous membership of both QUAD and SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) a quest for multipolarity or a sign of ambiguity? Critically analyze.**
3. **The global order that led to the establishment of Bretton Woods institutions was different from what it is now. In the light of this statement, discuss why the reform in Bretton woods institutions is the need of the hour.**
4. **"India's cultural richness and the wide expanse of its spiritual knowledge and icons are important pillars of soft power diplomacy". Comment.**
5. **The Indian Diaspora plays a significant role in keeping India at the centre of global affairs. However, it can also be a source of polarization as evident by recent events. Analyse.**

Section - B

6. **The G20 Summit is not only a diplomatic event, but it is also an opportunity to showcase India's capability to the world. In view of this, discuss the opportunities and challenges of India's G-20 Presidency.**
7. **Over 60 years of friendship, both India and the EU have maintained robust strategic relations. However, in some critical areas, there is still room for enhanced cooperation. Analyse.**
8. **The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) has not lost any of its relevance, rather it has stood the test of time. Do you agree? Critically examine with reference to the relevance of NAM in present times.**
9. **Explaining the geopolitical significance of AUKUS, analyze the implications of this alliance for the Indo-Pacific region.**
10. **The Blue Dot Network (BDN) has provided a new angle to the current spree of global infrastructure development. Do you think that the BDN is an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)? Analyze the opportunity that it could offer to India.**

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS REVISION TEST

Section - A

1. Island nations of the Indian Ocean hold immense strategic value in shaping the geopolitical contours of the region and ensuring maritime security of India. Discuss.

Approach

1. ***The questions is based on geopolitical significance of Island nations of the Indian Ocean***
2. ***Briefly introduce by India's recent efforts to reach Island nations of the Indian Ocean.***
3. ***Mention the significance of island nations of Indian Ocean.***
4. ***Discuss their importance in shaping geopolitics and maintaining maritime security and order in the region.***
5. ***Conclude by mentioning measures taken by India in this regard***

Hints:

As a coastal and eminent naval power in the region, the island countries in Indian Ocean hold a place of special importance for India. This especially is true with China gaining in stature in these countries and challenging India's position in them. In recent past India has taken some steps counter China and increase its presence amongst the island countries of Indian Ocean, which include:

India has supplied hydroxyl chloroquine (HCQ) tablets as gifts to Mauritius and Seychelles on special Indian Air Force planes. India had deployed the navy's 5,600-tonne landing ship, INS Kesari, to reach medical teams, medicines and supplies to countries in the Indian Ocean region such as Maldives, Mauritius, Madagascar, Comoros and Seychelles. The two medical assistance teams on board the warship will be deployed in Mauritius and Comoros.

Significance of island nations of Indian Ocean:

- **Location:** Given that India is essentially a maritime nation centrally situated in Indian Ocean region with a long coastline of 7500 km and 1200 island territories, the island nations are our close neighbours.
- **Proximity to sea lines of communications (SLOCs)** for patrolling in times of peace and conflict, given that the region hosts 64 percent of the world's oil trade and movement of half of the world's carrier ships. Also, 90% of India's trade by volume and 90% of its oil imports are carried on the seas.
- Prevalence of transnational threats such as piracy along areas such as the Bab el Mandeb and the Somali coast and the need for multilateral cooperation.

Role of Indian Ocean island nations in shaping India's maritime security and geopolitics of the region:

- Sri Lanka and Maldives, being neighbours close to India hold special significance. In the past Hambantota project funded by China and subsequently leased to it had raised strategic concerns.

Similarly, the endorsement of BRI and Chinese influence by Maldives had complicated matters. However, India First policy of Maldives and trilateral maritime dialogue involving the three countries helps India address these concerns.

- Tackling prevalent and inherent maritime threats, both traditional and non-traditional, like terrorism, piracy, and illegal smuggling, climate change and rising sea level, increasing natural disasters and loss of livelihood requires India's close collaboration with this region.
- By allowing major powers to establish naval base, island nations exercise much greater strategic influence. For instance, China built its first Indian Ocean Naval Base in Djibouti in 2017. India has signed agreements for the development of Agalega and Assumption Island with Mauritius and Seychelles respectively.
- In the west of India, islands of Socotra (Yemen), Madagascar, Mauritius, and the Seychelles have gained strategic importance. For instance, Socotra is strategically located at the opening of Gulf of Aden, which connects the Suez Canal with Indian Ocean. Similarly, Mauritius is close to most important SLOCs and West Asian oil fields. The majority of FDI inflow to India comes from Mauritius. Seychelles holds rights to a 1.3 million square km EEZ, thus making it extremely important for commercial and strategic reasons.
- In South East Asia Andaman & Nicobar is positioned close to Malacca strait and helps India closely observe military and economic activities in the area. Thus, Comprehensive Defence Cooperation Agreement with Indonesia and possibility of developing the Sabang port provide significant influence to India to play key role in the emerging conception of the Indo-Pacific.

