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I. NATIONAL CURRENT EVENTS

1. RESERVATIONS

I. Parliament Passed the Constitution (124th Amendment) Bill, 2019, to Provide 10% quota in Education and Employment to Economically Weaker Sections in the General Category (January 9, 2019):

- On January 8, 2019, the Lok Sabha passed the Constitution (124th Amendment) Bill, 2019, allowing 10% quota in education and employment to economically weaker sections in the general category.
- The Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha with a majority of members (319) voting for it, and four against.
- Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said: "I request all to support the motion. The Bill is aimed at equality for all."
- On January 9, 2019, the Rajya Sabha passed the Bill with a majority of 165 against seven votes.
- The existing reservation to the SCs, STs and OBCs would not be touched by the amendment.
- Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the reservation would be applicable to jobs in both the Central and State Governments. The Bill gave powers to States to determine the economic criteria for identification of beneficiaries.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the passage of the Bill as a "landmark moment in our nation's history."
- "It is our endeavour to ensure that every poor person, irrespective of caste or creed, gets to lead a life of dignity, and gets access to all opportunities," according to Mr. Modi.

II. The Constitution (124th Amendment) Bill, 2019, became the Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act, 2019, after the President Gave his Assent (January 12, 2019):

- On January 12, 2019, the President Ram Nath Kovind gave his assent to the Constitution (124th Amendment) Bill, 2019.
- The Ministry of Law and Justice issued a notification about the Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act, 2019 receiving the Presidential assent.
- The Act amended Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution – ensuring Fundamental Rights to a citizen – by adding a clause that allows the State to make "special provision for the advancement of any economically weaker sections of citizens".
- These provisions would relate to "their admission to educational institutions, including private educational institutions, whether aided or unaided by the State, other than the minority educational institutions".
- The Act lays down that the reservation would be "in addition to the existing reservations and subject to a maximum of 10% of the total seats in each category".
- Amendment to Article 16 of the Constitution states, "Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any economically weaker sections of citizens other than the classes mentioned in clause (4), in addition to the existing reservations and subject to a maximum of 10% of the posts in each category."
- "If the Parliament is amending the Fundamental Rights under Article 368, there is no obligation to go to the State Vidhan Sabha. This was part of the Constitution, as framed by them in 1949 and 1950. That needs to be appreciated," the Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said.

III. The 10% Economic Reservation Quota Challenged in the Supreme Court:

- On January 25, 2019, the Supreme Court sought the government's response to petitions challenging the Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act, 2019, which provides 10% reservation in educational institutions and government jobs for those economically backward in the unreserved category.
- The petitions filed in the Supreme Court said that the Act violated the Basic Features of the Constitution.
- On February 8, 2019, the Supreme Court declined to stay the Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act, 2019, but agreed to an early hearing of the challenge to the law.

IV. Conclusion:

1. Arguments in Favour of Reservations in Education:

- Opens Opportunities to Classes Deprived of Education and Employment
- Merit Comes Through Education and Jobs
- Quotas aim at Creating a More Equal Society
- Empowering Downtrodden Groups Improve Quality of a Population as a Whole
- Imperative Need for Providing a Level Playing Field to the Deprived and Disadvantaged Sections
- Reservations are Significant in Making the Development Process More Inclusive
- Reservations Lead to Inter-Generation Mobility
- The Southern States and Parts of Western India with Caste-based Reservations have Fared Better than the Rest of the Country
- Reservations are Not Anti-Merit, They Empower Larger Sections of Society to Social and Economic Mobility
- Need for Better Facilities for Education Instead of Reservations in Higher Educational Institutions
- Reservation in IITs and IIMs would Hamper the Standard of Education
- Reservation will lead to Mediocrity Replacing Merit
- Reservations will Undermine India's Prospects of Becoming a Knowledge Economy
- Reservations Will Further Divide the Society Along Caste Lines Causing Damage to the Social Fabric
- Reservation has been Used as a Political Tool
- Reservation will Trigger De-secularisation of Society
- In the Last Fifty Years Reservations have Not Led to Any Significant Improvement in the Status of the SCs/STs

I.2. AADHAAR

I. Supreme Court Upheld the Validity of Linking PAN with Aadhaar for Filing Tax Returns (June 9, 2017):

- On June 9, 2017, the Supreme Court upheld the Validity of an Income Tax law amendment linking the Permanent Account Number (PAN) with Aadhaar for filing tax returns or making Aadhaar or Aadhaar enrolment slip compulsory to apply for a Permanent Account Number (PAN) card.
- The Supreme Court held that the proviso to Section 139AA (1) of the Income Tax Act requiring citizens to mention their Aadhaar number or at least their Aadhaar enrolment ID to the designated authority was “directly connected with the issue of duplicate/fake PANs.”
- The Supreme Court held that 139AA (1) was not violative of the right to trade and profession under Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution insofar as it mandates giving of Aadhaar enrolment number for applying for PAN cards in the income tax returns or notified Aadhaar number to the designated authorities.
- The Supreme Court also did not find Section 139AA discriminatory. It stressed that the Parliament was fully competent to enact Section 139AA and its authority to make this law was not diluted by the orders of the Supreme Court that Aadhaar was voluntary.
- The Supreme Court exempted assesseees who were not Aadhaar card holders from the ambit of the proviso to Section 139AA (2) which mandates that those who do not link Aadhaar with PAN by July 1, 2017, would face the consequences of invalidation of their PAN abinito – that is, the effect of non-compliance would be the automatic invalidation of their PAN as if it had never existed.
- The Supreme Court said that their PAN cards would not be treated as invalid for the time being till a Constitution Bench decides on the question whether the Aadhaar scheme is a violation of right to privacy and a limb of Article 21 (right to life and dignity) of the Constitution.

II. Supreme Court Upheld the Validity of the Aadhaar Act (September 26, 2018):

- On September 26, 2018, the Supreme Court upheld the validity of the Aadhaar Act but weeded out provisions which had potential for misuse.
- The five-judge Constitutional Bench upheld the Aadhaar legislation by a 4-1 majority.
- The Supreme Court upheld Aadhaar as a reasonable restriction on individual privacy that fulfils the government's “legitimate aim” to provide dignity to a large, marginalised population living in abject poverty.
- “The Constitution does not exist for a few or minority of the people of India, but ‘We the People’,”
- The majority view declared Aadhaar a “document of empowerment.” An “unparalleled” identity proof. A document that cannot be duplicated, unlike PAN, ration card and passport.
- “It is better to be unique than the best. The best makes you number one, but unique makes you the only one,”
- Technology had become a vital tool for ensuring good governance in a social welfare state. Schemes such as the PDS, scholarships, mid-day meals and LPG subsidies involve a large amount of money, and “foolproof” Aadhaar helped welfare reach the poor
- The Supreme Court upheld the passage of the Aadhaar Act as a Money Bill, pointing out that neither were individuals profiled nor their movements traced when Aadhaar was used to avail government benefits under Section of the Aadhaar Act, 2016.
- It was also pointed out that the statute only sought “minimal” biometric information, and this did not amount to invasion of privacy.

- Upheld the PAN-Aadhaar linkage, but linking Aadhaar with bank accounts and mobile SIM cards was declared unconstitutional.
- Aadhaar card was not necessary for children aged between six and 14 under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan as right to education was a fundamental right.
- Statutory bodies like the CBSE and UGC cannot ask students to produce their Aadhaar cards for examinations like the NEET and JEE.
- Permission of parents and guardians was a must before enrolling children into Aadhaar. Children could opt out of Aadhaar once they attained the age of majority, according to the Supreme Court.
- The Supreme Court directed the government and the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) to bring in regulations to prevent rightfully entitled people from being denied benefits.

III. Impact of the Supreme Court Judgement on Sections of the Aadhaar Act:

1. Sections Upheld:

- **Section 7:** Aadhaar mandatory to access social services, subsidies and other benefits.
- **Section 139AA (Income Tax Act):** Aadhaar number has to be quoted in new PAN application and for filing returns.

2. Sections Struck Down:

- **Section 33(2):** Identity and authentication data has to be disclosed if it is in the interest of national security
- **Section 47:** Courts shall not take cognizance of offence under the Act except on a complaint filed by the UIDAI
- **Section 57:** Aadhaar can be used to identify individual for any purpose by state or companies

3. Sections Read Down:

- **Section 33(1):** Identity, authentication records of individual have to be disclosed on the basis of court order by District Judge (or above).
- The Supreme Court ruled that individual should be given chance of a hearing.

IV. Implications for the use of Aadhaar:

1. Where Aadhaar is Required:

- PAN
- Filing of Income tax returns
- Access to government subsidies like LPG

2. Where the Requirement of Aadhaar is Probable:

- Passport application
- Driving licence

3. Where Aadhaar is Not Required:

- Phone connection
- Credit card
- Welfare schemes for children
- Company directors
- Mobile payment apps

- Pension
- School admission and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
- Mobile wallets
- Private companies salary account linking
- State government welfare schemes

V. Significance of the Supreme Court Judgement on Validity of the Aadhaar Act:

- The Central Government hailed the Supreme Court ruling with the Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad pointing out that it would boost good governance.
- The Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said, "That the concept and legislation of a unique identity number has been accepted after a judicial review is extremely welcome".
- Supreme Court, by upholding the Constitutional validity of Aadhaar and clarifying the areas in which it cannot be made mandatory, has restored the original intent of the programme – to plug leakages in subsidy schemes and to have better targeting of welfare benefits.
- Majority opinion of the Supreme Court favoured the continuance of Aadhaar for the sake of 99.76% of people included under it, rather than fret over the 0.232% who excluded because of authentication failure.
- The Supreme Court said that the remedy was to plug the loopholes rather than axe Aadhaar.
- With the enrolment of 1.2 billion people, Aadhaar had acquired a scale and momentum that was irreversible
- Majority opinion of the Supreme Court held that the Aadhaar Act passed the "triple test" laid down in 'Privacy' judgement under which there has to be a law, a legitimate state interest and an element of proportionality in any law that seeks to abridge the right to privacy.

UPDATE – PART-III

I. Parliament Passed the Aadhaar and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2019 (July 8, 2019):

- On July 8, 2019, Parliament cleared the Aadhaar and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2019 which allows voluntary use of Aadhaar as proof of identity to open bank accounts and get mobile phone connections.
- The Bill provides for a ₹1 crore penalty and a jail term for private entities violating provisions on Aadhaar data.
- The Rajya Sabha passed the Bill by a voice vote on July 8, 2019. The Lok Sabha cleared it on July 4, 2019.
- The Opposition questioned the government's "intentions" on clearing the Bill without first bringing in a law for data protection.
- Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad told the Rajya Sabha that the legislation on data protection was a "work in progress", and the government would bring in a comprehensive law after further consultations with the stakeholders.
- "Data sovereignty is important to us and it will not be compromised," Mr. Prasad said.
- India in future would become a centre of data refinery and the government was taking due precaution in constructing the data protection law because the world was looking at India to take the lead on the issue, Mr. Prasad said.
- "No core biometric information collected or created for this act shall be shared with anyone for any reason whatsoever," Mr. Prasad said.
- The only exception will be made for reasons of national security, Mr. Prasad said.

I.3. DECRIMINALISATION OF SECTION 377 OF IPC

I. Supreme Court Decriminalised Section 377 of the IPC to Recognise Sexual Rights of LGBTQ Community (September 6, 2018):

1. Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court Decriminalised Section 377 of the IPC:

- On September 6, 2018, a five-judge Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court led by the then Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, unanimously held that criminalisation of private consensual sexual conduct between adults of the same sex under Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was clearly unconstitutional.
- However, the Supreme Court held that Section 377 would apply to “unnatural” sexual acts like bestiality. Sexual act without consent continues to be a crime under Section 377.
- Section 377 discriminated against minority based solely on their sexual orientation. It violated the right of the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer) community to “equal citizenship and equal protection of laws”.
- The Supreme Court held that bodily autonomy was individualistic. Choice of a partner was part of the fundamental right to privacy.
- The Supreme Court set aside its 2013 judgement in the Suresh Koushal case.
- The Supreme Court said that “Section 377 assumes the characteristic of unreasonableness, for it becomes a weapon in the hands of the majority to seclude, exploit and harass the LGBT community.”
- “Bigoted and homophobic attitudes dehumanise. Section 377 is irrational, indefensible and manifestly arbitrary.”

2. Significance of Decriminalising Section 377 of the IPC by the Supreme Court:

- Decriminalisation of Section 377 of the IPC by the Supreme Court was a much-needed self-correction of a past judicial wrong committed against the LGBTQ community.
- The judgement by the Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court would become the foundation for members of the LGBTQ community to seek individual rights
- Message from the Supreme Court judgement decriminalising Section 377 of the IPC is that social morality cannot be above Constitutional morality.
- Defence of a person's rights – although one may not agree with that person – is the key to keep democracy alive.

I.4. NORTH-EAST

SUMMARY

I. Introduction:

1. Eight States Share only 2% of the Border with the Rest of the Country

2. 8% of the Area of the Country, 4% of India's Population

3. Diversity - 262 Tribes

4. Underdeveloped: The economic development of the region has suffered due to the following reasons:

- Isolation from the rest of the country.
- Primitive agricultural practices.
- Poor transport and other infrastructural facilities.
- Natural calamities.
- Lack of investment and political stability.

5. Insurgency One of the Prime Reasons for the Region's Backwardness

II. Digital North East Vision 2022 Launched (Guwahati, Assam, August 11, 2018):

- The 'Digital North East Vision 2022' was launched by Union Minister for Electronics and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad in Guwahati Assam on August 11, 2018.
- To boost connectivity in the northeastern States the Centre announced investments worth ₹10,000 crore in the region over the next four years to implement more than 400 projects.
- The Digital North East Vision 2022 identified eight thrust areas to increase connectivity, including telecom infrastructure, electronics manufacturing units, BPOs and cyber security, apart from promotion of digital innovations.
- "The success of Digital India lies in the successful implementation of Digital North East,"
- Majority of the projects would be implemented by the Department of Telecom. The Ministry of Electronics and IT was expected to fund projects to the tune of ₹1,397 crore, while the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region would spend ₹411 crore.
- The Union Home Ministry has committed investments of ₹53 crore. Private sector investments are expected to be about ₹70 crore.
- Special focus would be given to 8,621 unconnected villages in the region
- Mr. Prasad also inaugurated the first electronics manufacturing cluster in the northeastern region in Guwahati as part of the initiative.
- The number of seats provided for the region under the rural Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) scheme had also been doubled to 10,000

III. Centre Introduced a Constitution Amendment Bill in Rajya Sabha to Increase the Financial and Executive Powers of the 10 Autonomous Councils of the North East (February 6, 2019):

- On February 6, 2019, the Centre introduced the Constitution (125th Amendment) Bill 2019 in the Rajya Sabha to increase the financial and executive powers of the 10 Autonomous Councils in the Sixth Schedule areas of the northeast.
- The Constitution Amendment would impact one crore tribal people in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
- "The Cabinet approved the landmark amendment to Article 280 and Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. The most important part of these amendments is that these will significantly improve the financial resources and powers of the autonomous districts councils in Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura, fulfilling long standing aspirations of the tribal population in these northeastern States".
- "This will be a game changer, as it will substantially enhance the funds available to these local government institutions for undertaking development works in these tribal areas,"
- The Finance Commission would be mandated to recommend devolution of financial resources to the councils
- Currently, the autonomous councils are dependent on grants from Central Ministries and the State governments for specific projects.
- According to the proposed amendment, at least one-third of the seats would be reserved for women in the village and municipal councils in the Sixth Schedule areas of Assam, Mizoram and Tripura.
- The proposed Constitutional amendment also provides for transfer of additional 30 subjects to Karbi Anglong Autonomous Territorial Council and Dima Hasao Autonomous Territorial Council in Assam.

- The proposed Constitutional amendments provide for elected village municipal councils, ensuring democracy at the grass-roots level.

IV. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Visit to the North East (February 8-9, 2019):

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the northeastern States of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura during his two-day visit to the northeast on February 8-9, 2019.
- Mr. Modi dedicated projects worth more than ₹20,000 crore to Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura.
- "A new India can be built only when the northeast is developed"
- Mr. Modi laid the foundation of the Se La Tunnel that would provide all-weather connectivity to the Tawang Valley for civilians, as well as security forces, throughout the year. Mr. Modi also dedicated the 110-MW Pare Hydroelectric Plant to the nation.
- In Assam, the Prime Minister launched projects worth ₹18,000 crore for boosting infrastructure, connectivity and economic growth of the entire region.
- "Projects worth ₹14,000 crore have been completed in oil and natural gas sector apart from ongoing projects to the tune of ₹9,500 crore,"
- In Tripura, the Prime Minister dedicated to the nation the 23-km Garjee-Belonia Railway Line which would boost Tripura as a gateway to South and Southeast Asia. He also inaugurated the new complex of Tripura Institute of Technology.

V. Conclusion:

1. Strategic Importance of the North-East

2. Systematic Multi-Level Interaction

3. North-East Key to India's Economic and Foreign Policy:

- The North-East has the potential to play a key role in India's "Act East Policy" and in its relations with ASEAN.
- North-East can be opened up to ASEAN for trade, commerce and education.
- India also needs to invest in infrastructure with neighbouring countries to connect its North-eastern region with ASEAN through ports and international highways

4. Economic Development Key to Peace

5. Centre Needs to Put in Place Strategies to Settle the Insurgencies and Economically Integrate the Region with the Rest of India and Connect with East Asia

I.5. JAMMU & KASHMIR

I. Current Situation:

1. Pulwama Terrorist Attack - Suicide Bomb Attack on a CRPF Convoy by Pakistan-based JeM (February 14, 2019) (For Detailed Analysis Refer to the Article on Terrorism):

- On February 14, 2019, at least 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel were killed when a convoy in which they were travelling was attacked by a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) suicide bomber, who rammed his explosive-laden vehicle into one of the convoy's buses on the Srinagar-Jammu Highway.