Conclusion:

The SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region), introduced by the Prime Minister in 2015 is a welcome step to focus on the blue economy. It is an increasing recognition of the increasing importance of maritime security, maritime commons and cooperation. Through SAGAR, India seeks to deepen economic and security cooperation with its maritime neighbours and assist in building their maritime security capabilities. China is a laggard when it comes to maintaining friendly relations which is an advantage for India. Rather than competing with China in terms of strength and power, India should continue a diplomatic and goodwill factor approach and must gain control over the Indian Ocean by the same means only.

2. Is India's simultaneous membership of both QUAD and SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) a quest for multipolarity or a sign of ambiguity? Critically analyze.

Approach

1. ***In introduction give a background of QUAD and SCO.***
2. ***Analyze the prospect and consequences of India's simultaneous membership of QUAD and SCO***
3. ***Conclude with balanced view***

Hints:

SCO (Shanghai cooperation organization) is an Intergovernmental Eurasian political, economic and military alliance in which India is admitted as full member state since 2017. On the other hand, QUAD (quadrilateral security dialogue) is a strategic dialogue between India, US, Japan and Australia. Idea of QUAD was first mooted by than Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007, however it didn't gain much traction than. QUAD is revived and revitalize in recent years with first summit level meeting of QUAD held in 2021.

Contradictions between QUAD and SCO:

- SCO mainly occupy India's continental neighborhood with China as its center while QUAD mainly deals with India's maritime neighborhood with Indo-Pacific as its center.

- Both the organizations also differ on issue of Taliban with SCO member are more receptive to acceptance of Taliban in international community while QUAD members are in favor of isolating Taliban.
- As member of SCO India took part in military exercise with countries like Pakistan and China while QUAD members take naval exercise like Malabar.

Analysis of India's simultaneous membership:

- Critics point out that with the hardening of anti-China stance of USA and deepening of Sino-Russian alliance, both the organizations will become increasingly antagonistic and India's simultaneous membership of both QUAD and SCO become untenable.
- However, another school of thought argues that India is not the only country which has joined contradictory alliances. Turkey is a member of both NATO and many grouping which include Russia and China.
- They further argue that India's simultaneous membership of QUAD and SCO should not be viewed as paradox rather as a strategy of hedging the bet in an increasingly multipolar world.

Conclusion:

Till date India has successfully balanced the contradiction of QUAD and SCO. However, with growing polarization on key questions like Taliban or freedom of navigation in South China sea it will be test of Indian diplomacy to maintain this balancing act. At the core of our foreign policy is the quest for strategic autonomy in decision making and we should use the membership of both the organizations to maximize our options and increase the maneuvering space for India in the region.

3. The global order that led to the establishment of Bretton Woods institutions was different from what it is now. In the light of this statement, discuss why the reform in Bretton woods institutions is the need of the hour.

Approach

1. ***The question requires analysis of Bretton woods institution in light of its relevance***
2. ***Contextually introduce with the Bretton woods institutions***
3. ***Compare the current challenges with the post-World War II***
4. ***Explain how by reforming the Bretton Woods institutions, we can address those challenges.***
5. ***Give a brief conclusion and suggestions.***

Hints:

The international economic system that emerged after the Bretton Woods conference of 1944, known as Bretton woods institutions became the most durable international arrangement devoted to economic openness. Seventy-fiveyears after the conference, however, global shifts in power, institutional gridlock, and populist backlash figure prominently in accounts predicting the system's demise, or no longer relevant and need urgent reforms.

Comparison of Challenges:

- The global economic system has changed in all its dimensions as compared to the time of there emergence.
- The global balance of power has shifted from the most powerful nations and now equally distributed to all nations.
- Governance is increasingly fragmented, frequently incoherent, often not formal, and where plurilateral and monoliteral solutions are replacing commitments to multilateralism.
- New models of economic development are embraced by rising powers that are less firmly committed to bedrock principles of economic openness and non-discrimination.

- The orthodoxy approach of Bretton woods institutions is no longer relevant in handling current global challenges of poverty, health and hunger.
- Bretton woods institutions failed to resolve the economic problems of borrowing countries.
- BWIs are incapable of effectively managing today's international financial system, in particular the instability and volatility of exchange rates and capital flows.
- The primary problem is basically the international capital flows without any international controls.
- Some analyst suggested that globalization has accentuated the crisis of development.

Reforms needed to be introduced:

- The IMF should work more transparently, it must manage and stabilize the international financial system.
- IMF should work on both aspects - crisis management and crisis prevention.
- IMF should ensures its accountability and answerability towards the general interest of the people, without which the improper funding cannot be curbed.
- The World Bank should widen its area of function, it should not remain a moneylender, but should more concerned with development, focused on development activities in poor countries.
- There should be an independent evaluator of Bank support projects and programmes to establish transparency and accountability.
- The response of the Bretton Woods institutions to helping refugees, mine clearance, reconstruction etc is inadequate or simply not forthcoming.
- The institutions need to develop an effective, efficient and robust system to take care simultaneously all complex humanitarian emergencies.

Conclusion:

Globalization has put a multidimensional effect on economics and politics, across the world, without effective international cooperation or a corresponding increase in governance that can regulate this market-driven process. Without effective international oversight, international problems will increase while international public goods will be undermined. An international mechanism for cooperation between nation states that requires coordinated action and facilitating cooperative behavior. Above all, it is necessary to create institutional mechanisms that give a voice to poor countries and their people in the process of global governance.

4. "India's cultural richness and the wide expanse of its spiritual knowledge and icons are important pillars of soft power diplomacy". Comment.

Approach

1. ***Define Soft power. Briefly introduce India's rich cultural diversity and spiritual traditions.***
2. ***Discuss the various components of our culture and heritage that gain significant attraction in various countries.***
3. ***Describe how India can leverage this soft power further.***
4. ***Suggest way forward***

Hints:

The term **'soft power'** was coined by neo-liberal academician **Joseph Nye** of Harvard University "to describe the ability to attract and co-opt rather than coerce, use force or give money as a means of persuasion." This depends on the attractiveness of one's culture, political values, and foreign policy. Soft power is part of "cultural diplomacy", i.e., using culture to create a favorable foreign policy

image for a country to expand its associations and its interests. India's diverse culture, its pulsating democracy, and a non-aligned foreign policy have been traditional pillars of its soft power. It is home to all major religions of the world.

Role of Cultural and Spiritual features in enhancing India's soft power

- **Buddhism:** India is the birthplace of Buddhism and cultures of East Asian and South-east Asian countries such as Cambodia, Vietnam, Japan, and Sri Lanka are heavily influenced by religion.
  - Buddhism is part of this historic contact, and there is a constant flow of pilgrims from the Southeast Asian countries to India even today
  - The introduction of **Buddhist Pilgrimage circuit**, a seven-day tour that covers at least six to seven Buddhist destinations will further cement this relationship
- **Yoga:** The UN Declaration of International Yoga Day on June 21, is a success of India's diplomatic efforts to spread yoga across the world.
  - Popularizing yoga in Europe and America is accredited to a few names like Paramhansa Yogananda, B. K. S. Iyengar, K. Pattabhi, and T. K. V. Desikachar.
  - The overwhelming number of yoga schools in America and Europe and many parts of Asia are a testimony to the popularity of India's rich cultural traditions.
  - Yoga is also a part of the curriculum of some educational institutions in Europe and America.
- **Islam and Sufism:** As a country with the second-largest population of Muslims, India could be an example of how Islam coexists with multiple religions, particularly for a battered West Asia.
  - Indian Muslims are heavily influenced by the syncretic Sufi culture. The dargahs of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti in Ajmer and Nizamduddin Auliya in Delhi attracts lakhs of visitors from worldwide.
  - Sufism reveals the tenets of Islam that need to be embraced to counter, delegitimize, and defeat terrorism.
- **Bollywood:** Recently the success of Bollywood movies like Dangal and 'Hindi Medium' in China has enhanced India's perception among the Chinese audience.
  - In addition to their popularity among the Indian diaspora from Nigeria and Senegal to Egypt and Russia, generations of non-Indians have grown up with Bollywood.
  - Indian cinema's early contacts with other regions made inroads into the Soviet Union, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and China
- **Others:** Dance forms such as Bharatnatyam, Kathak, and Odissi attracts dancers from all over the world

Enhancing our cultural diplomacy

The following steps could be taken to further enhance our cultural diplomacy.

- **Indian Cultural Services:** A cultural cadre which has high-profile career strategists recruited, trained and developed to nurture creativity with a global perspective could boost our cultural relations with other countries
- Documentation and promotion of historical ties in the lines of:
  - **Project Mausam**, which is to document the diversity of cultural, commercial and religious interactions in the Indian Ocean
- Boost **tourism** sector through circuits like the Buddhist circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Pilgrimage circuit, etc.

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- **Transnational Cooperation:** The transnational nature of the Buddhist Circuit necessitates a greater level of coordination between India and Nepal.
  - Embracing the opportunities presented by the North-South Economic Corridor of the countries of the Mekong region is crucial.
  - This will encourage travel to the north of Myanmar and to Southern China, which may, in turn, lead to more interest in neighbouring areas including India's northeast.
- Promote cultural movies emerging out of Bollywood

Way forward:

- India's older civilisational contacts with the countries of Southeast Asia form a shared cultural heritage that can aid in promising relations and sustain a common regional identity. At a global level, India's ancient culture of tolerance, diversity, and peace can be a model for creating harmony between competing nations and the different clashing cultures, ancient and modern, of the entire world.
- It is imperative that India expands its soft power and civilisational strength, both for national unity and to gain the proper place in the world for its magnificent heritage that can benefit all humanity. India has the cultural and civilizational depth to lead the world to a new era of peace and higher consciousness but needs further impetus in order to do so.
- Lastly, it must be realized that soft power comes up with its limitations. When it comes to major decisions at a global platform, hard power is the real deal-breaker. Countries like China and the US which wield significant hard power don't face the ire of global institutions even when they are violating global norms. Therefore, India should continue pushing its path to development and emerge as a greater military and economic power. At the same time, it should maintain its preference to wield soft power.

5. The Indian Diaspora plays a significant role in keeping India at the centre of global affairs. However, it can also be a source of polarization as evident by recent events. Analyse.