- The suicide bombing in the Lethpora area of Pulwama district also critically injured at least eight jawans. About 2,500 personnel of the CRPF were travelling to the Valley at the time of the terror attack.
- This was the deadliest terror attack in terms of casualties in the last three decades of militancy in Jammu and Kashmir.
- Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh blamed the “Pakistan-based, Pakistan-backed” JeM for the “dastardly” attack.

2. The Jammu & Kashmir Administration Withdrew Security to Separatist Leaders (February 17, 2019):

- The Governor's administration in Jammu and Kashmir issued orders to withdraw all security personnel and government facilities provided to five separatist leaders in Kashmir.
- The move followed the Pulwama terror attack on the CRPF Convoy.

3. The Union Home Ministry Banned the Jammu & Kashmir-based group, Jamaat-i-Islami (JeI) (February 28, 2019):

- On February 28, 2019, the Union Home Ministry banned the Jammu and Kashmir-based group, Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI), as “an unlawful association” under Section 3 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.
- The government notification said the JeI “has been indulging in activities which are prejudicial to internal security and public order, and have the potential of disrupting the unity and integrity of the country.”

4. Union Cabinet Approved the Jammu & Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019 (February 28, 2019):

- On February 28, 2019, the Union Cabinet approved the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019 that would pave the way to extend reservations in jobs, promotions and education to people living 10 km from the International Border (IB) in Jammu.
- The benefits were earlier reserved only for people living 10 km beyond the Line of Control (LoC) and affected by shelling and firing from across the border.
- “People living along the IB in Jammu live under similar conditions as those along the LoC. They also face continuous shelling and firing from across the border. While the population along the LoC was getting reservation benefits, those along the IB were not. Through this ordinance the anomaly has been corrected. It has nothing to do with altering 35A or Article 370,” the Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satyapal Malik said.
- Mr. Malik pointed out that since the State was under President's rule, the ordinance had to be cleared by the Centre.
- An ordinance to implement the 10% reservation quota for the economically weaker sections, as passed by the Parliament in January 2019 was also cleared by the President.
- The Home Ministry said that the ordinance on reservation in Jammu and Kashmir would benefit around 36 lakh people in the State.
- The 77th Constitution Amendment of 1995, extending benefit to promotion to SCs and STs would now be applied to Jammu and Kashmir.

UPDATE – PART-III**I. Article 370 Withdrawn, Article 35A Scrapped and the State of Jammu and Kashmir divided into Two Union Territories (August 5, 2019):**

- On August 5, 2019, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government redefined the Centre's relationship with the State of Jammu and Kashmir through a three step process – Revocation of Article 35A, withdrawing Article 370 and moving the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill 2019 to split the State into two Union Territories.
- Union Home Minister Amit Shah introduced two special Resolutions to recommend that the President issue a notification rendering Article 370 inoperative, and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill 2019 creating the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh in the Rajya Sabha.
- The first Resolution informed the Rajya Sabha that the President had used his powers under Article 370 to fundamentally alter the provision, extending all Central laws, instruments and treaties to Kashmir. However, the altered Article 370 will remain in the statute book.
- The Home Minister said if the Union Territory model worked well, the government would consider giving Jammu and Kashmir the status of a State again and “no constitutional amendment would be required”.
- The Home Minister termed Article 370 discriminatory on the basis of gender, class, caste and place of origin. He pointed out that it was “temporary in the first place and it has to go in the larger interest of the people of the State”.
- Mr. Shah said that from 2004 to 2019, the Centre sent over ₹2,77,000 crore to the State, but it did not percolate to the masses. “There was no development in the State because of corruption. 370 stopped anti-corruption bodies to function in the State. A monopoly was there”.
- Mr. Shah said the Resolution for Repeal of Article 370 of the Constitution of India “would pass every legal scrutiny”.
- The Home Minister said this was a “new experiment” and everyone should support it.
- “Terrorism cannot end in the State till Article 370 or 35A continue. They are an obstacle to development. We want to embrace the Kashmiri youth. The move will bring development, tourism and industries to the State. These opportunities till now were controlled by only three families,”
- Anticipating law and order problems in the Valley, former Chief Ministers Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti were placed under house arrest and communication networks as well as Internet were shut down. Thousands of additional Central Security personnel were deployed.
- The Resolution and the Bill were passed by the Rajya Sabha on August 5, 2019 and the Lok Sabha on August 6, 2019.
- The government would not talk to the Hurriyat, but was ready to speak to the people of Kashmir.
- The security forces would not be moved out of the Valley until the situation became fully normal
- The Centre's decision did not impact in any way India's claim over Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), and the government would continue to press for it.

1. Article 35A Scrapped:

- Article 35A is a provision incorporated in the Constitution in 1954 through a Presidential Order, and not by Parliamentary debate.
- Article 35A protected the laws such as bar on outsiders buying property in the State of Jammu and Kashmir and women marrying non-Kashmiris losing their property rights. Non-permanent residents were also denied government employment, scholarships or other aid provided by the state

- The government revoked the 1954 Presidential proclamation through a gazette notification.
- The Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019 passed by the Rajya Sabha on August 5, 2019 and Lok Sabha on August 6, 2019 abolished the status of “permanent resident” granted by Article 35A introduced in the 1954 proclamation.

2. Article 370:

- Under Article 370, the State of Jammu and Kashmir had its own constitution and laws passed by Parliament were applicable to the State only with the State government's concurrence.
- The President was empowered to decide which provisions of the Indian Constitution would be applicable with States assent.
- These special measures could only be altered on the recommendation of the Sadar-i-Riyasat (on the advice of the Ministers Council) or by the 'Constituent Assembly'.
- To drastically alter Article 370, a few clauses were added to Article 367 on August 5, 2019 which contains “interpretations”: the reference to the 'Constituent Assembly' was amended to read 'Legislative Assembly of the State'. All references to the 'Sadar-i-Riyasat' will be construed as references to the Governor.
- President Ram Nath Kovind declared that all provisions of the Indian Constitution shall now apply to the State.
- The President's declaration as passed by both Houses of Parliament that “all clauses of Article 370 shall cease to be operative in the State of Jammu and Kashmir was notified in the Gazette of India.
- The President's declaration came into effect from August 6, 2019.

3. The Jammu and Kashmir Re-organisation Bill, 2019:

- The Jammu and Kashmir Re-organisation Bill, 2019 was passed in the Rajya Sabha 125-61 on August 5, 2019.
- The Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha 351-72 on August 6, 2019.
- The Bill splits the State into two Union Territories – Jammu and Kashmir (with Legislative Assembly) and Ladakh (without Legislative Assembly).
- Both Union Territories will have Lieutenant-governors.
- Four sitting Rajya Sabha members of the State will become Members of Parliament of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Five Lok Sabha seats will be allotted to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir
- The Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir will have 107 seats to be chosen through direct election.
- The 24 seats in PoK will be vacant.
- The Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir would legislate on items in the State List, except public order and police, as is the case for other Union Territories.
- Land ownership and employment will be open to all citizens of India.
- The Union Territory of Ladakh will be allotted one Lok Sabha seat.

II. India Briefed Members of the UN Security Council and Envoys on the Decision to End the Special Status to Jammu and Kashmir:

- The Ministry of External Affairs reached out to the member-states of the UN Security Council and briefed envoys on the decision to end the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The outreach was carried out on the basis of a request from members of the diplomatic community.
- Diplomats were informed that the Indian parliamentary move was aimed at ensuring “good governance, promoting social justice and ensuring economic development” in Jammu and Kashmir.

III. Implications of the Decision to End the Special Status of Jammu and Kashmir:

1. Positive Aspects:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi termed the passage of the Resolution abrogating special status to Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 of the Constitution and the Jammu and Kashmir Re-organisation Bill 2019 “a momentous occasion in our Parliamentary democracy”.
- Kashmiri Pandits who were displaced from the Valley in the 1990s, hailed the amendment of Article 370 of the Constitution as a “historic event”, and hoped it would pave the way for their return to the homeland with honour and dignity.
- Jammu and Kashmir will now have no separate flag or constitution. The tenure of the Legislative Assembly will be five years and not six and Indian Penal Code would replace Ranbir Penal Code.
- People from other States in India will be eligible to purchase land and properties in Jammu and Kashmir. Non-permanent residents can now permanently settle in Jammu and Kashmir.
- People from other States can now get government jobs and employment in companies and will also be eligible for scholarships in state-run educational institutions.
- The Right to Information (RTI) Act will now be applicable in Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Central Government believes that the change in Jammu and Kashmir's status would encourage private sector investment in the new Union Territory.
- Up till now the provisions of Articles 370 and 35A prevented business houses from purchasing land and hiring skilled manpower, according to officials.
- The change in administrative status would have a positive impact on the ease of doing business as it would give industry ownership of establishments and would encourage hiring
- “These decisions will allow any individual or business that operates as per the laws of Union of India, to freely operate, under the same rules of business, in the UTs of J&K and Ladakh,”

2. International Context:

- Government's decision to end the special status to Jammu and Kashmir also has implications in the international context with geo-strategic shifts likely in South Asia over the next few months.
- The US-Taliban talks in Doha, Qatar had yielded “great progress”, according to the US Special Representative Zalmay Khalilzad who visited India on August 7, 2019 to create greater consensus in favour of peace in Afghanistan.
- Implications of this peace agreement between the US and the Taliban will have repercussions across South Asia and West Asia.

- Pakistan looks at the Taliban as its strategic asset and would try to use it in Kashmir as was the case in the late 1980s when insurgency peaked, according to analysts.
- The outcome of the US-Taliban peace agreement would be the US disinterest in South Asia
- In this context it will be important for India to keep a firm grip on Kashmir

3. Criticism and Concerns:

- Opposition parties in the Lok Sabha questioned the Centre's right to alter the status quo in Jammu and Kashmir without consulting stakeholders.
- On August 6, 2019, the Congress Working Committee (CWC) said that the provision of Article 370 that accorded special powers to Jammu and Kashmir should have been "honoured" till it was amended constitutionally after due consultation.
- The Centre's decision to abrogate Article 370 triggered concerns in the North-Eastern States having similar constitutional safeguards.
- The Constitution bestows special provisions under Article 371A for Nagaland, Article 371B for Assam, Article 371C for Manipur, Article 371F for Sikkim and Article 371G for Mizoram.

IV. Highlights of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Address to the Nation (August 8, 2019):

- It was a historic move and a new beginning for Jammu and Kashmir as well as Ladakh.
- The Union Territory status for Jammu and Kashmir, from being a full State, was a "temporary" measure and at some point, Statehood would be restored. Ladakh would remain a Union Territory.
- "You will choose your representative who will emerge from among you. I have full faith that under this new arrangement, we will destroy terrorism and free Jammu and Kashmir."
- "Article 370 and Article 35A had only given terrorism, separatism, nepotism and massive corruption to Jammu and Kashmir. These articles have been used as a weapon by Pakistan."
- Disturbances over the last 30 years had ended up killing 42,000 innocent people.
- While the country took justifiable pride in its democratic process of law-making, many of these laws, including the Right to Education, the Minimum Wages Act and Acts to prevent atrocities on Dalits, were not applicable in the State in the past.
- Those who had settled in Jammu and Kashmir after Partition could only vote in the Lok Sabha elections and not in the Assembly or local bodies elections. With the reading down of Articles 370 and 35A, this was now over.

V. Pakistan's Reaction:

- "No unilateral step by the Government of India can change this disputed status, as enshrined in the United Nations Security Council resolutions. Nor will this ever be acceptable to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan. As a party to this international dispute, Pakistan will exercise all possible options to counter the illegal steps,"
- On August 7, 2019, Pakistan expelled the Indian High Commissioner and suspended bilateral trade in response to India's decision to end the special status to Jammu and Kashmir.
- "The Government of India has been told to withdraw its High Commissioner to Pakistan. The Indian government has also been informed that Pakistan will not be sending its High Commissioner-designate to India,"

- The decisions were taken at a National Security Committee (NSC) meeting chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan.
- The NSC also decided to review bilateral arrangements and take the Kashmir issue to the UN, including the Security Council
- Pakistan's Independence Day on August 14 would be observed in solidarity with Kashmiris.
- A joint parliamentary session of Pakistan's National Assembly also passed a resolution condemning India's "unilateral move" on Kashmir.
- The moves by Pakistan seem to be intended for domestic consumption including anti-India terror groups, which have been assured of Pakistan's support for the Kashmir cause.
- The moves by Pakistan could also be intended to create a spectre of an imminent military escalation to cause concern in the US administration to pressure India to start negotiations over Jammu and Kashmir with the US as a mediator

VI. India's Response:

- "The Government of India regrets the steps announced by Pakistan yesterday [on August 7] and would urge that country to review them so that normal channels of communication are preserved," India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement.
- Pakistan's actions were aimed at presenting an "alarmist picture to the world".
- The ending of the special status to Jammu and Kashmir was an internal matter of India, aimed at bringing development opportunities to the people there, Pakistan exploited the lack of development to generate disaffection and "to justify its cross-border terrorism"

VII. China's Reaction:

- "The recent unilateral revision of domestic laws by the Indian side continues to undermine China's territorial sovereignty, which is unacceptable and will not have any effect," China's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said.
- "The Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Bill 2019, introduced by the government in Parliament on 5 August, which proposes the formation of a new Union Territory of Ladakh, is an internal matter concerning the territory of India," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said.
- "India does not comment on the internal affairs of other countries and similarly expects other countries to do likewise,"
- "So far as the India-China boundary question is concerned, the two sides have agreed to a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement of the boundary question on the basis of the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of India-China Boundary Question. Pending such a settlement, both sides have agreed to maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas on the basis of the relevant agreements,"
- China claims parts of Ladakh – the Aksai Chin plateau – India and China have been negotiating over the Line of Actual Control along Ladakh.
- In 1963, Pakistan ceded around 6,000 sq.km from Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK) to China. This will now fall within the Union Territory of Ladakh.

I.6. LOKPAL

I. Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose Sworn-in as the First Lokpal (March 23, 2019):

- On March 23, 2019, President Ram Nath Kovind administered the oath of office to Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose as the first Lokpal of India.
- The 66-year-old Justice Ghose is a former Supreme Court Judge and was a serving member of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) when his name was announced for the post of the Lokpal chairperson, the country's anti-corruption ombudsman.
- **Selection Panel:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan and eminent jurist Mukul Rohatgi
- **Judicial Members of the Lokpal:** Former Justices of different High Courts – Justices Dilip B. Bhosale, Pradip Kumar Mohanty, Abhilasha Kumari – besides sitting Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court Ajay Kumar.
- **Non-Judicial Members:** Former first woman chief of Sashastra Seema Bal Archana Ramasundaram, ex-Maharashtra Chief Secretary Dinesh Kumar Jain, former IRS officer Mahendra Singh and Gujarat cadre ex-IAS officer Indrajeet Prasad Gautam.
- The salary and allowances of the Lokpal Chairman will be same as that of the Chief Justice of India.
- The members of the Lokpal will be paid salary and allowances same as that of Judge of the Supreme Court.

I.7. 17TH LOK SABHA ELECTIONS

I. 17th Lok Sabha Elections (April 11 to May 19, 2019):

1. General Information:

- On March 10, 2019, the Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora announced that elections to the 17th Lok Sabha would be conducted in seven phases across the country from April 11 to May 19.
- The counting of votes took place on May 23, 2019.
- The Model Code of Conduct came into effect immediately after the announcement of the schedule.
- The Election Commission (EC) introduced fresh measures to enhance the integrity of the electoral process and raise the accountability of campaigners.
- The Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Odisha were conducted simultaneously with the Lok Sabha elections.
- The election in 22 States and Union Territories was conducted in a single phase.
- Two-phase elections were held in Karnataka, Rajasthan, Manipur and Tripura.
- Three-phase elections were held in Assam and Chhattisgarh.
- Four-phase elections were held in Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Odisha.
- Five-phase elections were held in Jammu and Kashmir.
- Seven-phase elections were held in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

- **Number of Voters:** Increased to 900 million or 90 crore from 814.5 million in 2014
- **Service Electors:** 16.77 lakh
- **Overseas Electors:** 71,735
- **Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT):** For Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) a total of 17.4 lakh units were used for the first time at all stations.
- **Number of Lok Sabha Seats:** 543 (excluding two nominated members)
- **Number of Polling Stations:** 10.35 lakh, 10% higher than in 2014
- **Adult Franchise Enshrined in Article 326 of the Constitution:** Free, fair and peaceful elections are the foundation of a true democracy. The essence of elections in India is adult franchise enshrined in Article 326 of the Constitution.

2. Poll Expenditure:

- The ceiling for the Lok Sabha is Rs.70 lakh per candidate.
- The ceiling for Lok Sabha for smaller states was Rs.54 lakh.
- For Assembly elections the ceiling was increased to Rs.28 lakh.
- For smaller states the ceiling for Assembly elections was Rs.20 lakh.

3. Model Code of Conduct (MCC):

- The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) refers to a set of norms laid down by the Election Commission (EC), with consensus of political parties.
- The MCC is not statutory and spells out the norms for elections. Political parties, candidates and polling agents are expected to observe the norms, on matters like content of election manifestos, speeches and processions, to general conduct, in order to make the elections free and fair.
- On March 10, 2019, the Model Code of Conduct became operational with the announcement of announcement of the election schedule by the EC and remained in force till the election process was completed.
- The Model Code of Conduct bars Ministers from combining official visits with electioneering work.
- The MCC also bans the use of official machinery for electioneering and advertisements at the cost of the exchequer for partisan coverage of political news.
- There is a ban on announcement of financial grants or promise of roads and water supply.
- Transfer of officials is also banned.

4. Opinion Polls:

- Under the current law, the Election Commission (EC) has the powers to ban conduct of opinion polls 48 hours prior to voting.

5. Electoral System:

- **The First-Past-the-Post (FTPT) System in India:** India's electoral system is based on the First-Past-the-Post (FTPT) in which the winner is the candidate with most votes.