Approach

1. ***Give an estimate of Indian diaspora***
2. ***Discuss the significance of Indian Diaspora***
3. ***Mention the division in Diaspora with respect to domestic political discourse***
4. ***Conclude by suggesting way forward***

Hints:

Overseas Indians, collectively known as Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Overseas Citizen of India (OCIs), where Non-Resident Indians are Indian citizens who are not residents of India and Overseas Citizen of India are people of Indian birth or ancestry who live outside and also are not the citizens of Republic of India. According to a Ministry of External Affairs report, there are 32 million NRIs and OCIs residing outside India and overseas Indians comprise the world's largest overseas Diaspora. Indian Diaspora is a large source of remittances for us with Diaspora sending approx. $83 billion in 2019 making India largest recipient in the world. However, in recent times, breaking the traditional united image Indian Diaspora have shown signs of cleavage on issues of domestic politics.

Significance of Indian Diaspora:

- Indian Diaspora has come a long way to play a significant role in keeping India at the centre of global affairs.

- Traditionally Indian Diaspora in the west is seen as a carrier of brand India and they act as ambassador of our soft power. Growing popularity of Bollywood movies, Indian cuisines, Yoga in the west are seen as contribution of our diasporic community.
- Indian diaspora has also played crucial role in furthering India's strategic interest as exemplified by role played by Indian diaspora in Indo-US civil nuclear deal.
- Diaspora have also played a crucial role in bringing back latest technology, investment, best practices to India.
- The outflow of the Indian diaspora has positively transformed the perception of the world towards the India. The dominance of Indians in computer software, particularly in the Silicon Valley, has strengthened the image of India as a technology powerhouse and a source of quality human resources. Sundar Pichai, Satya Nadella, Indra Nooyi, Vinod Khosla, Deepak Chopra and many others have reached the highest echelons in their respective sectors.
- With focus on 'Make in India', Indian diaspora can be facilitated to contribute to the Indian development story by investing in the greenfield and brownfield projects, as well as, portfolio investments in India. Similarly, the Indian diaspora is expected to guide the policy-makers in the field of the Artificial Intelligence-driven industry which will create high-value jobs.

Diaspora and domestic politics:

- Protest in western capitals on issue of citizenship Amendment Act, farm laws etc. have divided the diaspora along the line of domestic politics.
- This trend is also reflected in political class where in USA breaking the bipartisan consensus on India, many law makers of Indian origin have supported resolution censoring India.
- Protest outside Indian embassy on issues of domestic politics have dented the traditional soft power image of India specially in west.
- "Referendum 2020" organized by groups like Sikhs for justice in western capitals has provide fuel to Pakistani propaganda on mistreatment of minorities in India.
- Pakistan has been known traditionally to mobilize its diaspora for domestic political purposes, a counter Indian mobilization and subsequent polarization can affect the credibility of our common narrative on key issues.

Conclusion:

Hence, need of the hour is of constant communication with the Diaspora to dispel any wrong notion regarding domestic politics and engage Diaspora constructively so that they can continue as the flag bearer of India around the world.

Section - B

6. The G20 Summit is not only a diplomatic event, but it is also an opportunity to showcase India's capability to the world. In view of this, discuss the opportunities and challenges of India's G-20 Presidency.

Approach

1. ***The question requires analysis of India's Presidency in G20***
2. ***Contextually introduce with India's G20 presidency***
3. ***Discuss the opportunities & challenges for India in G20 Presidency***
4. ***Conclude by suggesting way forward***

Hints:

The G20 presidency gives India an unprecedented opportunity to test its clout and credibility in tackling the fragmented global order. India has assumed the G20 presidency when the world is confronting various problems. The COVID-19 recovery and global economic stability will all continue to be part of the major discourse for 2023. While at the helm of framing the platform's priorities, however, New Delhi now has the chance to play an important role in shaping and strengthening global architecture and governance on all major international economic issues.

Opportunity for India in G20 presidency:

- **Bringing Russia towards discussion and diplomacy:** From a geopolitical perspective, India could take the opportunity to leverage its historical and amenable ties with Russia, and bring a more isolated Moscow to the discussion and diplomacy roundtable of over 200 G20 meetings to follow.
- **Path toward peace & reconciliation:** It could use its platform to address the Ukraine conflict, strategizing for peace and a path toward reconciliation as much as possible.
- **China's assertion & G20's credibility:** An assertive China, will test India's leadership and its ability to revive the G20's credibility in an otherwise declining era of multilateralism.
- **Raising voice for Global South:** India is also at the center of a troika of G20 presidencies — of Indonesia, India and Brazil, respectively — all of them emerging economies, thus, providing a greater voice for making the concerns of the "Global South" heard at a very crucial juncture for the international community.
- **Bridging gap between West and Global South:** This could be another anchor for India, bridging the gap between the West and the Global South on issues such as climate change, trade facilitation and health care resilience support.
- **Raising support for developing countries:** Whether at climate talks, negotiating for a fairer deal in terms of technological and financial support for developing countries; at the World Trade Organization, on issues related to lowering tariff and non-tariff barriers for vulnerable economies; or at the World Health Organization, for a patent waiver on COVID-19 vaccines, India has championed the cause of low-income nations in the past — and it could now do so again.
- **Chance to showcase democracy & diversity:** The G20 will also be a chance to showcase India, the largest Democracy in the world, its glory and diversity. It will also have an opportunity to show the member nations its new heights of excellence in areas ranging from economic progress to science and technology, space, innovation and start-ups.
- **Showcasing development to world:** G20 is crucial for India for the reason that this international forum brings under its umbrella all the five permanent members of the UNSC, all G7 members and all BRICS countries. This platform would help India to showcase its development and propose its models to the world as potential solutions.

Challenges for India in G20 presidency

- **Volatility of geopolitics & economic slowdown:** India's G20 (The Group of Twenty) Presidency inherits volatility of geopolitics coupled with a slowdown in global economic activity.
- **Challenges due to war on Ukraine:** The road ahead for India is full of challenges including the war on Ukraine and the Covid-19 pandemic threatening the global economy, which is experiencing disrupted supply chains, cost of living crisis, soaring energy prices and challenges to climate action.
- **Transboundary challenges:** Indian Presidency has to reconsider transboundary challenges to financing needs through Multilateral Development banks , which constitute a significant hurdle in addressing shared global economic challenges like global inflation, food and energy insecurity and macro-economic implications of climate change.

- **Post pandemic challenges:** Although India has been the voice of the Global South in multilateral platforms, setting their agenda and championing their cause in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic is challenging.
- The pandemic has worsened the economic conditions of these countries, deflected their focus from achieving sustainable development goals and exposed the gap in health system as distinguished from that of the developed countries. India has to address these issues using her experience and skills in digital inclusion, public health and pharmaceuticals, sustainable growth and development
- **Supply of fertilisers and food:** Supply of fertilizers and foods, another major policy challenge, is affected due to the Russia-Ukraine war and the following restrictive trade practices and high energy prices cutting off the supplies of Russian and Ukrainian nitrogen and potash from the global fertiliser markets.

Conclusion:

Under its presidency, India will have to navigate a delicate balance, overcoming partisan pressures from both sides to bridge the East-West conflict. And it will have to do so while carefully wading through issues central to its own strategic self-interests as well as those of the global community, creating an archetype for substantive talks, implementation and outcome for the G20 next year. Further, championing the virtue of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" — the world is one family — as its G20 theme, India needs to skillfully manage this disorderly family in the year ahead. And through this leadership role, it must give priority to a developmental agenda, while creating a blueprint for a faster, more resilient and inclusive global economic recovery.

7. Over 60 years of friendship, both India and the EU have maintained robust strategic relations. However, in some critical areas, there is still room for enhanced cooperation. Analyse.

Approach

1. ***Introduce by summarising the new EU-indo Pacific strategy.***
2. ***Elaborate the significance of the strategic partnerships.***
3. ***Enumerate the challenges and conclude with a positive note.***
4. ***Conclude with the way forward***

Hints:

India-EU relations date to the early 1960s, with India being amongst the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with the European Economic Community. A cooperation agreement signed in 1994 took the bilateral relationship beyond trade and economic cooperation. At the 5th India-EU Summit at The Hague in 2004, the relationship was upgraded to a 'Strategic Partnership'. The EU is a significant trade partner for India and the two sides have been attempting to negotiate a free trade deal since 2007. Indo-EU bilateral trade (excluding services trade) stood at US$104.3 billion in the financial year 2018-19.

EU-India strategic alignment:

India and the EU have a common interest in each other's security, prosperity and sustainable development. They can contribute jointly to a safer, cleaner and more stable world. The prospects of this strategic partnerships can be listed as follow:

- **Economic Ties:**
  - **Bilateral trade:** The EU is India's largest trading partner, while India is the EU's 9th largest trading partner. It is the second-largest destination for Indian exports after the United States.
  - **Investment:** The EU's share in foreign investment inflows to India has more than doubled from 8% to 18% in the last decade. This makes the EU an important foreign investor in India.

- **Defence & Security:** EU and India have instituted several mechanisms for greater cooperation on pressing security challenges like counterterrorism, maritime security, and nuclear non-proliferation.
- **Climate Change:** EU and India also underline their highest political commitment to the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC despite the US withdrawing from the same.
  - The EU and India also cooperate closely on the Clean Ganga initiative and deal with other water-related challenges in a coordinated manner.
- **Reducing dependence on China:** It is necessary for both sides as it is making them highly vulnerable to Chinese aggression.
- **Promotion of multilateralism:** Both sides are facing issues related to the US-China trade war and uncertainty of the US' policies. They have a common interest in avoiding a polarized world and developing a rules-based order.
- **Conformity over Indo-Pacific:** The Indo-Pacific is the main conduit for global trade and energy flows. Rule-based Indo-pacific is of everyone's interest with the EU no exception.
- **Nuclear energy:** The EU and India agreed on 29 September 2008 at the EU-India summit in Marseille, to expand their co-operation in the fields of nuclear energy and environmental protection and deepen their strategic partnership.