- **Alternative Model – the Proportional Representation (PR) System Followed in Most European Countries:** Analysts suggest that in a diverse democracy like India, the Proportional Representation (PR) system, followed by most European countries, could be tried.
- The PR system essentially entails voting for parties or social groups (instead of individuals), that get representation in proportion to their share of votes.
- The PR system could ensure adequate representation to the diverse groups in India, according to analysts.

6. Record Voter Turnout During the 17th Lok Sabha Elections:

- The 17th Lok Sabha elections witnessed a record voter turnout of 67.11%, according to the Election Commission.

7. None-Of-The-Above (NOTA):

- The percentage of votes for None-Of-The-Above (NOTA) option remained the unchanged from 2014.
- The NOTA percentage varied widely across States with a high of 2.08% in Assam and Bihar to 0.65% in Sikkim.

8. Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT):

- The Election Commission (EC) for the first time used 17.3 lakh units for the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT).
- Of the 71.3 lakh VVPATS, a physical count of 20,625 VVPAT slips was to be done after the Supreme Court ordered a tally of VVPATS in five polling stations instead of one in every assembly segment.
- On May 22, 2019, the EC rejected the demand of Opposition Parties for tallying the VVPAT slips in five polling booths in each Assembly segment with the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) prior to the vote count.
- The EC stated that the VVPAT counting sequence would remain as per the Supreme Court-approved guidelines.
- After the counting was over, it was found that there was not a single case of mismatch between the VVPAT slip and the EVM count, according to the Election Commission data.

II. Landslide Victory for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of Prime Minister Narendra Modi:

- On May 23, 2019, the counting for 542 of the 543 Lok Sabha Constituencies started. Elections in Vellore, Tamil Nadu, were cancelled by the Election Commission after a large amount of cash was seized during campaigning.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won 303 seats, 21 more than its tally of 282 in 2014. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by the BJP won 353 seats.
- The Congress won 52 seats eight more than its tally of 44 in 2014. The Congress-led United Progressive Alliance won 91 seats.
- The non-aligned political parties won 98 seats.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, re-elected with a bigger majority than in 2014, said his victory was a mandate from a new India and a victory for democracy and for an aspirational and inclusive country.

- Mr. Modi emphasised that the mandate laid the foundation for the 21st century India, where there would be only two castes. "The first of these castes would be the poor, and the second those who want to fight poverty."
- Mr. Modi promised that his government would respect the bounds placed by the Constitution.

III. Narendra Modi Sworn-in for a Second Term as the Prime Minister of India (May 30, 2019):

- On May 30, 2019, Narendra Modi took the oath of office as Prime Minister for the second time in a row at a grand swearing-in ceremony held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- At the glittering event, 57 Ministers were also sworn-in – 24 Cabinet Ministers, 9 Ministers of State with Independent Charge and 24 Ministers of State.
- The foreign leaders who attended Prime Minister Narendra Modi's swearing-in ceremony included the leaders from the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) grouping and the leaders from Mauritius and Kyrgyz Republic.
- The foreign leaders included Bangladesh President Mohammed Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister of Mauritius Pravin Jugnauth, Prime Minister of Bhutan Lotay Tshering, President of Myanmar U. Win Myint, President of Sri Lanka Maithripala Sirisena and President of Kyrgyz Republic Sooronbay Jeenbekov.

IV. Portfolios of Cabinet Ministers:

- Narendra Modi – Prime Minister; Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pension; Department of Atomic Energy; Department of Space; and all other portfolios not allocated to any Minister.
- Amit Shah – Home Affairs
- Rajnath Singh – Defence
- Nirmala Sitharaman – Finance and Corporate Affairs
- S. Jaishankar – External Affairs
- Nitin Gadkari – Road Transport and Highways & Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
- Piyush Goyal – Railways & Commerce and Industry
- Ravi Shankar Prasad – Law and Justice; Communications & Electronics and Information Technology
- Prakash Javadekar – Environment, Forest and Climate Change & Information and Broadcasting
- Ramesh Pokhriyal – Human Resource Development
- Smriti Irani – Women and Child Development & Textiles
- Harsh Vardhan – Health and Family Welfare; Science and Technology & Earth Sciences
- Narendra Singh Tomar – Agriculture and Farmers Welfare; Rural Development & Panchayati Raj
- Ram Vilas Paswan – Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
- Dharmendra Pradhan – Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel
- Mahendra Nath Pandey – Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
- Arvind Sawant – Heavy Industries and Public Enterprise

I.8. NAGALAND

I. Nagaland Sets up the Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland:

- On June 29, 2019, Nagaland Home Commissioner R. Ramakrishan issued a notification for the setting up of the Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland (RIIN).
- The RIIN is aimed at preparing a master list of all indigenous peoples and checking the issuance of fake indigenous inhabitant certificates.
- The RIIN will be prepared after an extensive survey with the help of a village-wise and ward-wise list of indigenous inhabitants based on official records
- It will be prepared under the supervision of each district administration.
- The RIIN exercise was launched on July 11, 2019 with designated teams surveying people living in every village and urban ward to prepare a list of indigenous inhabitants who would be provided a certificate.
- The Home Commissioner of Nagaland said the concerns and observations of different sections were a welcome development.
- “The State government is of the opinion that the present exercises are new initiatives and need consultations with participation from all stakeholders,”
- The decision followed the remarks from organisations like the Naga Hoho, the apex body of all Nagaland’s tribes, that the RIIN was premature and could have serious ramifications.
- Other groups including the Naga Students’ Federation said the survey should be restricted to non-locals.

II. Nagaland Declared a “Disturbed Area”, AFSPA Extended for Six Months (June 30, 2019):

- On June 30, 2019, Nagaland was declared a “disturbed area” for another six months under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) which empowers the security forces to conduct operations anywhere and arrest anyone without prior notice.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs issued a notification saying that the Centre was of the opinion that the State was in a “disturbed and dangerous condition” and the use of armed forces in aid of the civil power was necessary.”
- “Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 3 of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1959 (No.28 of 1958) the central government hereby declares that the whole of the said State to be a ‘disturbed area’ for a period of six months with effect from 30 June 2019, for the purpose of that Act,” the notification said.

I.9. NIA AMENDMENT BILL, 2019

I. Highlights of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Amendment Bill, 2019 Passed by the Lok Sabha (July 15, 2019):

- Empowers the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to probe terror attacks targeting Indians, Indian interests on foreign soil.
- Allows NIA to probe cybercrimes and cases of human trafficking
- Allows the Centre and States to designate sessions courts as special courts for trial
- Seeks to empower NIA to carry out searches in a State without DGP’s consent.

- “Just like the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI of the US) assisted Indian agencies in the aftermath of the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, the NIA will henceforth be able to offer investigative assistance to the senior leadership of the host country and its law enforcement agencies. Over the last one decade, there have been quite a few instances wherein Indians or Indian interests have been targeted on foreign soil,” according to an NIA official.
- “Now like the FBI investigated transnational crimes, NIA too will be able to probe incidents of terrorism targeting our citizens and assets abroad,”
- “With terrorism transcending borders, there is a need to have enabling legislation for the law enforcement agencies to fight and investigate all such cases not only in India but elsewhere with active cooperation of member countries with whom we have a close rapport and mutual agreements,” according to the former DGP of Jammu and Kashmir K. Rajendra.
- The NIA Amendment Bill 2019 was passed by the Lok Sabha with 278 in favour of the Bill and six against it.

I.10. UAPA AMENDMENT BILL, 2019

I. Highlights of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019 Passed by the Parliament (August 2, 2019):

- The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019, amends the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.
- Under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, the Central Government may designate an organisation as a terrorist organisation if it: (i) commits or participates in acts of terrorism, (ii) prepares for terrorism, (iii) promotes terrorism, or (iv) is involved in terrorism.
- The UAPA Amendment Bill, 2019 additionally empowers the Government to designate individuals as terrorists on the same grounds.
- The Bill empowers the Director General of NIA to grant approval of seizure or attachment of property when the case is investigated by the said agency.
- The Bill also empowers an “officer of the rank of Inspector of NIA to investigate the offences under Chapter IV and Chapter VI”.
- The Amendment to UAPA would enable the Government to declare top terrorists like Hafiz Saeed and Masood Azhar, already designated as global terrorists by UN, as ‘individual terrorists’.
- Listing of an individual as ‘terrorist’ helps in imposing travel ban, restrict access to funds and other amenities.
- Banning of individuals as terrorists under UAPA will add weight to India’s request to other countries to designate them on similar lines.
- The UAPA Amendment Bill, 2019 was passed by the Lok Sabha on July 24, 2019 and the Rajya Sabha on August 2, 2019.
- Union Home Minister Amit Shah said gathering evidence against terrorists was a complex process, and the law would help security agencies remain two steps ahead of them.
- Mr. Shah said that it was important to identify terrorists and not just organisations.
- The Home Minister assured the Rajya Sabha that no one’s human rights would be violated as a four-stage scrutiny with provision for appeals had been prescribed when individuals are declared terrorists.
- All countries had laws to designate individuals as terrorists, according to Mr. Shah.

I.11. PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2019
I. Highlights of the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2019 by the Parliament (July 22, 2019):

- The Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill 2019 amends the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 to include the provision that apart from a former Chief Justice of India (CJI), a former Supreme Court judge can be the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).
- Increases the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) members from two to three, one of which will be a woman.
- The Bill expedites the process of appointment of Chairperson and members of the NHRC and provides for, among others, including the chairpersons of the National Commission for Backward Classes, the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights and Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities as members of the NHRC.
- On July 19, 2019, the Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said in the Lok Sabha that the government was sensitive to the rights of humanity and was committed to strengthening the NHRC.
- “With this Bill, every section of society has now received representation. We are a government that stands for the human rights of victims not of terrorists and perpetrators of sexual crime. The amendment will ensure transparency in the appointment of chairman and members of the commission and will help fill all the vacancies.
- The Chairperson of NHRC is appointed by a Committee which includes the Prime Minister and Opposition leaders of both Houses, according to the Union Home Minister Amit Shah.
- The Bill was passed by a voice vote in the Lok Sabha on July 19, 2019 and the Rajya Sabha on July 22, 2019.

I.12. RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT
I. Highlights of the Right to Information (Amendment) Bill, 2019 Passed by the Parliament (July 25, 2019):

- The Bill seeks to change the status of the Information Commissioners who are on par with the Election Commissioners, and states that the term of office, salaries, allowances and other terms and conditions shall be “as prescribed by the Central Government”.
- “The functions being carried out by the Election Commission and the Central and State Information Commissions are totally different. The Election Commission of India is a constitutional body....On the other hand, Central Information Commission and State Information Commissions are statutory bodies established under the Right to Information Act, 2005.”
- The Bill aimed at institutionalisation and streamlining of the RTI Act, according to the Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Jitendra Singh.
- The Bill strengthened the overall RTI structure, corrected anomalies and was an enabling legislation for administration
- The Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha on July 22, 2019 and the Rajya Sabha cleared it on July 25, 2019.
- The Opposition staged a walkout during the vote on its motion to send the legislation for scrutiny by a Select Committee. The Opposition motion was defeated 75 to 117 in favour of the government.
- “The amendment was brought without any motivation and in good faith. It will lead to institutionalisation of the Information Commission and will strengthen the provision of RTI Act,”

II. INDIAN ECONOMY

II.1. UNION BUDGET 2019-20

SUMMARY

I. Union Budget 2018-19 – Vision for the Decade:

1. Building physical and social infrastructure
2. Digital India reaching every sector of the economy
3. Pollution free India with green Mother Earth and Blue Skies
4. Make in India with particular emphasis on MSMEs, Start-ups, defence manufacturing, automobiles, electronics, fabs and batteries, and medical devices
5. Water, water management, clean Rivers
6. Blue Economy
7. Space Programmes, Gaganyaan, Chandrayaan and Satellite programmes
8. Self-sufficiency and export of food-grains, pulses, oilseeds, fruits and vegetables
9. Healthy society – Ayushman Bharat, well-nourished women & children, Safety of civilians
10. Team India with Jan Bhagidari, Minimum Government Maximum Governance

II. Impact of the Union Budget 2019-20 on Different Sectors:

1. Economy:

- Push for Make in India by increasing a number of import duties
- FDI relaxation, Make in India convey a strong signal to investors
- Infrastructure boost through private investment and more financing options

2. Taxpayers:

- Higher surcharge on super rich – 39% tax for ₹2-5 crore, 42.7% for over ₹5 crore
- Affordable housing loans get ₹1.5 lakh extra interest rebate
- Threshold for applicability of lower corporate tax rate of 25% increased from ₹250 crore to ₹400 crore; 99.3% companies covered

3. Consumers:

- Petrol and diesel costlier by ₹2 per litre on higher duties
- Gold and Silver costlier as customs duty increased from 10% to 12.5%
- Goods and Services Tax (GST) on electrical vehicles reduced to 5%. Additional income tax deduction of ₹1.5 lakh on interest loans taken to buy electric vehicles

4. Investors:

- Share supply to increase sharply with higher public holding rule
- New tax to discourage firms from share buyback
- Investments in Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE), Exchange Traded Funds (ETF) becomes attractive with 80C benefit

5. Startups:

- Relief from Angel tax for startups that submit all declarations
- Boost for digital payments as charges abolished for buyers
- Wider category of Venture Capital (VC), Price-to-Earnings Ratio (PEs) and others eligible for tax benefits

III. Implications of the Union Budget 2019-20:

A. Positive Aspects of the Union Budget 2019-20:

- 1. Budget for 'New India', 'Citizen-friendly, Development-friendly, and Future-oriented'**
- 2. Budget lays out the Strategic Building Blocks for Each Sector of the Economy to move towards the Goal of a \$5 Trillion Economy**
- 3. Budget Provides Measures for Improving Investments Particularly in the Infrastructure Sector**
- 4. The Budget Emphasis is on Social Welfare with Focus on Rural India, Urban Transformation and Women Empowerment**
- 5. Budget Incorporated a Number of Positive Tax Reforms**
- 6. Balanced Budget Aiming towards Inclusive Growth with Fiscal Prudence**
- 7. Reforms in Agriculture with New Infrastructure and Institutional Support will Help in Transforming Agriculture**
- 8. Growth Oriented Budget Seeks to Transform the Economy with Thrust on Investment and Job Creation**
- 9. Holistic and Aspirational Budget Aiming to Expand the Economy based on Inclusive Economic Growth**

B. Criticism of the Union Budget 2019-20:

- 1. 'Insidid' Budget Burdens Common Man**
- 2. Reduction in Allocation for Education and Health**
- 3. Opportunity Missed to take Bold Decisions on Revive Private Sector Investment, Simplifying the GST Regime and Announcing a Roadmap to Support the Ayushman Bharat**
- 4. The Budget focus on Fast, Inclusive and Sustainable Development Receives only Limited Financial Backing**
- 5. The Union Budget 2019-20 is Silent on Structural Reforms including Governance Reforms and has few Measures to take the Economy to Faster Growth**
- 6. The Stock Markets reacted negatively to the Budget with the Sensex and the Nifty witnessing a steep fall on July 8, 2019.**

IV. Conclusion:

- 1. Government Committed to continue on the Path of Fiscal Consolidation and Promotion of Economic Growth Top on the Agenda**
- 2. Budget Mentions Government's Commitment to Substantially Boost Investments in Agriculture and Social Sector**
- 3. The projections made in the Budget are realistic and adequately provide for items of expenditure such as defence expenditure, pension and salaries, internal security and other welfare programmes**
- 4. The government expenditure will increase by ₹ 3.29 lakh crore in 2019-20 over the revised target in 2018-19. "To fully finance these expenditure commitments, necessary resource mobilisation from tax and non-tax sources has also been envisaged,"**
- 5. "Promotion of economic growth will be top of the agenda... to give focused attention to growth the government has constituted a five-member Cabinet Committee on investment and growth chaired by the PM himself,"**

6. If we have set a target of \$5 trillion, it is because we are also taking very strong steps for promotion of growth and promotion of growth-incentivising investment

7. The proposals for infrastructure and affordable housing would help the middle class, and the tax increase should be viewed as a sharing of responsibility rather than a measure to punish the rich.

II.2. PM-KISAN SCHEME

I. PM-KISAN Scheme:

- The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme was announced in the Interim Union Budget 2019-20.
- Under this scheme small and marginal farmers owning combined land holding of up to 2 hectares will be given ₹6,000 per year through direct transfer to bank accounts.
- The Government said that it would benefit 12 crore farmers.

II. Prime Minister Narendra Modi Launched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Scheme (February 24, 2019):

- On February 24, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme at Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, transferring the first instalment of ₹2,000 each directly to the bank accounts of 1.01 crore farmers. He said that the rest would get their money in the next few weeks.
- "Every year, our government will give ₹6,000 each to 12 crore small and marginal farmers who own land up to 5 acres in three equal instalments," Mr. Modi said.
- "We have budgeted ₹75,000 crore for this. The process has started, and those who haven't got the money will get their first instalment of ₹2,000 in the next few weeks,"
- Government has transferred ₹2,021 crore (total), benefitting 1.01 crore farmers across 21 States and Union Territories in a single day.
- The Prime Minister appreciated States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand and Gujarat for swift action in sending details of beneficiaries to the Centre.
- Mr. Modi stressed that the scheme is fully funded by the Central Government.
- "The State Governments have nothing much to do. They just have to send us the list of farmers and we will deposit money in their accounts without any role of middlemen,"

III. Significance of the PM-KISAN Scheme:

- At a time of farmer distress across the country due to fragmented land holdings and falling prices of produce, the direct cash transfers under the PM-KISAN scheme would benefit the farmers.
- A Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) will have a positive impact on the finances as well as the psychology of the farmers. Hence DBT should replace the existing welfare subsidies

UPDATE – PART-III

I. Government Extended the PM-Kisan Scheme to All 14.5 Crore Farmers:

- The Central Government approved the extension of the PM-Kisan income support scheme to all farmers removing the ceiling of two hectares.
- The extended PM-Kisan scheme will now benefit all 14.5 crore farmers, subject to prevalent exclusion criteria, across the country.