Critical areas which have room for enhanced cooperation

- **Deadlock over BTIA:** The negotiations for a Broad-based Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) were held between 2007 to 2013 but have remained dormant/suspended since then.
- **Brexit altercations:** In the longer term of balancing of global powers, a smaller Europe without the key military and economic force UK, is much weaker in the wake of an ambitious China and an increasingly protectionist US.
- **The EU primarily remains a trade bloc:** This has resulted in a lack of substantive agreements on matters such as regional security and connectivity.
- **Undue references to sovereign concerns:** The European Parliament was critical of both the Indian government's decision to scrap Jammu and Kashmir's special status in 2019 and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.
- **The Russian invasion of Ukraine:** India's stance over the Russian invasion of Ukraine may have disappointed EU but India's nuanced diplomacy has helped in preventing a unipolar centre of gravity in international politics.

Conclusion:

Notwithstanding the above challenges, the growing realities in EU-India relationship offers more than a foundation of mutual benefit rather it offers a strong commitment for reinforcing a rule-based order in the Indo-Pacific region. Democracy has also been a realm of strategic relations between them and working together they can collectively change the geo-political and economic dynamics of the new global order.

8. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) has not lost any of its relevance, rather it has stood the test of time. Do you agree? Critically examine with reference to the relevance of NAM in present times.

Approach

1. Briefly introduce the origin of NAM and its objectives.

2. ***Arguments describing the still held relevance of NAM and how it could be improved***
3. ***Critically place arguments describing how NAM has declined in relevance.***
4. ***Conclusion with the way forward***

Hints:

The Non-Aligned Movement is a forum of 120 countries that are not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. After the United Nations, it is the largest grouping of states worldwide. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was created and founded during the collapse of the colonial system and the independence struggles of the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America and other regions of the world and at the height of the Cold War.

It is argued that with the end of the Cold War, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) has lost its relevance and significance. However, even though NAM may not have the political, economic or military strength to successfully resist the powerful nations, it continue to live as the movement of the developing countries engaged in the pursuit of international peace, security, and development.

Significance of NAM in present times

- **Integral part of foreign policy:** NAM as foreign policy is very much relevant today. Many developing countries like India still follow NAM policy. The policy to avoid colonization and imperialism continues to remain valid for all small and developing countries.
- **Check on big power ambitions:** NAM constitutes 120 developing countries and act as a check on big power ambitions. It stood as a unifying force against the traditional foreign policy of great power and strictly restricts imperialism, nationalism and universalism.
- **Base of 'South-South' co-operation:** NAM acts as catalyst to foster the co-operation between South-South nations. It raises issues that are of major concern for the south countries .It initiate economic, political and social development corner to achieve desired results of moving from developing to developed nations.
- **Voice of developing nations:** NAM is emerging majority day by day. Each year its strength increases which act as force and give its members to put their point on internationals issues.
- **Alternative world power:** NAM with passage of time emerged as the alternative world power. With its strength and motive to democratize the international system proved its qualification as alternative world power which would promote equality and peace all over the world and even provide new dynamics to the existing world's politics.
- **Culture diversity and human rights:** NAM is the protector of human right and culture diversity. NAM always active to secure the human right of every nation and if found it being violated it stand for its protection.
- **Peaceful settlement of international disputes:** NAM since its foundation act as platform that protect the interest of developing countries .If disputes arises between developed and developing countries at any point of concerned topic then NAM act as platform which negotiate and conclude disputes peacefully securing the favorable decision for each member of nation.
- **Preservation of territorial integrity and sovereignty:** NAM proved it relevance with the ideal of preserving independence of every nation. This policy will survive long lasting till the time sovereign nation state exists irrespective of any periodical, marginal changes, in the existing system all over the world. It has repeated relevance in every stage till the concept of international relation exists So whether world is uni-polar, multi-polar, or bio-polar NAM as policy will grow stronger.

Declining Relevance of NAM in today's scenario

- **End of Cold War:** End of the Cold war and disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 proved to be a watershed in the evolution of NAM. NAM was forced to carve out a new role for itself as its initial objectives of de-colonisation and end of apartheid had been largely realized by then.

- **Reduced differences:** Rapid advance of globalisation, at least till the international financial and economic crisis in 2008 and the sovereign debt crisis in Europe in 2010, has significantly brought down economic and physical borders between the North and South.
- **Differing structures:** Members of the NAM are not united culturally or politically.
- **A strong relationship with big powers:** Several members of the grouping including India have been strengthening their engagement with the developed world to invite capital, technology, better management practices, larger markets etc to improve the economic conditions of their citizens
- **New regional and issue-based groupings:** The emergence of groups like International Solar Alliance, BRICS, RCEP, G20, etc., means that countries are collaborating at multilateral platforms based on emerging issues and common challenges.
- **Inadequacy in handling problems:** Only two countries of the Non-Aligned Conference of 1961, Cyprus and Ethiopia, supported India against China. No collective action was taken against external security threats or aggression against non-aligned nations, while the movement's record even in intra-non-aligned disputes such as Iran-Iraq, Indonesia-Malaysia or Libya-Chad was abysmal.

Conclusion:

Non-alignment in the post-Cold War era is still relevant and really means the freedom to choose a wide range of partners to cooperate with on different issues, to protect our national interests. Thus, while being non-aligned gives us the flexibility to choose our partners and partnerships, the Non-Aligned Movement has declined in relevance in today's world.

However, it is not the institutional relevance that is the most important feature of NAM. It is the principles it represents such as – issue-based alignment, democratization, using the group to tackle power asymmetry, mutual collaboration and cooperation and pursuing overall peace. It is these principles that need revitalization. As an institution that is an embodiment of these principles, NAM will always be relevant.

9. Explaining the geopolitical significance of AUKUS, analyze the implications of this alliance for the Indo-Pacific region.

Approach

1. ***Contextual Introduction of the AUKUS and India's Stand***
2. ***Geopolitical significance of AUKUS agreement***
3. ***The Implications of the AUKUS on the Partners ,Indo-Pacific/Quad and on the status of India***
4. ***Way Forward for India and conclusion***

Hints:

AUKUS is a trilateral security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, announced on 15 September 2021 for the Indo-Pacific region. Under the pact, the US and the UK will help Australia to acquire nuclear-powered submarines. The pact also includes cooperation on advanced cyber, artificial intelligence and autonomy, quantum technologies, undersea capabilities, hypersonic and counter-hypersonic, electronic warfare, innovation and information sharing. The pact will focus on military capability, separating it from the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance that also includes New Zealand and Canada. For India, any such dealing for the Indo-Pacific region has long-term implications.

Geopolitical significance of AUKUS agreement

- **Countering China:** the UK, WE, and Australia have announced a historic security pact in the Asia-Pacific, in what's seen as an effort to counter China, without naming it.

- **Nuclear Empowerment for Australia:** It will let Australia build nuclear-powered submarines for the first time, using technology provided by the US. With this Australia will join only six countries- the USA, the UK, China, Russia, India, and France with nuclear-propelled submarines.
- **Matter of Surprise:** The three nations are already allied to each other, in more ways than one, for instance, the US and UK are NATO allies, and Australia, New Zealand, and the US are linked by the ANZUS pact. All three are also members of the "Five Eyes" intelligence alliance.
- **The Question on the Quad:** The announcement places a question mark over the continuing relevance of this forum and its long-overdue actualization as there is the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) for the Indo-pacific realm.
- **Topographic Shift:** The high trust, high technology, and military partnership between the USA and the UK is now being extended to include Australia, leaving out other NATO allies of the USA, France, and Germany in particular. This signals that the geography of the global geopolitics is shifting from Europe to Asia, even as the topography shifts from primarily land-based to ocean-based defences.

The Implications of the AUKUS:

On the Partners:

- **Joint Alliance:** Under the AUKUS alliance, the three countries will enhance the development of joint capabilities and technology sharing, ensuring our people are kept safe from harm and reinforcing our shared goals.

  Deepen Security: AUKUS will foster deeper integration of security and defense-related science, technology, industrial bases, and supply chains.
- **Defense Partnership:** A landmark defence and security partnership has been agreed by the leaders of the UK, the United States, and Australia today which will protect and defend our shared interests in the Indo-Pacific.
- **The UKs Ambition:** AUKUS is a concrete articulation of the UKs ambition, made in the Integrated Review, to deepen defense, security, and foreign policy ties with like-minded allies across the globe.

On the Indo-Pacific/Quad:

- For the Quad, AUKUS should be a welcome move. The only inception of the Quad, unlike the AUKUS, is to arrange the world order with the open, inclusive, and progressive Indo-Pacific. Quad delineates the expansive geography of the region and is currently the name for a strategic vision shared by a number of States.
- The QUAD represents an implicit understanding between the four countries but there is no official military relationship between them. Moreover, the values of the Quad is not often specific; the core area it works are humanitarian relief, climate change, vaccination, coordination, trade, and technology, etc., which is very much different from the AUKUS.
- Although the strategic architecture of the region has only begun to take shape, AUKUS is unlikely to replace Quad or place it in the second tier in the Indo-Pacific. Having said so, it is also certain that any important Indo-Pacific initiative will substantively overlap with Quad.

On the status of India:

- India is central to the definition of the Indo-Pacific and the existence of the Quad. It is true that any sub grouping, or initiative that diminishes its position in the region is likely to suffer a serious erosion of relevance before long. But, India never wanted to be part of such an alliance. In this way, we can take the following outcomes for India:

- **Positive Implication:** The implication of the AUKUS is positive because it outsources a nuclear-propelled detente in the Indian Ocean. If AUKUS and China hold each other in military check, India would have more space and time to grow its economy in relative peace.
- **Negative Implication:** It is negative because it may marginalize Indias role.

Way Forward for India:

Harnessing AUKUSs Benefit:

- For India, the real success will come if it is able to help create, and lead trade and security groupings that harness AUKUSs benefits.
- The Quad set-up is open for further partnership among the nations in the Indo-Pacific; for instance, new partnerships may arise in the sectors, such as cyber security, Artificial Intelligence, Quantum technology, etc.
- The new configuration, *a 12-member Dodecahedron*, with a shared interest, and to some extent shared values could include India, the USA, post-Brexit UK, Canada, France, Australia, Singapore, Vietnam, South Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Japan.
- Moreover, Taiwan and South Korea can be brought into QUAD when assistance is needed in the field of semiconductors, electronics, telecommunication, or information technology.