- The PM-Kisan scheme announced in the interim Budget provided ₹6,000 per year (in three instalments) to an estimated 12.5 crore small and marginal farmers holding land up to 2 hectares.
- The PM-Kisan scheme would cost the government ₹87,000 crore per year.
- The Government also cleared a pension scheme for agriculturists, small traders and self-employed persons.
- Under the pension scheme, small shopkeepers, retailers and traders whose annual GST turnover is below ₹1.5 crore and are in the age group of 18-40 years, will be entitled to get ₹3,000 monthly after attaining the age of 60 years.

II.3. INFLATION

I. Current State of Inflation:

1. Falling Inflation:

- Inflation has been falling for the last 4-5 months consecutively at both the retail and wholesale levels.
- Inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) – which captures the retail inflation and the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) – has been falling since a year.
- In December 2017, the CPI was 5.21%, since then it has fallen steadily to reach 2.05% in January 2019, the lowest in 19 months.
- The WPI has also been falling similarly, but has been more volatile than the CPI, according to analysts.

2. Reasons behind the Falling Inflation:

- A fall in the global oil prices. The prices of Indian basket of crude oil decreased to \$57 per barrel in December 2018.
- The prices of the Indian basket of crude oil increased a little to \$59 per barrel in January 2019.

3. Impact of Low Inflation on the Economy:

- As India imports more than three-fourths of its oil, a fall in global crude oil prices has a big impact on almost every sector of the economy such as food, manufacturing, transport and infrastructure.
- As India is still dependent on oil imports to a large extent, any sector that uses fuel or energy as an input is impacted by the global oil prices.
- With the fall in global oil prices, the inflation too falls, specifically in energy-sensitive sectors. It is a cascading effect with the falling prices in each of these sectors having an impact on the other sectors dependent on them.
- The falling inflation allows the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to ease the interest rates. The RBI cut the bench mark interest rates by 25 basis points in its last Monetary Policy.
- Global oil prices would remain stable in the range of \$55-65 per barrel for the next three to four quarters. Thus the retail inflation would remain at 2-3% and wholesale inflation at 3-4% in the next three to four quarters.

II.4. RBI'S MONETARY POLICY

I. RBI Cut in Lending Rates and Shifted Focus back to Growth (February 07, 2019):

- In his first Monetary Policy review, the new RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das announced on February 7, 2019, a 25 bps lending rate cut.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cut the policy repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.25% in a bid to revive the economic growth.
- The retail inflation rate was projected to remain below its target of 4% for the next 12 months.
- The lending rate cut was the first since August 2017.
- The RBI also changed the stance of the Monetary Policy to 'neutral' from 'calibrated tightening', which indicated that the RBI was ready to move in either direction based on incoming data.
- The RBI's move would enable banks to lower their lending rates.
- All the six members of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted for a change in the stance from calibrated tightening to neutral.
- The MPC voted was 4-2 for 0.25% lending rate reduction.
- The RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said that the acceleration in Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) in December 2018 was the slowest in 18 months.
- Mr. Das said, "It is noteworthy that the path of inflation has moved downwards significantly and over the period of the next one year headline inflation is expected to remain contained below the target of 4%. This has opened up space for policy action."
- The RBI has forecast a GDP growth in the next financial year at 7.4%.
- "The favourable macroeconomic configuration that is evolving underscores the need to act now when it is most opportune," the RBI Governor said.
- "It is vital to act decisively and in a timely manner to address the objective of growth once the objective of price stability as defined in the [RBI] Act is achieved," Mr. Das said.

UPDATE – PART-II

I. RBI Cuts Interest Rates in Its Bimonthly Monetary Policy to Address Growth Concerns (June 6, 2019):

- On June 6, 2019, the Reserve Bank of India lowered interest rates for the third time in succession as it announced its second bimonthly monetary policy.
- The benchmark interest rate of the RBI fell below 6% for the first time since 2010 as the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) cut repo rates (rate of interest at which banks borrow money from the RBI) by 25 basis points (bps) to 5.75% to address growth concerns.
- The RBI shifted its monetary stance from 'neutral' to 'accommodative' to help revive the economy. The shift in stance means an increase in interest rates is ruled out and more cuts are on the way as long as prices remain in check
- "The MPC notes that growth impulses have weakened significantly as reflected in a further widening of the output gap compared to the April 2019 policy," the RBI said.
- The RBI revised GDP growth projections for the current financial year from 7.2% to 7%.
- "The headline inflation trajectory remains below the target even after taking into account the expected transmission of the past two policy rate cuts," the RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said.

- “Hence there is scope to boost aggregate demand and, in particular, private investment activity, while remaining consistent with the mandate of flexible inflation targeting,” Mr. Das said.
- The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation has been revised to 3.4-3.7% in the second half of the current fiscal.
- Over the medium term the RBI targets 4% CPI inflation.
- The RBI Governor said that banks transmitted only 21 basis points of the cumulative 50 basis points rate cut (in February and April 2019).
- “Our expectation is that as we go forward, there will be higher and faster transmission,” Mr. Das said.
- RBI also took steps to boost digital transactions by waving off the charges for fund transfer by Real Time Gross Settlement System (RTGS) – meant for large-value instantaneous fund transfers and the National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) system for other funds.
- The rate cuts by the RBI's MPC could lead to reduced EMI on housing, vehicle and personal loans if the banks decide to pass on the benefit
- The Industry and investors were disappointed by the absence of a special liquidity window for the nonbanking finance companies (NBFCs). The stocks and bond prices fell after the RBI's announcement.

II.5. AYUSHMAN BHARAT

I. Main Features of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Abhiyaan (PM-JAY) or Ayushman Bharat or the National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM) Launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi (Ranchi, Jharkhand, September 23, 2018):

- On September 23, 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Abhiyaan (PM-JAY) or Ayushman Bharat or the National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM) from Ranchi in Jharkhand.
- Mr. Modi said that the scheme would be a “game changer” globally in health insurance.
- “This is the world’s largest health scheme, which will serve a population tantamount to that of 27-28 European countries...more than all of America, Canada and Mexico put together,” the Prime Minister said.
- There are two inter-related components of the health scheme:
- First, 1,50,000 Health and Wellness Centres will be created to bring primary healthcare closer to the people. These centres will provide Comprehensive Primary Health Care (CPHC), covering both maternal and child health services and non-communicable diseases, including free essential drugs and diagnostic services.
- Second, the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) would provide health protection cover to poor vulnerable families for secondary and tertiary care. PM-JAY would provide up to ₹5 lakh per family per year, for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation.
- The PM-JAY would start on a pilot basis in 80-100 districts.
- The second phase of expansion would start in October 2018.
- Under the PM-JAY, all the registered beneficiaries will get a sum of ₹5 lakh. The insurance money will be provided to the beneficiaries on a yearly basis.

- The government will select 1.5 lakh healthcare centres and hospitals for implementation of the PM-JAY, with ₹1,200 crore allocation for the development and activation of such centres
- Beneficiaries will be required to use their registered mobile phone numbers as their ID number
- Only individuals registered under the Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011 of India are eligible
- Only financially weak and underprivileged members of the society will be eligible for the PM-JAY. A maximum of five members of such a family will get the insurance cover
- PM-JAY would provide coverage up to ₹5 lakh per family per year, for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation through a network of Empanelled Health Care Providers (EHCP).
- The EHCP network will provide cashless and paperless access to services for the beneficiaries at both public and private hospitals.
- “The target beneficiaries will be more than 10 crore families belonging to the poor and vulnerable population based on SECC database,” according to a government release.
- “AB-NHPM or PM-JAY will subsume the ongoing Centrally sponsored schemes – Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) and the Senior Citizen Health Insurance Scheme (SCHIS).”
- The AB-NHPM or PM-JAY would take care of almost all secondary care and most of the tertiary care procedures, the government release said.
- AB-NHPM or PM-JAY will be implemented at the national level through the AB-NHPM Agency and by the State Health Agency (SHA) at the state level.
- The cost of the scheme will be shared by the Centre and the States in the 60:40 ratio.
- The current estimated cost of AB-NHPM or PM-JAY is ₹12,000 crore.

II. Benefits of AB-NHPM or PM-JAY:

- According to Vinod Paul, a NITI Aayog member, the AB-NHPM has two dimensions:
- One, it aims to implement a comprehensive primary health care with Health Wellness Centres (HWCs) serving as people centric nuclei. A national network of 1.5 lakh HWCs would be created by transforming the existing sub-centres and primary health-care centres by 2022.
- Two, it also aims to provide health cover of ₹5 lakh per family per year for hospitalisation in secondary and tertiary care facilities.
- Building a strong next generation primary health-care system will save lives and will lead to a healthier India, according to Mr. Paul.
- The biggest benefit of the AB-NHPM is poverty alleviation as nearly six million families were driven to poverty due to the high health expenditure
- The AB-NHPM is the foundation for a universal health coverage system that covers all Indians, it needs to be given a legal status through the enactment of a separate laws.
- The AB-NHPM has a national character with the States playing an important role in its implementation and the beneficiaries would be able to port the service anywhere.
- AB-NHPM would lead to increased investment in health and generate jobs, particularly for women, and would be a driver for development and growth. It is a turning point for the health sector in India, according to Mr. Paul.

III. Challenges Facing the AB-NHPM or PM-JAY:

- Inadequate health infrastructure in the country
- Rolling out the scheme nationally
- There is potential for largescale misuse of the scheme
- The AB-NHPM or PM-JAY may require a large amount of money to be injected by the Centre

II.6. CABINET COMMITTEES ON ECONOMY & JOBS**I. Government Constituted Two Cabinet Committees on Investment and Growth and Employment and Skill Development (June 5, 2019):**

- On June 5, 2019, the Government constituted two Cabinet Committees, to be chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to address the problems of slowing economic growth and rising unemployment.
- The five-member Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth consists of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister for Road Transport and Highways and MSME Nitin Gadkari and Minister of Railways & Minister of Commerce & Industry Piyush Goyal.
- The Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth will focus on measures to bring investment and spur growth in the critical sectors including infrastructure, manufacturing and agriculture, as the Indian economy is passing through a volatile period.
- With the GDP decreasing to 5.8% in the last quarter of 2018-19, the lowest in five years, the Committee will prepare a road map to bring the economy back on growth trajectory.
- In 2018-19 the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth was 6.8% against a target of 7.2%.
- Slow growth is the result of falling performance of the core sectors of the economy, as the eight core sectors recorded a growth of just 2.6% in April 2019, compared to 4.6% in April 2018.
- A 10-member Cabinet Committee on Employment and Skill Development has also been set up with Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the Chairman.
- The other members of the Cabinet Committee on Employment and Skill Development include Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Railway Minister Piyush Goyal, Minister of Agriculture Narendra Singh Tomar, Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Skill and Entrepreneurship Mahendra Nath Pandey and Ministers of State Santosh Kumar Gangwar (Labour) and Hardeep Singh Puri (Housing and Urban Affairs).
- According to the employment data for 2017-18, released on May 31, 2019, India's unemployment increased to 6.1% in the period, the highest in 45 years.
- The formation of the two Cabinet Committees signalled the Government's commitment to increase growth and create jobs
- "Formation of these two Cabinet Committees indicates the firm commitment of the new government to attract FDI into the country, boosting infrastructure development and job creation avenues,"

II.7. NITI AAYOG**I. Fifth Governing Council Meeting of the NITI Aayog (New Delhi, June 15, 2019):****1. NITI Aayog Governing Council – The Highest Policy-Making Body:**

- On June 15, 2019, the fifth Governing Council meeting of the NITI Aayog was held in New Delhi.
- The NITI Aayog Governing Council is the highest policy-making body of the Government think tank and is chaired by the Prime Minister.
- The fifth Governing Council meeting was attended by the Chief Ministers of all States except four – Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal and Telangana, according to the NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Rajiv Kumar.

2. Issues to be Discussed:

- Rainwater harvesting
- Drought situation and relief measures
- The aspirational districts programme
- Transforming agriculture
- Security issues with focus on the Left Wing Extremism-affected districts.

3. Highlights of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Address:

- "The goal to make India a \$5 trillion economy by 2024 is challenging, but can surely be achieved."
- For this the States should recognise their core competence and aim to increase their economy by 2 to 2.5 times, working towards raising GDP targets right from the district level.
- The common man's purchasing power would increase as a result.
- Urged the States to focus on their potential to grow.
- Announced the setting up of a high-powered committee for structural reforms in the agricultural sector. The committee "would include some Chief Ministers and take a holistic approach to the subject".
- The reforms would cover logistics and supply chains, produce marketing, food processing and value addition, and are likely to involve changes to the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and Agriculture Produce Marketing Act.
- There would be a potential revision of disaster relief fund norms.
- Emphasised that the battle against Left Wing Extremism (LWE) now in a "decisive phase" was being fought on two levels: firmly dealing with the violence, even as development proceeds in a fast-paced and balanced manner in the aspirational districts.
- "The geographical area of influence of LWE has shrunk and the number of perpetrators of violence has declined significantly."
- Promised that the Centre would continue to provide assistance to the States in order to completely eradicate this issue over the next 10 years.
- **Aspirational Districts:** The Centre has started a major policy initiative for rapid transformation of 115 districts which are lagging in development.
- NITI Aayog has a key role in fulfilling "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas".

III. WORLD ECONOMY**1. G-20****I. 13th G20 Summit (Buenos Aires, Argentina, November 30-December 1, 2018):**

1. First G20 Summit in South America: The 13th G20 Summit was held on November 30 and December 1, 2018 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This was the first G20 Summit in South America.

2. Agenda:

- Talks between the US and China to resolve their escalating trade war the central issue
- Focus on regulating the crypto-currencies
- The future of work
- Infrastructure for development
- Sustainable food future

3. Highlights of the 9-Point Agenda Presented by Prime Minister Modi at the Summit:

- Presented a nine-point agenda, before the G20 countries, calling for “strong and active cooperation” to deal with fugitive economic offenders comprehensively.
- “Cooperation in legal processes, such as effective freezing of the proceeds of crime, early return of the offenders, and efficient repatriation of the proceeds of crime should be enhanced and streamlined,” the agenda read.
- Called for joint efforts by G20 countries to form a mechanism that denied entry and safe havens to fugitive economic offenders.
- “Principles of United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (UNOTAC), especially related to ‘International Cooperation’ should be fully and effectively implemented.”
- Suggested that the Inter-governmental Financial Action Task Force (FATF) be called upon to establish international cooperation that led to timely and comprehensive exchange of information between the authorities and financial intelligence units.
- “FATF should be tasked with formulating a standard definition of fugitive economic offenders. FATF should also develop a set of commonly agreed and standardised procedures related to identification, extradition and judicial proceedings for dealing with fugitive economic offenders.”

4. Highlights of the G20 Communique:

- Focussed on four themes – the future of work, infrastructure for development, a sustainable food future and gender mainstreaming.
- “Nations need to train, educate and improve skills for “inclusive fair and sustainable Future of Work.”
- Described education as a basic human right. The G20 leaders sought coordination between employment and quality education policies.
- The G20 members agreed to implement the “irreversible” Paris Agreement on climate change.
- “United States reiterates its decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement.”
- Recognised the “contribution” of the “multilateral trading system,” and added that it was “falling short” in the goals of growth and job creation.

5. Significance of the 13th G20 Summit:

- An important fallout of the 13th G20 Summit was that the trade war between the US and China was averted. The US President Donald Trump agreed not to impose the threatened increase in tariff from 10% to 25% on \$200 billion Chinese imports to the US and the Chinese President agreed in return to expand purchases from the US.
- The G20 Communique agreed to reform the WTO and emphasised commitment to rule-based international order.
- The G20 Communique also stressed on structural reforms to enhance growth. It said monetary policy would continue to support economic activity and ensure price stability, consistent with central banks' mandates.
- The G20 members agreed that terrorists and tax evaders deserve no refuge.
- India used the forum perfectly to push for cooperation to deal with the problem of fugitive economic offenders.
- The G20 agreed to ratify the multilateral convention on mutual administration on tax matters. It would increase revenues.

7. India would Host the Annual G20 Summit in 2022, when it Celebrates its 75th Anniversary of Independence.

II. Conclusion:

- Time for the G-20 to evolve beyond the crisis management role and emerge as a major forum for forging a consensus among developed and emerging economies on major issues including trade and climate change, according to analysts.

UPDATE – PART-III**I. 14th G-20 Summit (Osaka, Japan, June 28-29, 2019):****1. Agenda of the Summit:**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Osaka Japan for the 14th G-20 Summit on June 28-29, 2019.
- The Prime Minister would stress on tough measures to enable return of economic fugitives to their native countries, strong actions against terror financing and focus on multilateralism and WTO reforms.
- On the sidelines of the Summit Prime Minister Narendra Modi would meet BRICS leaders and leaders of other groups including Russia-India-China (RIC), US-India-Japan, the US President Donald Trump, Prime Ministers of Japan, Australia, Presidents of Indonesia, France and German Chancellor.
- Energy security, financial stability, disaster resilient infrastructure, WTO reforms, countering terrorism, return of economic fugitives, food security, democratisation of technologies and portable social security schemes are issues of importance for India

2. India's Stand:

- India pitched strongly to deal with fugitive economic offenders, India's Sherpa to G-20, Suresh Prabhu said.
- "We strongly put forward the need to deal with fugitive economic offenders. It has been a strong agenda, we have been working on tax evasion, corruption, economic offences and fugitive offenders running away [from the country]. We have also been very strongly championing this,"

- “We strongly feel that as a global community must act in unison to deal with such issues of people committing economic offences and running away from their national domicile country,”
- India strongly believed in digital economy and had taken a host of measures, including a huge number of bank accounts, to give it a thrust

3. Highlights of the G-20 Statement:

- “As leaders, one of our greatest responsibilities is to ensure the security of our citizens. It is the state’s role, first and foremost, to prevent and combat terrorism. Here in Osaka, we reaffirm our commitment to act to protect our people from terrorist and VECT exploitation of the Internet.”
- “We issue this statement to raise the bar of expectation for online platforms to do their part, we leaders of the G-20, reaffirm our strongest condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.”
- The live-streamed Christchurch terrorist attacks in New Zealand that killed 51 people, and other recent atrocities, demonstrated the urgency with “which we must fully implement relevant UN resolutions, the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy and other instruments, including the 2017 Hamburg G-20 Leaders’ Statement on Countering Terrorism.”
- “We urged online platforms to adhere to the core principle, as affirmed in Hamburg, that the rule of law applies online as it does offline. This must be achieved in a way that is consistent with national and international law, including human rights and fundamental freedoms such as freedom of expression and access to information – we hold these in high regard.”
- “We commit to collaborate with states, international organisations, industry, and civil society in this endeavour.”
- All G-20 leaders, except the US, agreed to the “Irreversibility” of the Paris climate deal and pledged its full implementation.
- Warned of growing risks to the global economy and stressed they would play a lead role in the global efforts to fight corruption by denying safe haven to persons sought for corruption and “work more closely” on asset recovery cooperation.