Strengthening the Naval Capacity:

- India operates only one indigenously-built Submersible Ship Ballistic Missile Nuclear - INS Arihant after returning the Submersible Ship Nuclear - INS Chakra on lease from Russia.
- Following the AUKUS partnership, India may persuade France in a deal for procuring the nuclear attack submarines. It would fill up a huge gap in Indias naval capacity.
- It will also bolster India and France relationship for some good reasons as a part of regional security calculus.

Conclusion:

We are witnessing a rapid and profound restructuring of the global order. The AUKUS grouping is all set to fill the vacuum of not having a giant alliance in the Indo-Pacific region, and play a pivot role in ensuring peace, and stability in the region. Meanwhile, India can look forward to positive outcomes, while harnessing opportunities for mutual cooperation, economically as well as for ensuring security in the Indo-Pacific.

10. The Blue Dot Network (BDN) has provided a new angle to the current spree of global infrastructure development. Do you think that the BDN is an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)? Analyze the opportunity that it could offer to India.

Approach

1. ***Contextually introduce by mentioning about BDN***
2. ***Discuss how the BDA provides and alternative to BRI***
3. ***Write about the opportunity for India that it could provide***
4. ***Conclude with the way forward.***

Hints:

The Blue Dot Network (BDN) is a multi-stakeholder initiative formed by the United States, Japan, and Australia to provide assessment and certification of infrastructure development projects worldwide on measures of financial transparency, environmental sustainability, and impact on economic development, with the goal of mobilizing private capital to invest abroad.

It was initially led by the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), Japan Bank for International Cooperation, and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia. In June 2021, the Group of Seven (G7) announced the adoption of the Build Back Better World (B3W) initiative to counter China's BRI. Thereafter, the Blue Dot Network was co-opted into the B3W initiative.

Blue Dot Network may be a better alternative to BRI because of the following reasons:

- The BDN as it has come to be known, particularly as an alternative to the BRI, is increasingly pitting countries promoting the liberal order against the Chinese authoritarian order.
- Progressively countries have expressed concerns over the manner in which the BRI is pushing states into a debt trap, even as vulnerabilities are beginning to creep in over the limits of a country's strategic autonomy that can be impaired as a factor of the debt trap.
- The BDN looks at promoting investment in high-level infrastructure that is based on maintaining international standards, and seeks to enhance the governance towards the furthering of best practices while promoting open markets as the option to link these projects together.
    - The BDN looks at promoting investment in high-level infrastructure that is based on maintaining international standards, and seeks to enhance the governance towards the furthering of best practices while promoting open markets as the option to link these projects together.
    - This brings the focus more on the geo-economics of the region, as the Indo-Pacific is emerging as the core of the global rivalry between the US and its allies and China.
    - Increasingly as newer players are entering into the Indo-Pacific region with the aim to further the existing normative order, the space for addressing challenges in the region is providing the opportunity to explore newer areas of collaboration. The Blue Dot Network is emerging as one such area.
    - The core agenda of the Blue Dot Network is to assist smaller countries in developing quality infrastructure that would comply with international certification, particularly focusing on the need to promote transparency and openness related to the investments. This critically emphasised, by implication, which the BRI was not transparent and did not adhere to international certification standards.
    - Australia, a key economic partner of China, publicly pulled out of the BRI in April 2021 after the two countries saw a rapid decline in bilateral ties

Opportunity for India

According to analysts, the Blue Dot Network could offer a unique opportunity to India in the post-Galwan Valley scenario. New Delhi, which had largely positioned itself as an anti-BRI nation, could find the US-led initiative attractive and in sync with the QUAD concept.

- **Economic edge over China:** It might give India an economic edge over its rival, China, in the form of better quality infrastructural projects
- **India Plus BDN" Strengthens the Quad Process:** The BDN actually offers India a better opportunity to cooperate with its partners in the Quad to develop its strategies in consonance with countries with which it is closely aligned to promote the vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific
- **Enhances Indo Pacific strategy:** Under the aegis of its Act East Policy, India has revamped and restructured its Asia ties and Indo-Pacific outreach. Indian initiatives like Sagarmala, Project Mausam, the Cotton Route, and Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) can provide collaborative opportunities under BDN.
- There will be greater transparency and financial accountability when it comes to development projects India will undertake.

- The network will act as a globally recognized seal of approval for major infrastructure projects, which will drive home the message that these projects are not exploitative but sustainable

India is still rightly weighing its options as far as joining the BDN is concerned because:

- **Concerns with USA:** despite convergence on the BDN, important foreign policy decisions require due process. While the BRI is a national security and sovereignty threat to India, the US–India trade concerns are no simplistic ordeals either.
- India and the United States first need a common minimum program that outlines their mutually shared priorities on China and its BRI upon which New Delhi and Washington can hash out their differences.
- **Antagonizing China:** India, as an emerging power in the Indo-Pacific, must walk a fine line and must not adopt a blatant anti-China approach. At the same time, India must not appear to snub the United States by rejecting the BDN outright.

Conclusion:

The Blue Dot Network will provide countries with clear project standards. A country that joins the Blue Dot Network as a partner will boost its project capability efforts. Moreover, the BDN is made to counter the growing dependence of developing world on China and its infrastructure. Thus, it needs to be considered carefully, as it offers several regional benefits that are strategically significant to India.

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