4. Significance of the Summit:

- G-20 Summit is significant for the meetings of the leaders on the sidelines of the Summit, than for substantive outcomes. The G-20 members (19 countries and the EU) account for 85% of the global GDP and each leader wishes to hold talks with other members on bilateral and multilateral levels.
- At the 14th G-20 Summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi 20 meetings on the sidelines of the Summit, including nine bilateral, eight pull-aside engagements, and one each of Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) BRICS, Russia-India-China (RIC), Japan-US-India groupings.
- Mr. Modi also held a meeting with US President Donald Trump.
- The Indian Prime Minister raised India’s concerns at the G-20 deliberations including the need for cooperation on dealing with serious economic offenders and fugitives and climate change funding. This was reflected in the final G-20 Statement.
- India refused to attend the digital economy summit pushed by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, as the plan for “data free flow with trust”, ran counter to Reserve Bank of India’s proposed data localisation guidelines.
- There was consensus among the G-20 members on issues such as efforts to fight corruption, gender equality and ocean pollution management.

- G-20 is a key platform to discuss important issues and must not be detracted from its original purpose of promoting sustainable growth and financial stability.

5. Highlights of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Address at the Informal Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) Summit:

- "Today, I will focus on the three major challenges. First is the instability and downfall in the global economy. Unilateralism and competitiveness are overshadowing the rule-based multilateral global trade systems."
- The second challenge is to make development sustainable and all-inclusive.
- The third challenge is terrorism.
- Terrorism is the biggest threat to humanity. "There is a need to stop all the mediums of support to terrorism and racism."
- Strengthening the World Trade Organisation (WTO), fighting protectionism, ensuring energy security and the need to work together to fight terrorism.
- "We need to emphasise on the necessary reforms in international financial and business institutions and organisations for improving multilateralism."
- Energy resources like oil and gas should be available at low prices regularly for continuous economic development.
- For sustainable and inclusive development, the New Development Bank (NDB) should give priority to the investment in the physical and social infrastructure and renewable energy programmes of member countries.
- The New Development Bank (NDB) was founded by the BRICS countries with an initial capital of \$50 billion with each country contributing \$10 billion, was introduced at the BRICS summit in Ufa, Russia on July 09, 2015.
- The NDB is seen as an alternative to the World Bank and its capital would be increased to \$100 billion.

6. Highlights of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Address at the Russia-India-China (RIC) Meeting:

- A trilateral meeting of the Heads of States of Russia-India-China (RIC) was also held at the sidelines of the G-20 Summit in Osaka Japan.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping discussed global issues, especially terrorism and climate change.
- "As the world's leading economies, the exchange of views between us, on the economic, political and security situation of the world, it is important. Our trilateral meeting today is a useful medium of discussion and coordination on major global issues."
- "During the meeting of our foreign ministers in China in February, views were discussed on many issues. These include cooperation on issues of counter-terrorism, international hot-spot, reformed multilateralism, climate change under RIC."
- "The RIC meeting was an excellent forum to discuss ways to enhance multilateral cooperation between our nations and work to mitigate challenges being faced by our planet, most notably terrorism and climate change."
- "RIC meeting in Osaka discussed counter-terrorism, international hot-spot issues, reformed multilateralism & climate change," MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar tweeted.

7. Japan-India-US Trilateral Meeting:

- A meeting of the Japan-India-US trilateral grouping was also held on the sidelines of the G-20 Summit in Osaka, Japan.
- "Today's meeting of the JAI Trilateral was a productive one. We had extensive discussions on the Indo-Pacific region, improving connectivity and infrastructure development," Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted.
- The three countries agreed to join forces to ensure collaboration in connectivity and infrastructure development projects in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The three countries are pushing for a "rules-based order" in the region, to counter an aggressive and expansionist China.
- In the Indo-Pacific region, the JAI grouping, along with QUAD are trying to put in place the political rationale for seeing the entire region in a continuum from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific

III.2. THE US-MEXICO-CANADA AGREEMENT (USMCA)

I. The US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) (October 1, 2018):

- On October 1, 2018, the US President Donald Trump announced the end of the nearly 25-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which he had called a "disaster" for US workers, and hailed its successor, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), as the greatest trade deal ever seen.
- After more than a year of talks, the US, Canada and Mexico reached an agreement on September 30, 2018 to replace the NAFTA.
- The USMCA made several changes to NAFTA including the tweaks to quotas applied to Canada's dairy industry. Under the new deal, Canada would allow US dairy producers to compete with locals which would favour Canadian consumers.
- The US agreed to retain Chapter 19 and Chapter 20 dispute-settlement mechanisms as a compromise. This would help Mexico and Canada to deal with the protectionist duties imposed by the US against their exports.
- The USMCA "will result in freer markets, fairer trade and robust economic growth in our region," according to a joint statement from the US Trade Representative and Canadian Foreign Minister.
- "It is a good day for Canada," the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said.
- Mexican Foreign Minister Luis Videgaray tweeted that **the USMCA was good for his country "and for North America"**.

II. Highlights of the USMCA:

- The US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) has 34 chapters and governs more than \$1 trillion in trade.
- USMCA is intended to last 16 years and will be reviewed every six years.
- The Agreement gives the US greater access to the dairy markets of Canada and Mexico, and allows extra imports of Canadian cars.
- The US farmers would have access to 3.5% of Canada's \$16 billion-a-year dairy market.
- The current tariffs of up to 275% had kept most foreign milk out of Canadian market.

- If the US imposes a 25% global tariff on car imports, Canada and Mexico would have a quota of 2.6 million cars they can export to the US as a protection of their car industry.
- 40% of car parts of vehicles produced in the three nations must be made in North America, paying wages of \$16 an hour.
- Canada and Mexico managed to preserve the dispute settlement mechanism as a protection against the protectionist duties imposed by the US against their exports.
- The USMCA includes stronger protections for workers, tough new environmental rules, and updates the trade relationship to cover the digital economy and provides “ground-breaking” intellectual property protections.
- The USMCA adds provisions to prevent “manipulation” of the trade rules, including covering currency values, and controls over outside countries trying to take advantage of the duty-free market.

III. Implications of the USMCA for India and the World:

- Announcement of the USMCA by the US President Donald Trump indicated that the US now extend Mr. Trump's ‘all or nothing’ approach to trade relations with the European Union (EU), China, Japan and India.
- President Trump termed India as “the tariff king” and said it had sought to start negotiations immediately.
- India will have its task cut out in dealing with the Trump administration in order to protect Indian exporters' access to the US, which is one of the largest markets for India's services and merchandise

III.3. US-CHINA TRADE WAR

I. Current Situation:

1. US-China Confrontation on Chinese Telecoms Equipment Maker Huawei Technologies:

- The National Defence Authorization Act (NDAA), signed into law by the US President Donald Trump in August 2018, bans the US government from doing business with Huawei or compatriot ZTE Corp or from doing business with any company that has equipment from the two firms as a “substantial or essential component” of their system.
- US always suspected Huawei, the world's largest maker of telecommunications equipment, of espionage and cyber sabotage.
- The US concerns were based on the perception that Chinese state-owned entities, recipients of large subsidies, pass on sensitive information to the government.
- This concern increased when China enacted the National Intelligence Law in 2017 requiring citizens and organisations to cooperate in national intelligence activities
- Huawei is privately listed firm, but there are concerns that it could still access sensitive data. The concerns are based on fact that Huawei's founder served in the Chinese military
- In the end of 2018, Huawei's chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou arrested in Canada at the US request on suspicion of violating US sanctions on Iran.
- Three Canadians were arrested by China which was seen as an act of retaliation.
- On March 7, 2019, Huawei said it filed a complaint in a federal court in Texas challenging Section 889 of the National Defence Authorization Act (NDAA) which bans the US government from doing business with Huawei.

- The lawsuit marked another confrontation between the US and China.

2. The US President Donald Trump Escalated the Trade War by Raising Tariffs on Chinese Goods Worth \$200 Billion (May 10, 2019):

- On May 10, 2019, the US President Donald Trump escalated the trade war with China by increasing tariffs from 10% to 25% on Chinese goods worth \$200 billion.
- The tariffs were increased on 5,700 categories of Chinese goods.
- With the latest increase of tariffs by the US, Chinese goods worth a total of \$250 billion would be affected.
- The announcement by the US President came after the latest round of US –China trade negotiations ended without a deal.

3. China Retaliated by Increasing Tariffs on US Goods Worth \$60 Billion (May 13, 2019):

- On May 13, 2019, China said that it would raise tariffs on \$60 billion worth of US goods from June 1, 2019, in retaliation for the latest round of US tariff hikes and US plans to target almost all Chinese imports.
- In addition to tariff increase, China could use other measures to retaliate against the US as it imports lesser US products – which limits its ability to match tariffs.
- “China could stop purchasing US agricultural products and energy, reduce Boeing orders and restrict US service trade with China,” Hu Xijiang, Editor of Chinese state-run Global Times, tweeted.
- Chinese trade negotiator, Vice-Premier Liu He said, “We have a consensus in lots of areas but to speak frankly there are areas we have differences on , and we believe these concern big principles.”
- Mr. Liu pointed to three major areas of disagreement between China and the US as follows:
- Whether to cancel all trade war tariffs when an agreement is reached
- The exact size of Chinese purchases of US goods
- A balanced agreement text.

4. Implications of the US-China Trade War for the US and the World:

- With the Trump administration's move to increase tariffs on Chinese imports worth \$200 billion and China's retaliation with higher tariffs on US imports worth \$60 billion , the world's two largest economies appear to be moving towards a prolonged trade war which would have major implications for the world economy.
- Trade war would cause a decrease in bilateral trade volumes in the short term with businesses in the US, China and countries with trade and investment links in the two countries facing economic problems.
- A reversal of globalisation of supply chains could take place in the long term
- China could look for alternative markets and trading partners if the US continues with its current policy of economic isolation.
- Global institutions like the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and other rule-making institutions could lose their authority adversely impacting the global economic order
- Emerging economies like India need to adjust and adapt to the changing situations and enhance their domestic economic architecture

- **The trade war with China would have an adverse impact on the US economy**, according to analysts.
- **Tariffs are taxes paid by the US companies that import Chinese goods. With the increase in tariffs, these companies will either sustain losses or pass on the burden to consumers. This would result in loss of business for the US companies.**
- **A study by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and others shows that the tariff revenue collected by the US is insufficient to compensate for losses suffered by the businesses and consumers.**
- **The US agricultural products would take a hit as China is the largest buyer of US soybeans. China has already increased the duty on them to 25%.**

5. IMF – Implications of the US Trade War:

- **On June 14, 2018, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) warned that the US President Donald Trump's aggressive trade policies and expansive tax cuts, at a time when the US economic is growing, were creating risks that could damage the domestic and global economies.**
- **The tax cuts would generate a near-term boost to growth but also “will elevate the risks to the US and global economy,” and increase the size of those risks**, according to the IMF annual review of the US economy.
- **The punitive import duties imposed and threatened by the US could harm the global economic recovery by “catalysing a cycle of retaliatory responses” and interrupting global supply chains**, according to the IMF report.
- **The US economy is “especially vulnerable” to damage from the escalating global trade war, which could shave hundreds of billions of dollars off global GDP**, according to the IMF Chief Christine Lagarde.
- **The IMF said that the increasing trade restrictions were “the greatest near-term threat” to the global economy.**
- **As the US President Donald Trump launched the current trade war, retaliation and negative impact would be focused on the US economy, leaving other regions to continue trading among themselves.**

6. The US and Chinese Presidents to Meet on the Sidelines of the G20 Summit in June End:

- **On June 6, 2019, the US President Donald Trump said that talks with China were ongoing but threatened to hit China with tariffs on “at least” another \$300 billion worth of Chinese goods.**
- **Mr. Trump said that he would take a decision after holding talks with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping at the G20 Summit in Japan on June 28-29, 2019.**

UPDATE – PART-III

I. Meeting between the US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping (Osaka, Japan, June 29, 2019):

- **The US President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping held a meeting on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Osaka, Japan on June 29, 2019.**
- **Both leaders struck a trade war truce as the US vowed to hold off on further tariffs, allow US companies to sell equipment to Chinese telecom giant Huawei and declared that trade negotiations with China were “back on track”.**
- **“We won’t be adding an additional tremendous amount of \$350 billion left which could be taxed or could be tariffed. We’re not doing that, we are going to work with China on where we left off to see if we can make a deal,” Mr. Trump said.**

- **"We will continue to negotiate,"** Mr. Trump added.

II. The US President Donald Trump Announced 10% Tariffs on \$300 Billion of Chinese Imports from September 1, 2019:

- **Accusing China of reneging on promises to buy US agricultural products, US President announced on August 1, 2019 that he would impose a 10% tariff on another \$300 billion on Chinese imports from September 1, 2019.**
- **US and Chinese negotiators met in Shanghai on July 30 and 31, 2019 and agreed to continue discussions in September 2019.**
- **The US President said that if trade discussions failed to progress he could raise tariffs further – even beyond the 25% levy he has already imposed on \$250 billion of imports from China.**

III. China Threatens Retaliation:

- **China said it would not be blackmailed and warned of retaliation after the US President's announcement of additional tariffs of 10% on \$300 billion Chinese imports.**
- **"It is a serious violation of the consensus reached by the Chinese and US President in Osaka and runs counter to the right direction. It will not be helpful for resolving the issues. China deplores and firmly opposes that,"** the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said.
- **In case the US enforced additional tariffs, "China will have to take necessary countermeasures to uphold its core interests and the fundamental interests of the Chinese people. The US will be responsible for all related consequences,"** the spokesperson said.
- **China's tough stand on trade negotiations, with little prospects of an early resolution, indicated its intent to play the long game with the US which was likely to extend beyond Mr. Trump's presidency.**

IV. DEFENCE NATIONAL

1. TERRORISM

SUMMARY

I. Pulwama Terror Attack:

1. Suicide Bomb Attack on a CRPF Convoy by Pakistan-based JeM (February 14, 2019):

- **At least 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel were killed when a convoy in which they were travelling was attacked by a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) suicide bomber, who rammed his explosive-laden vehicle into one of the convoy's buses on the Srinagar-Jammu Highway.**
- **The suicide bombing in the Lethpora area of Pulwama district also critically injured at least eight jawans. About 2,500 personnel of the CRPF were travelling to the Valley at the time of the terror attack.**
- **This was the deadliest terror attack in terms of casualties in the last three decades of militancy in Jammu and Kashmir.**
- **Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh blamed the "Pakistan-based, Pakistan-backed" JeM for the "dastardly" attack.**
- **Adil Ahmed Dar, a JeM militant, who carried out the suicide bomb attack, claimed responsibility for the attack in video recorded before the attack.**
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "The attack on CRPF personnel, in Pulwama is despicable. I strongly condemn this dastardly attack. The sacrifices of our brave security personnel shall not go in vain."**

- On February 18, 2019, three JeM terrorists were killed in an 18-hour gunfight in Pulwama's Pinglana area. An Army officer and three Army personnel, a police officer and a civilian also lost their lives in the operation.
- On February 20, 2019, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) took over the probe in the Pulwama terror attack case and named Pakistan-based terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) in the First Information Report.

2. India Vows a Strong Response to the Pulwama Terror Attack:

- "The Government of India condemns in the strongest possible terms the cowardly terrorist attack on our brave security forces in Pulwama, Jammu & Kashmir earlier today (14 February 2019). This heinous and despicable act has been perpetrated by Jaish-e-Mohammed, a Pakistan-based and supported terrorist organisation proscribed by the United Nations and other countries."
- "This terror group is led by the international terrorist Masood Azhar, who has been given full freedom by the Government of Pakistan to operate and expand his terror infrastructure in territories under the control of Pakistan and to carry out attacks in India and elsewhere with impunity,"
- "The Government of India is firmly and resolutely committed to take all necessary measures to safeguard national security. We are equally resolved to fight against the menace of terrorism,"
- "We demand that Pakistan stop supporting terrorists and terror groups operating from their territory and dismantle the infrastructure operated by terrorist outfits to launch attacks in other countries,"
- "We strongly reiterate our appeal to all members of the international community to support the proposal to list terrorists, including JeM chief Masood Azhar as a designated terrorist under the 1267 Sanctions Committee of the UNSC and to ban terrorist organisations operating from territories controlled by Pakistan,"
- "We express our sincere condolences to the family members of our fearless security personnel who have made the supreme sacrifice,"
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that those responsible for the Pulwama terror attack will pay a "very heavy price" and stressed that the security forces have been given a free hand to decide on the timing, place and nature of their response.
- Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan Ajay Bisaria was called to Delhi for consultation in the wake of the terror attack.
- All-Party Meeting, chaired by the Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, all political parties unanimously adopted a resolution to condemn the Pulwama terror attack and asserted that the entire country not only stands in solidarity with the security forces in fighting terror but also speaks in one voice.

3. Bilateral Punitive Measures Taken by India Against Pakistan:

A. Pakistan's High Commissioner Issued a "Strong Demarche" Seeking "Immediate and Verifiable Action" Against JeM

B. India Revoked Pakistan's Most Favoured Nation (MFN) Status

C. India Increased Customs Duty on All Goods Imported from Pakistan to 200%

D. India to Stop the Flow of Its Share of Water to Pakistan under the Indus Water Treaty:

- "Under the leadership of Honourable PM Narendra Modi, our Government has decided to stop our share of water which used to flow to Pakistan. We will divert water from Eastern rivers and supply it to our people in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab."
- Under the 1960 Indus Water Treaty, India secured the exclusive rights to the water of three Eastern Rivers which flow through Punjab – the Sutlej, the Beas and the Ravi.

- These three Eastern Rivers make up nearly 20 per cent of the Indus river system.
- Pakistan was allowed the exclusive use of the Western Rivers that pass through Ladakh and Kashmir before entering Pakistan – the Indus, the Jhelum and the Chenab.
- The three Western Rivers make up 80 per cent of the Indus river system.
- The water flowing through all the six rivers is 7,320 thousand million cubic (tmc) feet.
- India can use 1,440 tmc ft of water in the Eastern Rivers. However, India is using 1,350 tmc ft (94%) while the remaining 90 tmc ft (6%) is flowing into Pakistan.
- The Union Cabinet on February 21, 2019, approved construction of the Shahpur-Kandi dam on river Ravi in Punjab. A Central assistance of ₹485.38 crore will be provided over five years from 2018-23.
- The implementation of the project will allow irrigation of 5,000 hectares in Punjab and 32,173 hectares in Jammu and Kashmir.

E. JeM Local Leadership Destroyed:

- Lt. Gen. Kanwal Jeet Singh Dhillon, General Officer Commanding (GOC), Chinara Corps said, “We have eliminated the JeM leadership in the Valley, which was being handled by the JeM based in Pakistan and was taking directions from Pakistan Army and ISI.”

5. India's Diplomatic Offensive to Isolate Pakistan Globally:

A. India's Foreign Secretary Briefed Envoys of 25 Countries

B. India Raised the Issue of Pulwama Terror Attack during Bilateral Meetings with Several Countries during the Munich Security Conference

C. The US and the United Nations Condemned the Pulwama Terror Attack

D. India Shared a New Dossier on Pakistan with Several Countries

E. UN Security Council Condemned Pulwama Terror Attack

6. Pakistan's Response:

A. Pakistan Denied having any Role in the Pulwama Terror Attack

B. Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's Stand:

- Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan said that his country would retaliate if India decided to take punitive military action against it.
- Claimed that India had not presented any evidence of Pakistan's involvement in the Pulwama attack. He said that Pakistan itself was a “victim” of terrorism.
- Promised that if India provided Pakistan with “actionable intelligence” about Pakistani involvement in the Pulwama attack, “I guarantee action.”

7. India Rejects Pakistan Prime Minister's “Lame Excuse”:

- “The Prime Minister of Pakistan has offered to investigate the matter if India provides proof. This is a lame excuse..... Prime Minister of Pakistan has neither chosen to condemn this heinous act nor consoled with the bereaved families,”

II. India's Air Strikes on JeM's Terror Training Camp in Pakistan's Balakot (February 26, 2019):**1. India's First Cross-LoC Air Strike since the 1971 War:**

- On February 26, 2019, Indian Air Force (IAF) bombed the Jaish-e-Mohamed's (JeM) "biggest" terror training camp in Pakistan's Balakot. This was the first cross-LoC air strikes carried out by India since the 1971 war.
- The air strikes were carried out by 12 Mirage-2000 fighter jets which dropped five one-tonne bombs on the JeM terror training camp in Balakot, based 70 km inside the Line of Control (LoC), in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.
- The Mirage-2000s were armed with SPICE 2000 and Crystal Maze-Mk2, also called AGM-142 Popeye, precision guided munitions from Israel.
- As the stand-off ranges were between 60 to 100 km, the Mirage 2000 fighter jets could fire munitions from a considerable distance.
- An unmanned Aerial Vehicle was in the air monitoring and assessment, while the Israeli Phalcon and indigenous Netra early warning aircraft were deployed to monitor the mission.
- An IL-78 mid-air refuelling tanker took off from Agra.
- The Government announced that it was a "non-military, pre-emptive" counter-terror operation against imminent threats from the JeM.
- "Credible intelligence was received that the JeM would attempt another suicide terror attack, and jihadis were being trained for this purpose. In the face of imminent danger, a pre-emptive strike became absolutely necessary," Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said.
- "A very large number of JeM terrorists, trainers, senior commanders and groups of jihadis, who were being trained for fidayeen action, were eliminated," in the operation, according to Mr. Gokhale.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security to review the operations, and later met all three Service Chiefs.
- All the Opposition Parties hailed the IAF for the precision strikes on JeM terror training camps in Balakot inside Pakistan.

2. Pakistan's Reaction:

- "India has committed uncalled for aggression to which Pakistan shall respond at the time and place of its choosing," Pakistan's National Security Committee (NSC) said in a statement.
- Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan convened an emergency meeting of the NSC hours after the Indian aircraft carried out the strike.
- There was increased firing along the LoC from the Pakistan side.

3. International Reaction:

- India's air strikes on JeM terror camps inside Pakistan received support from many countries including France and Australia.
- "France recognises India's legitimacy to ensure its security against cross-border terrorism and asks Pakistan to put an end to operations of terrorist groups established on its territory,"
- The British Government called on India and Pakistan to pursue diplomatic solutions.
- China called for restraint

- The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) condemned “the Indian incursion and aerial violation.”

4. Implications of India's Air Strikes on JeM Terror Training Camps in Pakistan's Balakot:

A. Reasons behind Choosing JeM's Terror Camps in Pakistan's Balakot:

- India's Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said that the air strikes were based on specific intelligence that more jihadis were being trained for suicide bombings at the JeM training camps in Pakistan's Balakot.
- The terror cadre were shifted to Balakot after LoC launch pads and rest houses were emptied.
- The shifting was done by Pakistan in anticipation of Indian action.
- JeM commander and the alleged mastermind of the Pulwama terror attacks Abdul Rasheed Ghazi was believed to have been trained at Balakot.
- The JeM terror training camp facility in Balakot was headed by Maulana Yousuf Azhar, brother-in-law of JeM chief Masood Azhar.

B. India's Diplomatic Drive after the Air Strikes:

- India called the air strikes ‘non-military pre-emptive’.
- The Government of India briefed the big powers including the US, Russia and China on the air strikes by the IAF on JeM terror training camps in Pakistan and assured them that there was no intention to escalate the matter and that actions would be taken in a restrained and responsible manner.
- India's envoys briefed key countries about the air strikes and received support for the action.
- India rightly judged that the global opinion has changed and there is no tolerance anymore for terror groups who operate from Pakistan's territory.
- India asked Pakistan to dismantle other terror camps on its soil.
- There was no international criticism for India's air strikes.
- China also issued restrained statement.

C. Shift in India's Counter-Terror Responses – Calling off Pakistan's Nuclear Bluff:

- Air strikes by India on JeM terror training camps inside Pakistan territory marked a major shift in its counter-terror responses, which so far had been restricted to ground operations across the LoC in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).
- Use of air strikes against terrorist camps in Pakistan after the surgical strikes in 2016 have expanded India's scope of response in dealing with the terrorist threat emanating from Pakistan.
- The 2016 surgical strikes showed that Indian forces could cross the LoC to strike the launch pads of terrorists in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir PoK.
- The air strikes on JeM terror training camps in Balakot deep inside Pakistan, beyond PoK has taken India's response to terror strikes from Pakistan-based terrorist to a new level
- The message from the surgical strikes in 2016 was to call off Pakistan's nuclear bluff as Pakistan used the nuclear threshold to dissuade India from taking any retaliatory action against terror attacks.
- Pakistan has a first-strike nuclear doctrine on the premise that the nuclear option is a shield against India's conventional warfighting superiority

- The air strikes showed that India got rid of the nuclear threat in dealing with Pakistan by using air power in a contained manner to achieve the objective of counter-terrorism
- Pakistan was using terror groups to violate the LoC in its proxy war with India, but the air strikes inside Pakistan showed that India would use conventional military tools to target a proxy war
- By making it clear that the air strikes were 'non-military and pre-emptive' India could now use the precedent to launch more air strikes on terror camps inside Pakistan in future.

D. Measured and Appropriate Counter-Attack by India Put the Onus for Escalation on Pakistan

E. India's Air Strikes Raised the Cost to Pakistan for Carrying out Proxy War Against India

III. Pakistan's F-16s Cross the LoC for Retaliatory Strikes, Repulsed by Indian Air Force (February 27, 2019):

1. One F-16 shot down by IAF; One MiG-21 hit and Pilot taken Captive by Pakistan:

- Pakistan sent several aircraft to the LoC in retaliation for India's air strikes on JeM terror training camps in Balakot inside Pakistan.
- "Pakistan has responded this morning by using its Air Force to target military installations on the Indian side. Due to our high state of readiness and alertness, Pakistan's attempts were foiled successfully."
- Pakistan Air Force action was detected and the Indian Air Force responded instantly
- "In that aerial engagement, one Pakistan Air Force fighter aircraft was shot down by a MiG-21 Bison of the Indian Air Force. The Pakistani aircraft was seen by ground forces falling from the sky on the Pakistani side,"
- "In this engagement, we have unfortunately lost a MiG-21. The pilot is missing in action. Pakistan has claimed that he is their custody. We are ascertaining the facts,"

2. India Demanded the Safe and Immediate Return of IAF's Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman

3. India Handed over a Dossier to Pakistan with Specific Details of JeM's Involvement in the Pulwama Terror Attack (February 27, 2019)

4. International Community Called for Restraint by India and Pakistan

5. Pakistan Prime Minister Announced the Release of Indian Air Force Pilot as a Peace Gesture (February 28, 2019)

6. India Rejected Pakistan's Prime Minister's Offer for Talks, Demanded "Immediate, Credible and Verifiable" Action by Pakistan First Against Terror Groups

7. India Presented Proof of Downed Pakistan Air Force F-16 Jet (February 28, 2019):

- "There is no doubt that Pakistan tried to target our military installations. We responded swiftly because of which their designs to deliver their bomb load at the intended targets were thwarted," according to Air Vice-Marshal (AVM) R.G.K. Kapoor.
- "In the aerial combat that ensued, one F-16 of the PAF was shot down by an IAF MiG-21 Bison,"
- The IAF displayed parts of an AIM-120 AMRAAM (Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile) fired by an F-16, which fell in Indian territory to prove that PAF had deployed F-16s in an attempt to strike military targets across the LoC on February 27, 2019.
- "The F-16 crashed and fell across the Line of Control in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK),"

- There was enough evidence to show that F-16s were used in the mission and Pakistan was trying to hide this fact
- Parts of AMRAAM, which is carried only on the F-16s in the PAF, were recovered east of Rajauri in the Indian territory.
- The AMRAAM was supplied to Pakistan by the US under strict conditions that it could not be used in an offensive role. "It is due to this they were trying to deny the very presence of an F-16 jet,"
- Major General Surindra Singh Mahal said the PAF "attempted" to target military establishments, including a brigade headquarters, a battalion HQ, forward defences and a logistics installation.

8. Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman Arrived in India to a Hero's Welcome (March 1, 2019)

IV. Conclusion:

- India would maintain the pressure on Pakistan to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure and the masterminds of the terror attacks despite the release of Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman due to back channel diplomacy and pressure by global powers like the US on Pakistan to de-escalate the situation.
- India's diplomatic offensive to isolate Pakistan globally helped in India securing an upper hand in the hostile engagement with Pakistan. India has the advantage of keeping the option of using force open in future transgressions, while de-escalating the current confrontation
- India needs a sustainable campaign to pressure Pakistan on diplomatic, economic and military fronts to act against terrorists and the infrastructure of terrorism on its soil
- Pakistan needs to realise that the time of denials and obfuscation is over. It needs to begin dismantling terror infrastructure on its territory in a time-bound and verifiable manner.

UPDATE – PART-II

SUMMARY

I. UN Security Council Designated Masood Azhar as a Global Terrorist (May 1, 2019):

- On May 1, 2019, Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) chief Masood Azhar was listed as a designated terrorist by the UN Security Council 1267 Sanctions Committee.
- The P-3 or group of three permanent UNSC members – the US, the UK and France, had co-sponsored a listing request at the 1267 Sanctions Committee on February 27, 2019, after the Pulwama attacks.
- On March 13, 2019, China placed a hold on the P3 listing request which lasted for three months. It was the fourth attempt to designate Masood Azhar, over a decade which was blocked by China.
- On March 28, 2019, the US circulated a draft resolution to sanction Masood Azhar among the UN Security Council (UNSC) members to pressure China into either supporting the listing or having to take a stand in open proceedings and risk being seen as supporting terror.

II. India's Stand on the UNSC Designation of Masood Azhar as a Global Terrorist:

- Welcomed the UNSC decision calling it a "step in the right direction."
- "This is in accordance with India's position and in line with the information that India has shared with the members of the Sanctions Committee regarding terrorist activities of Masood Azhar and the JeM. India will continue with the efforts through international forums to ensure that terrorist organisations and their leaders who cause harm to our citizens are brought to justice,"

- “Our objective has been all along the naming of Azhar. The process started in 2009, in 2016 and 2017 it was continued. Designation was not on the basis of a single incident, but [was] on the basis of evidence we have shared linking Azhar to several acts of terrorism,”
- India would maintain the international campaign against cross-border terrorists
- Listing of Masood Azhar resulted from years of terrorism and violent plots traced to the JeM chief who operates from Pakistan.
- Emphasised that Pakistan would be held responsible by the international community on the follow up actions it is expected to take after the UN listing.

III. Reasons behind China Lifting Its Hold on the Listing of Masood Azhar as a Global Terrorist:

- “The Chinese side has carefully studied the revised materials, taken into account the opinions of all the parties concerned and made no objection to this listing,”
- China's observations followed the visit of India's Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale to Beijing on April 22, 2019.
- “China will continue to firmly support Pakistan's efforts to fight terrorism and extremist forces,”
- Main reason behind China's opposition to the listing of Masood Azhar as a global terrorist was Pakistan.
- China has deep economic and strategic ties with Pakistan where it has invested billions of dollars to build the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).
- **Azhar's Listing Would Remove an Irritant in Deepening India-China Relations:**
 - Both India and China have decided to deepen bilateral relations despite structural problems facing them.
 - India-China relations were revived after the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Wuhan in April 2018.
 - In the recent past China indicated that it was ready to do business with India overlooking Pakistan's sensitivities.
 - In 2018, China dropped its opposition to include Pakistan on the Financial Action Task Force grey list, which allowed the listing to go through easily.
- **Pressure from the US:**
 - Putting hold on Azhar's listing had cast a shadow on China's commitment to fighting terrorism.
 - JeM has designated an international terrorist outfit and its role in multiple terror attacks in India has been well established.
 - China's continued hold on the listing of Masood Azhar weakened its position against terror, internationally
 - The US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo slammed China's “shameful hypocrisy”, pointing out that it was abusing over a million Muslims at home while protecting “violent Islamic terrorist groups from sanctions at the UN”.
 - The US circulation of a draft resolution among the UN Security Council (UNSC) members on March 28, 2019, to sanction Masood Azhar put pressure on China to either support the listing or to take a stand in open proceedings and risk being seen as supporting terror.
- **Removing the Reference to Pulwama**

IV. Pakistan's Response:

- On May 1, 2019, Pakistan issued a Statutory Regulatory Order to freeze the financial assets belonging to Masood Azhar. It also ordered travel ban and arms embargo on him.

- With the designation of Masood Azhar as a global terrorist by the UNSC, the number of Pakistani citizens in the UN proscribed list increased to 146.
- Pakistan has the third highest number of citizens in the UN proscribed list after Iraq and Afghanistan in the ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee list.
- With the listing of Masood Azhar as a Global terrorist there is international pressure on Pakistan to prosecute him for acts of terror.
- The global terror financing watchdog, Financial Action Task Force would be closely watching Pakistan's moves before it takes a decision on whether to "blacklist" Pakistan or keep it on the "greylist".
- Political and financial pressure needs to be maintained on Pakistan to bring the designation of Masood Azhar as a global terrorist to a logical end.

V. Significance of the Listing of Masood Azhar as a Global Terrorist for India:

- UNSC designation of Masood Azhar as a global terrorist was a huge diplomatic victory for India in its decade-old diplomatic battle at the UNSC.
- Masood Azhar had eluded being designated an International terrorist for 20 years, despite his release by India in 1999 for exchange of hostages after the IC-814 hijack, and the dozens of terrorist attacks carried out by JeM under his leadership, including the attacks on the Parliament in 2001, Pathankot airbase attack in 2016 and the Pulwama bombing on the CRPF convoy in February 2019.
- Despite the drawback of China's hold on the listing of Masood Azhar as a global terrorist, India adopted an approach of "patience and persistence".
- "It is a big success for India's efforts to root out terrorism.... India's voice is being heard globally. India's views cannot be ignored any longer, it has been proved," Prime Minister Modi said.
- "This is, for us, a significant outcome because we have been at it for several years. The first effort that we have made in this regard was in 2009. More, recently, we have been persistent, diligent and in a subterranean manner, making all our efforts towards this goal. Today that goal stands achieved."
- Listing of Masood Azhar was the result of diplomacy by many partners and took concerns from all countries on board. The US was the key to pushing it through, along with the UK and France, while Indonesia as the Chairperson of the UNSC played a key role.
- France said that the listing of Masood Azhar as a global terrorist was a very important "political decision" as for the first time the world had reached a decision on the issue.
- Designation of Masood Azhar as a global terrorist was a blow to Pakistan's ISI which had propped up the JeM as a dominant terror outfit in Jammu and Kashmir.

IV.2. INDIA'S NUCLEAR TRIAD

I. India Declared Nuclear Triad Operational (November 5, 2018):

- On November 5, 2018, India declared its nuclear triad, stated in its nuclear doctrine, operational after its indigenous ballistic missile nuclear submarine INS Arihant completed its first deterrence patrol.
- India's nuclear triad or the capability to fire nuclear weapons from land, air and sea was now complete by the addition of submarine strike capability to land and air-based delivery platforms.

- **“Prime Minister Narendra Modi received today the crew of Ship Submersible Ballistic Nuclear (SSBN) INS Arihant. The submarine recently returned from its first deterrence patrol,”** according to a statement by the PMO.
- **“Today is historic because it marks the completion of the successful establishment of the nuclear triad. India’s nuclear triad will be an important pillar of global peace and stability,”** Mr. Modi said.
- **“True to its name, INS Arihant will protect the 130 crore Indians from external threats and contribute to the atmosphere of peace in the region,”** the Prime Minister said.
- **Mr. Modi congratulated the crew and “all involved in the achievement which puts India among a handful of countries having the capability to design, construct and operate SSBNs”.**
- **“In an era such as this, a credible nuclear deterrence is the need of the hour. The success of INS Arihant gives a fitting response to those who indulge in nuclear blackmail,”** the Prime Minister said.
- **“Our nuclear programme must be seen with regard to India’s efforts to further world peace and stability,”** Mr. Modi said.
- **In view of India’s stated position of ‘No-First-Use in launching nuclear weapons, the SSBN is the most dependable platform for a second-strike as the nuclear powered submarines can stay underwater indefinitely without being detected by the adversary. The land and air-based platforms are easier to detect.**

II. Three Platforms of India’s Nuclear Triad:

1. Land Platform:

- Prithvi-II (350 km)
- Agni-I (700 km)
- Agni-II (2000 km)
- Agni-III (3000 km)
- Agni-V (Over 5000 km, in the process of induction)

2. Air Platform:

- Sukhoi-30MKI, Mirage-2000 and Jaguar fighter aircraft modified to deliver nuclear warheads

3. Sea Platform:

- Nuclear Powered 6000 tonne INS Arihant (codenamed S-2) armed with K-15 nuclear missiles with a range of 750 km.
- INS Arighat submarine launched in 2017. Will be inducted by 2020.

III. Significance of the Nuclear Triad:

- **The nuclear triad refers to the three legs that comprise most nuclear forces-** the land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICMBs), Strategic bombers, and submarine based long-range missiles- as mentioned above.
- Each leg of the Nuclear Triad has its own advantages and disadvantages, but **together, they tend to cancel out the various disadvantages to create a robust, safe and relatively invulnerable deterrent force,** according to defence experts.
- A Nuclear Triad, which includes all legs of the Triad, **reduces the dangers, vulnerabilities and insecurity associated with any single leg.**
- Defence analysts argue that **India has a defensive nuclear doctrine with a no-first-use commitment and therefore it is crucial to ensure survivability of the nuclear arsenal to enable retaliation. It is for this reason that the Nuclear Triad is the only solution as per India’s nuclear doctrine.**
- **A Nuclear Triad gives India the capability which will deter the aggressor** from taking recourse to war and hence provide deterrence and peace and tranquillity, according to defence experts.

IV.3. RAISINA DIALOGUE**I. The Raisina Dialogue:**

- The Raisina Dialogue is envisioned as India's flagship conference of geopolitics and geo-economics, according to the website raisinadialogue.org.
- The Raisina Dialogue was designed to explore prospects and opportunities for Asian integration as well as Asia's integration with the larger world, according to the website.
- The Raisina Dialogue is predicated on India's vital role in the Indian Ocean region and how India along with its partners can build a stable regional and world order, according to the website.

II. 4th Raisina Dialogue (New Delhi, January 8-10, 2019):

1. Theme of the Dialogue for 2019: "A World Reorder: New Geometries; Fluid Partnerships; Uncertain Outcomes".

2. Objective: The discussions would seek to address issues arising from the outgoing global transitions and changes to the world order, triggered by unique leaders, innovative partnerships and new technologies, according to the Ministry of External Affairs website.

3. 600 Delegates from 93 Countries: The Raisina Dialogue has steadily expanded in scope and scale since the first edition in 2015; for the fourth edition in 2019, it was attended by 600 delegates from 93 countries, including influential political leaders, strategic thinkers, policy practitioners, technology innovators, business representatives and academics, according to the MEA website.

4. Highlights of the External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj's Address at the Dialogue:

- "Today, no country, big or small, is immune from this existential threat, particularly, terrorism actively supported and sponsored by states. In this digital age, the challenge is even greater, with a greater vulnerability to radicalisation."
- In 1996, India proposed a draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism at the UN, but it remained a draft because of a lack of consensus on a common definition.
- "Developing and under-developed nations are the worst victims of climate change, with neither the capacity nor the resources to meet the crisis."
- "We have risen to meet the challenge." This referred to the International Solar Alliance (ISA) jointly launched by India and France in 2018 with the participation of 120 countries.
- Highlighted five elements of India's global engagement in the past four-and-a-half years. The first being rebuilding bridges with India's immediate and extended neighbourhood.
- "Our revitalised Act East and Think West paradigms have further broadened the reach of our strategic and economic neighbourhood."
- "India therefore stands for a democratic and rules-based international order, in which all nations thrive as equals."
- India was building sustainable development partnerships that stretched from the Indian Ocean and Pacific Islands to the Caribbean, and from Africa to the Americas, and have expanded "both in geographical reach and sectoral coverage".
- "Note that we refer to these as partnerships, and not assistance."
- Global disruptions and ensuing complexities were ongoing phenomena and the crucial question was how to respond to these transitions.
- While the prosperity of Indian's at home and abroad and their security were of paramount importance. "Self-interest alone does not propel us".

5. Highlights of the Chief of Army Staff General Bipin Rawat's Address:

- “Yes, there should be talks with Taliban so long as they do not come out with any preconditions and so long as they are looking at lasting peace in Afghanistan and bringing stability in that country.”
- “It is in our interest, in the region's interest and in Pakistan's interest. We all want stability.”
- “When you start attaching preconditions, it gives a sense of a notional victory that one or the other side is talking from a position of strength and victory.”
- Pakistan always considered Afghanistan its backyard and so they always wanted a situation there [Afghanistan] which was more favourable to them. “So even if it implies speaking to the devil they will do it.”
- “We see a different form of radicalisation in Jammu and Kashmir. Youth are being radicalised due to a lot of disinformation, misinformation and a lot of false information.”
- “So long as media keeps giving coverage and focus to terrorist activities, it will stay.”
- The ISIS had not been able to find its feet in India despite the large number of Muslims because “I think we have rich family values”.

6. Highlights of the Commander, US Indo-Pacific Command, Admiral Philip Davidson's Address:

- “Free and open Indo-Pacific is not a containment strategy for China.... We are not asking people to choose between US and China.”
- “I welcome operations, exercises in the SCS [South China Sea] and freedom of navigation operations from any other nation, welcome India.”
- It was the responsibility of all our nations here to help the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in their discussions for a Code of Conduct with China in the SCS.

7. Highlights of Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javed Zarif's Address:

- Proposed a new platform for regional peace building.
- “We can start with a Regional Dialogue Forum, particularly in the Persian Gulf region which has been the scene of so many wars in the last four decades; from Saddam Hussein's aggression against Iran and later against Kuwait, to US operations and finally to the humanitarian nightmare in Yemen.”
- “Admission to such a forum should be based on accepting generally-recognised principles and shared objectives, notably respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and the political independence of all states.”
- It could connect people of various member countries cutting across all traditional boundaries.
- Highlighted the effectiveness of such a forum in dealing with threats like terrorism and extremism that have left the countries of the region in a state of continuous insecurity.

IV.4. ARMY REFORMS**I. Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Address to the Armed Forces Highlighted the Army Reform (August 14, 2018):**

- On August 14, 2018, the Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her first address to the Armed Forces on the eve of the Independence Day, highlighted the government's efforts to reform the Army.
- "In a first ever exercise after Independence, the Ministry of Defence, in consultation with the Indian Army, has decided to reform the Indian Army in a planned manner," the Defence Minister said.
- "This restructuring is aimed at enhancing the combat capability of the Army in a manner that the officers, Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and other ranks (OR) will be used for improving the operational preparedness," the Defence Minister said.
- The first phase of the reforms involved redeployment and restructuring of approximately 57,000 posts of officers, JCOs, ORs, and civilians, according to the Minister.
- The major reforms include optimisation of signals establishments, restructuring of repair echelons, redeployment of ordnance echelons, better utilisation of supply and transport echelons and animal transport units besides closure of military Farms and Army postal establishments in peace locations.
- Ms. Sitharaman assured that there shall be no shortcoming in providing all dues and facilities to soldiers.
- In line with the recommendations of the 7th Pay Commission, the Defence Ministry had taken "the decision to pay uniform allowance" and clarity had been brought with respect to "what is covered within the ambit of the allowance and what clothing items will be provided by the government," according to the Minister.
- To ensure faster decision making, for day-to-day requirements of the troops or ammunition, greater powers had been delegated to the service headquarters and other lower functionaries, according to Ms. Sitharaman.

II. Army's Commanders Conference to Finalise Measures to Right-Size the Force (New Delhi, August 2018):

- On August 9, 2018, a week-long biannual Army Commanders Conference started in New Delhi to finalise several measures to right-size the force and optimise the increasing revenue expenditure.
- "As part of the conclave, commanders and directorates at Army Headquarters will deliberate on important studies that have been ordered to meet future operational challenges," according to a statement by the Army.
- "There are four studies examining operational and optimisational issues of the Army and the headquarters as also human resources management aspects," the Army statement said.
- These studies aimed to improve the teeth-to-tail ratio, with the purpose of strengthening the structures within the Army, to make it combat-ready for the future, the Army stated.
- The four studies being undertaken by separate study groups are for restructuring of the Army Headquarters and Army restructuring, which includes cutting down the strength, cadre review of the officers and review of terms and conditions of Junior Commissioned Officers and Other Ranks.
- "The aim is to finalise the broad roadmap of the restructuring in this conference and agree on a roadmap on rolling out the measures,"

- A key concern for the Army is the mounting revenue expenditure and pensions which leave very less for capital procurements.
- All the points made at the Commanders Conference would be integrated into the study

III. Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Approved the First Batch of Army Reforms (March 7, 2019):

- On March 7, 2019, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman approved the first batch of Army reforms which included relocation of 229 officers from the Army Headquarters, creation of a new post of Deputy Chief for Military Operations and Strategic Planning, and setting up new wings for vigilance and human rights issues, according to official sources.
- The Army reforms are intended to make 1.3 million-Army leaner and meaner.
- The number of officers being moved out was 20% of the number of officers in the Army Headquarters in New Delhi. These officers would be deployed in forward locations along the borders with Pakistan and China.
- The post of Deputy Chief of Army Staff, Strategy, was being created to deal with military operations, intelligence, strategic planning and operational logistics, according to the official sources.
- The Army reforms would also include restructuring the Army's officer cadre, lowering the age of key commands, arresting the increasing revenue expenditure and "rightsizing" the force.

UPDATE – PART-III

I. Army Reforms:

- The four studies ordered by the Army Chief General Bipin Rawat are as follows:
- Restructuring of the Army Headquarters (AHQ)
- Creation of the Integrated Battle Groups
- The Cadre review of Officers
- The Review of the terms and conditions of Junior Commissioned Officers and Other Ranks
- The aim of the reforms is a holistic integration to enhance the operational and functional efficiency, optimise budget expenditure, facilitate force modernisation and address aspirations, the Army stated.

II. Army's Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) (June 2019):

- The Indian Army plans to raise Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) that can be quickly mobilised to strike across the borders with Pakistan and China, as part of its ongoing reforms to reformat its entire warfighting machinery and enhance the 'cold start' doctrine.
- "Lethal and agile" Integrated Battle Groups have been "test-bedded and exercised" in last May 2019 wargames, which saw the participation of a "strike corps" and "a holding corps" under the aegis of the Western Command.
- "The plan is to raise two to three IBGs in Jammu, Punjab and Rajasthan for the Pakistan border by October-November 2019. The ones meant for China will come up under the new 17 Mountain Strike Corps being raised in Bengal's Panagarh later,"
- The new self-contained IBGs will be commanded by Major Generals and would largely consist of T-90S main-battle tanks, along with a mix of infantry, artillery, air defence, signals and engineers, backed by attack helicopters.

- “After the requisite approvals from the government, both offensive and defensive IBGs will be raised from the existing formations in stages....the former will be more armour (tank)-intensive for thrusts across the border, while the latter will be infantry-centric to hold ground,”
- The IBGs, with about 5,000 troops each, will be carved out of some of the around 50 divisions (which have about 15,000 soldiers each) under the 15 corps (40,000 to 60,000 troops each) in the 12.3 lakh strong Indian Army.
- The aim of the Army is to combine infantry, armour, artillery, engineers, logistics and support units, which usually come together only during actual combat or exercises, into IBGs even during peace time.
- Such a move would ensure that the IBGs can be swiftly mobilised with the Army's new Land Warfare Doctrine with the response along the western front being sharp and swift aimed to destroy the adversary's centre of gravity and secure spatial gains.
- Army formulated its “Pro-Active Conventional War Strategy”, called Cold Start Doctrine, after the slow mobilisation of “strike formations” at the border launch pads under Operation Parakram in 2001.

III. Restructuring of the Army Headquarters (AHQ):

- The Army Headquarters (AHQ) restructuring is the first of the four measures being undertaken as part of the transformation of the Force.
- “The government has already given in-principle approval for the AHQ restructuring. We have identified how to utilise the available space. One of the main ideas is to get procurements aligned, among other things. A new Deputy Chief (Sustenance) is going to look after all procurements,”
- Currently, there are two Deputy Chiefs for – 1. Information systems and training and 2. Planning and systems.
- After the restructuring of the AHQ there would be three Deputy Chiefs for – 1. Sustenance 2. Strategy and 3. Information
- A new post of ‘Additional Director-General (ADG) Vigilance’ will be created to report to the Army Chief.
- A new position of ADG, Human Resources will be created who “shall take proactive action on HR violations,”
- The entire training function will move under the Army Training Command (ARTRAC), which will be shifted from Shimla to Meerut.
- The Director-General, Rashtriya Rifles (RR), now based in Delhi, will be moved to Udhampur, under an Additional Director-General, where the Northern Command is located.
- The Number of Officers in AHQ will be reduced by over 200. Young officers will be posted out to field areas.

IV.5. LIGHT COMBAT AIRCRAFT (LCA) - TEJAS

SUMMARY

I. Introduction:

1. LCA Named Tejas: On May 4, 2003

2. Second Indigenous Jet Fighter.

3. India has joined a select group of eight countries which have the capability to develop their own supersonic fighter aircraft.

4. LCA's Development Effort: ADA and HAL

5. Features of LCA:

- **Advanced Multi-Role Fighter Plane**
- **Meets Demands of Modern Combat**
- **State-of-the art Technology.**
- **Air Frame:** Lighter and more reliable.
- **Glass Cockpit**
- **Radar:** The advanced multi-mode radar
- **Flight Control:** Uses advanced digital fly-by-wire technology
- **Weapons:** Air-to-air and air-to-ground weapons, including laser guided bombs

6. Objective: To ensure that the IAF keeps itself ahead of the potential hostile neighbours

7. Cost of the each LCA: Rs. 210-250 crore

II. Significance of LCA:

- **Designed to Replace the MiG Series**
- **Indigenously Developed**
- **Spin-Offs**
- **Critical for Strategic and Academic Aspects.**
- **Vital for the Country's Security**
- **Cheaper**
- **Lesser Parts Needed**
- **Naval Variant**
- **Will Remain Contemporary for the Next few Decades**

III. Tejas to Replace MiG-21 Fleet:

- **Indigenously developed Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) would be the mainstay of the IAF and would likely replace the entire MIG-21 fleet of almost 250 fighter aircrafts.**
- **LCA was the mainstay. There would be seven squadrons of it. It was 3-4 times better than MiG-21s**
- **The improved version of LCA referred to as Mk-1A with four major improvements over the Mk-1 variant is being offered by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) as an interim measure in view of the delay in LCA-Mk2.**
- **The third squadron with 1A would be a highly improved version, which was under trials. Those special additives were under trail like firing a Bond Visual Range (BVR) missile etc**
- **Functionally, the LCA was better than many other foreign. It reacts very smoothly, fly-by-wire, its turn radius was very good, manoeuvrability was very good but it had limitation in the sense that it was a light combatant. It cannot go into deep penetration. It was mostly good for dogfights or to degrade the opponent Army's command posts**

IV. Tejas gets the Final Operation Clearance (FOC) Certificate (February 20 2019):

- **The FOC for Mk1 Tejas given on the first day of Aero India 2019, in Bengaluru, certifies that the world's lightest fighter plane is "ready for battle."**
- **"You saw how much the aircraft could fly and the number of sorties it could generate in April 2018. And during Vayu Shakti we showed you how accurately this aircraft could release weapons on the target. So that is the proof," the IAF Chief said.**
- **The IAF has placed orders for 40 Tejas aircraft of which HAL has rolled out 14 and the IAF has accepted 10. The remaining of this first batch of Tejas aircraft will be built as per the FOC standards.**

IV.6. VAYU SHAKTI & SEA VIGIL EXERCISES**I. Vayu Shakti Exercise (Pokhran, February 16, 2019):**

- On February 16, 2019, the Indian Air Force (IAF) conducted the 'Vayu Shakti' exercise at Pokhran air to ground range in Rajasthan which demonstrates the capability of IAF to detect targets at ground, hit them with precision and completely neutralise enemy assets.
- "While wars are fought few and far between, we have an ever present sub-conventional threat as the enemy knows he cannot defeat us in a conventional conflict. So today we show our ability to punish, our ability to insert and extricate troops from hostile territories," Air Chief Marshal B.S. Dhanoa said.
- "The IAF is prepared to deliver appropriate response as assigned by our political leadership and will always remain at the forefront in executing its missions," the IAF Chief said.
- The Chief of the Army Staff General Bipin Rawat, senior officers and Defence Attaches from 41 countries witnessed the display.
- Vice-Chief of IAF Air Marshal Anil Khosla called Vayu Shakti a "focussed capability-based exercise" in which all facets of aerial warfare were demonstrated.
- All the fighter jets of the IAF were part of the major fire power demonstration, including the indigenously developed Tejas, the weaponised Advanced Light Helicopter, the Akash Surface-to-Air Missile system and the Netra Airborne Early Warning and Control System.
- Of special note were the precision strikes to destroy transporter erector launchers of enemy surface-to-surface missiles and the swing role capability of the LCA Tejas through destruction of aerial and ground targets, according to an IAF officer.
- Overall, 137 aircraft, including 81 fighter jets, from seven air bases took part in the Vayu Shakti exercise.

II. Exercise Sea Vigil (January 22-23, 2019):

- Exercise Sea Vigil, the largest coastal defence drill and first of its kind in India was conducted along the entire 7,516.6 km long coastline and the Exclusive Economic Zone from January 22-23, 2019, and coordinated by the Navy.
- "Exercise Sea Vigil aims to comprehensively and holistically validate the efficacy of the measures taken since 26/11. It aims to simultaneously activate the coastal security mechanism across all 13 coastal States and Union Territories," according to a statement by the Navy.
- About 150 ships of the Navy and Coast Guard, 40 aircraft, including Dornier, Advanced Light Helicopters and UAVs such as the Searchers participated in the exercise.
- "Multi agency audit and identification of gaps, shortfalls and incorporation of lessons learnt into Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are the desired outcomes," according to the Navy statement.
- "In an effort to test the preparedness and coordination, some rogue elements tried to breach the surveillance network and reach the coast during the exercise," an official said.
- After the 26/11 Mumbai Terrorist attacks, the Navy was designated as the agency responsible for overall maritime security, including offshore and coastal security, while the Coast Guard was designated as the agency responsible for coastal security in territorial waters.
- A multi-tiered patrol and surveillance mechanism with focus on technical surveillance and augmenting Maritime Domain Awareness through the coastal radar chain was adopted.

IV.7. JOINT EXERCISES**I. 'Ex Cope India-18' – India, US Air Forces Joint Military Exercise (West Bengal, December 3-14, 2018):**

- From December 3-14, 2018, the Indian and the US Air Forces held their 12-day military exercise name 'Ex Cope India-18' in the Kalaikunda and Panagarh air bases in West Bengal, with an aim to enhance operational coordination, according to officials.
- The 'Ex Cope India-18' was the fourth edition of the bilateral joint drills between the Indian and the US Air Forces. It was for the first time that the exercise was held at two Air Force bases, according to officials.
- "The aim of the exercise is to provide operational exposure and undertake mutual exchange of best practices towards enhancing operational capability," the Indian Air Force (IAF) said in a statement.
- The US fleet included F15 C/D and C-130 military aircraft. The IAF fleet included Su-30 MKI, Jaguar, Mirage 2000, C-130J and AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) aircraft.
- More than 100 personnel of the US Air Force, along with 400 personnel of the IAF, participated in the exercise.
- The exercise followed the Joint International Air Drill between China and Pakistan in December 2018.
- Cope India 2018 director, Air Commodore J.S. Mann, said that mutual understanding of operational air power and the best practices learnt from each other during the joint exercise would help the countries "operate together in times to come".
- The joint air exercise between the two Air Forces was held after 13 years. In 2005 it was held at the Kalaikunda Air Station.
- Both countries called for such joint exercises to be held more frequently.
- The exercise involved formation of teams, comprising pilots and aircraft of both the Air Forces, participating in war games over the air space of Kalaikunda.
- IAF officials said that the Kalaikunda air station was ideal for holding such exercises not only because it is one of the largest air stations in the region but also because it has a large reserve air space of hundreds of square kilometres.

II. SIMBEX – India, Singapore Bilateral Naval Exercise (Port Blair, November 11-21, 2018):

- The 25th edition of SIMBEX – India, Singapore bilateral naval exercise was held at the tri-services command in Port Blair from November 11-21, 2019).
- The exercise was held off the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal.
- "Started as basic Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) exercises in 1994, today these exercises have graduated to complex maritime combat drills, including missile and torpedo firings, and shore-based intensive professional exchanges," the Indian Navy said in a statement.
- The exercise involved seven ships from the Indian Navy and five ships from the Singapore Navy along with an Archer class submarine and a Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle.
- Maritime Patrol aircraft of both countries, P8I of Indian Navy and Fokker F50 from Singapore, also took part in the exercise.
- The number of missiles and torpedo firings, undertaken were in fact unprecedented and perhaps the largest the Indian Navy had undertaken with any foreign Navy till date, according to the Indian Navy.

- Both countries have expanded their military cooperation in recent years under India's Act East Policy.
- In 2017, India and Singapore signed a naval agreement having a provision for mutual logistical support and giving India access to the Changi naval base.

III. 7th India-China Joint Military Exercises – 'Hand in Hand' (Chengdu, China, December 11-23, 2018):

- India and China resumed their joint military drills after a gap of one-year with the 7th India-China joint 'Hand-in-Hand' military exercises from December 11-23, 2018, in the Chinese city of Chengdu.
- "Opening Ceremony of the 7th India-China joint Hand-in-Hand training exercises was held in Chengdu. Indian Army contingent and the Tibetan Military command of People's Liberation Army (PLA) are participating in the exercises," the Indian Embassy in China tweeted on December 11, 2018.
- "The aim of the Hand-in-Hand exercises is to build closer relations between the militaries of India and China. The exercises involve tactical level operations in an international Counter Insurgency Counter Terrorist environment as per UN mandate," the Indian Embassy in China said.
- China expressed hope that the resumption of military exercises between the Indian Army and PLA would inject impetus and yield good results for the improvement of bilateral ties.
- The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson referred to the informal Wuhan summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in April 2018 and the "important consensus" reached between the two leaders to improve relations.
- "Departments on the two sides in charge of various fields are making positive efforts to more effectively implement the consensus reached between the two state leaders. Contacts between the two militaries and border troops are part of these efforts," the Chinese spokesperson said.
- "We believe that under the guidance of the consensus between the two leaders, the two sides will make joint efforts to ensure that bilateral exchanges and cooperation, including those in the defence field, will achieve positive outcomes and offer more driving force for the development of bilateral relations," the Chinese spokesperson said.
- The Hand-in-Hand exercises were held after a gap of one year as both countries were locked in a 73-day standoff in Doklam in the Sikkim sector of the border in 2017.
- About 175 personnel from each side took part in the exercise. The Indian side was represented by troops from the 11 Sikh Light regiment under the Northern Command, according to media reports.
- The scope of the exercise was to understand transnational terrorism and evolve joint drills for the conduct of counter terrorism operations, in addition to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations.

UPDATE – PART-II

I. India-US Military Exercise (Hyderabad, March-April 2019):

- A month-long military training exercise of US military forces from the 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) with the Indian National Security Guard concluded on April 5, 2019.
- The exercise was held in Hyderabad and is expected to build interoperability and comradeship between Indian and US armed forces. It was designed to enhance the capabilities of both the forces.
- The training focused on mutual defence operations, according to a release issued by the US Consulate at Hyderabad.
- The military exercise was overseen by the US Embassy in New Delhi and the US Special Operations Pacific Command at Camp HM Smith in Hawaii.

- **“The US-India security partnership is strong and is growing stronger,”** according to the US Consul-General Katherine Hadda.
- **“The aim of the programme is to enhance professionalism and the ability to operate together during crisis,”** a US Consulate release said.
- The month-long exercise was significant as it prepared Indian and US soldiers for a wide range of challenging scenarios and included emergency medical training as well as combat marksmanship, urban close-quarter combat and integrated full-mission training.
- The military exercise provided soldiers hands-on experience in real urban settings, such as hotels and transportation hubs, in preparation for the possibility of terror attacks on vulnerable soft targets, a statement said.
- **“Knowing how to respond together, with enhanced capabilities shared by both the Indian and US armed forces, is even better,”** Consul General of US Consulate at Hyderabad, Katherine Hadda said.
- The training events are part of US Indo-Pacific Command's Theatre Security Cooperation Programme, conducted by the US military with a select group of countries in the Indo-Pacific region to enhance coordination and capabilities.
- The US military works alongside India to increase interoperability, build partner capacity, prevent conflict and promote regional strength and peace throughout the Indo-Pacific, the statement said.
- The US has recognised India as a major defence partner. Military collaboration between the two countries is a result of growing high-level trust and consistent efforts by both sides to broaden the ways in which the US and India can work together, the statement said.

II. Joint Naval Drills by India, the US, Japan and the Philippines (South China Sea, May 3-9, 2019):

- Indian Navy ships INS Kolkata and Shakti carried out Group Sail with the naval ships of the US, Japan and the Philippines from May 3-9, 2019, the Indian Navy said on May 9, 2019.
- **“The ships undertook various exercises en route which include formation manoeuvring, underway replenishment runs, cross-deck flying and exchange of sea riders,”** according to a statement by the Indian Navy.
- **“The Group Sail exercise showcased India's commitment to operating with like-minded nations to ensure safe maritime environment through enhanced interoperability,”** the statement by the Navy said.
- Six ships, including a frigate and helicopter carrier JMSDF Izumo from Japan, a Philippines frigate and Arleigh Burke class destroyer from the US Navy took part in the six-day exercise.
- The Indian Navy ships were on return passage from their deployment to the South and East China Seas as part of the annual Easter Fleet overseas deployment during which they visited Vietnam, China and South Korea.
- The Indian Navy ships took part in the International Fleet Review (IFR) in China as part of the 70th anniversary celebrations of the People's Liberation Army (Navy).
- From May 1-3, 2019, the Indian Navy ships took part in Phase I of the maritime security field training exercise under the aegis of ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) off South Korea.
- The Group Sail exercise in the South China Sea (SCS) was a clear show force in a region, according to analysts.
- China claims a major part of the South China Sea (SCS) and has disputes with most of the maritime neighbours.

IV.8. ARTILLERY GUNS**I. Dhanush Artillery Gun:**

- Dhanush, is an upgraded version of the Swedish Bofors gun which was procured by India in the mid-1980s. It has over 80% indigenous content.
- Dhanush is a 155-mm, 45-calibre gun with a range of 36 km, and has demonstrated a range of 38 km with specialised ammunition.
- Dhanush is compatible with all NATO 155mm ammunition systems.
- Dhanush successfully completed its user trials and is ready for induction into the Army.
- “This was the third and final phase of user exploitation firings in which six Dhanush guns were fired in battery formation from May 31 to June 7, 2018 at the Pokhran field firing range. A total of 301 rounds were fired from the six guns, including burst fire,” according to Dr. Uddipan Mukherjee, public relations officer of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB).
- The Dhanush artillery guns travelled extensively during the trials over 1000 km in towed/self-propelled mode in desert and high-altitude terrains demonstrating their mobility.
- The Army has placed an order for 114 Dhanush guns. “The OFB has already supplied six guns for battery firing during the user trials. Another 12 will be issued within a year on receipt of the Bulk Production Clearance (BPC),”
- The entire order of 114 Dhanush artillery guns would be delivered within four years.

II. M-777 Ultra-Light Howitzer (ULH) Artillery Guns:

- The M-777 is a 155-mm, 39-calibre towed artillery gun made of titanium and aluminium alloys and weighs only four tonnes, making it transportable slung under helicopters.
- In November 2016, India signed a deal with the US government under the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) programme for 145 M-777 guns at a cost of \$737 million.
- Of the 145 M-777 artillery guns, 25 will be imported and the remaining 120 will be assembled in India in partnership with the Mahindra group.
- Two M-777 artillery guns were delivered for calibration and making range tables with local ammunition when a barrel burst occurred. The trials were suspended since September 2017.
- The Army received four guns for the trials to resume in July and August 2018.
- The first regiment is scheduled to be ready by September 2019.

Significance of the M-777 Ultra-Light Howitzer (ULH) Artillery Guns for the Army:

- M-777 Ultra-Light Howitzers (ULH) deal along with other gun upgrades would boost the Indian Army's firepower, which was critically short of guns.
- M-777 ULH artillery guns have been tested by the US forces in rugged terrains of Afghanistan.
- The M-777 ULH artillery guns have a strike range of 27 km and would be an important equipment in the arsenal of the new Mountain Strike Corps being raised in the Northeast of India, which has a long international border with China
- India has not acquired a single howitzer since 30 years which has resulted in a void in the country's artillery requirement. This was due to the Bofors kickbacks scandal that occurred in the 1980s.

- The M-777 ULH deal would also give impetus to the 'Make in India' initiative
- The M-777 Ultra-Light Howitzers (ULH) deal worth \$737 million with the US under the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) programme would lead investments of over \$200 million under offset requirements
- This envisaged investments in approximately 40 Indian defence suppliers across the country as well as an offer to establish an Assembly Integration & Test facility for the weapon system in India in partnership with an Indian industrial company

III. K9 Vajra-T Tracked Self-Propelled Artillery Guns:

- The K9 Vajra-T is a 155-mm 52 calibre self-propelled artillery gun with a maximum range of 40 km, customised from the original K9 Thunder gun of South Korea.
- The fire control system of K9 Vajra-T has been customised for desert conditions to the requirements of the Army.
- In April 2017, the Indian engineering conglomerate Larsen & Toubro (L&T) and Hanwa Techwin of South Korea signed a contract to manufacture the K9 Vajra-T artillery guns.
- The K9 Vajra-T artillery gun was shortlisted by the Army after extensive trials and the contract is worth ₹4,500 crore for 100 guns.
- The first 10 K9 Vajra-T artillery guns would be imported from South Korea and the rest manufactured by L&T in India.
- The Army will receive the first 10 guns in September 2018 and the rest by 2020.

IV. M777 Ultra-Light Howitzers and K9 Vajra Self-Propelled Artillery Guns Inducted into the Army (November 9, 2018):

- On November 9, 2018, the Army inducted its first artillery gun systems in three decades.
- The M777 Ultra-Light Howitzers from the US and K9 Vajra-T self-propelled artillery gun from South Korea were inducted at the Devlali Field Firing Ranges in Maharashtra. The third equipment inducted was a common gun tower.
- The last time Army inducted an artillery gun system – the Bofors guns from Sweden – in the early 1980s.
- Three guns of each type were inducted in the presence of Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Army Chief General Bipin Rawat. In all, the Army would get 10 K-9 guns in 2018.
- "A third equipment is also being inducted today – the common gun tower, a 6x6 vehicle with cross-country capability. Required to tow medium guns. These are made by the Indian company Ashok Leyland," the Defence Minister tweeted.

UPDATE – PART-II

I. Indigenous Dhanush Artillery Guns Handed over to the Army (April 8, 2019):

- On April 8, 2019, the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) handed over the first batch of six Dhanush artillery guns to the Army.
- Dhanush artillery gun is an upgraded version of the Swedish Bofors gun procured in the 1980s.
- "Indigenisation to the extent of about 81%, has already been achieved. By the end of 2019, the indigenisation level of the gun will go up to 91%," Defence Ministry said in a statement.
- "The first Dhanush regiment with 18 guns is expected to be ready by the end of next year,"

- Dhanush is a 155-mm, 45 calibre artillery gun with a maximum effective range of 38 km in salvo mode compared to the 39 calibre, 27-km range of the original Bofors gun. It is compatible with all North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) 155 mm ammunition system.
- Dhanush artillery gun is fitted with inertial navigation system with global positioning system (GPS) based gun recording and auto-laying, an enhanced tactical compute for onboard ballistic computations, and onboard muzzle velocity recording, an automated gun sighting system equipped with camera, thermal imaging and laser range finder.
- The Army has placed an indent for 114 guns in the first phase which would be delivered within four years.

IV.9. THE NAXALITE PROBLEM

SUMMARY

I. Introduction:

1. Naxalites: An informal name given to revolutionary communists groups waging a violent struggle to establish a 'people's government' through a 'people's war'.

2. The Naxalite Movement:

- The Naxalite movement began as a peasant uprising in Naxalbari, a village in West Bengal in 1967.
- In the 1970s the Naxalite movement gained cadre in urban India.
- In the 1980s the Naxalite movement retreated to rural India from Andhra Pradesh up to Nepal.

3. Two Major Groups of Naxalites Merged in 2004 to Form the Communist Party of India (Maoist)

4. Left-Wing Extremist Violence has Affected 76 Districts Across 10 States:

- **States Severely Affected by Left-Wing Extremism:** Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Bihar.
- **States Partially Affected by Left Wing Extremism:** West Bengal, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.
- **States Slightly Affected by Left Wing Extremism:** Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh

5. International Linkages

6. Change in Character of the Naxalite Movement: No longer confined to agrarian concerns but represents the Dalit and tribal identities and also supports ethnic and regional concerns

II. Current Situation:

1. Maoist Attack in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada District (April 9, 2019):

- Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA Bhima Mandavi and four security personnel were killed when their convoy was attacked by suspected Maoists in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi "strongly" condemned the attack, emphasising that the sacrifice of those killed would not go in vain.

2. Maoist Attack on Jawans in Gadchiroli District of Maharashtra (May 1, 2019):

- Maoist insurgents blew up an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) killing 15 jawans and a civilian in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra.
- Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh called the attack an "act of cowardice and desperation."
- A preliminary probe into the Naxal attack found lapses in adherence to the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the red zones of the State.
- The probe found a sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) guilty of rushing the unit into an ambush, without following procedures or sending a road patrol party to do a recce.

3. Use of Powerful IEDs by Maoists a Major Challenge:

- The use of powerful Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) by Maoists to attack security forces was a major challenge, in view of the back-to-back attacks on security forces and civilians by the left-wing extremists.
- “Among the 28 security personnel killed this year, 22 were martyred in IED blast. The number of IED fatalities were only 7 out of 78 killed in 2017. We can say that Maoists are focussing on IEDs to avoid direct confrontation with security forces to minimise their own casualties,”
- The higher fatality ratio in states affected by left-wing extremism indicates the Maoists are well-adapted to the jungle terrain. The high casualties have been caused by explosion of high-intensity IEDs

III. Conclusion:**1. Two-Pronged Approach to Meet the Challenge posed by Naxalism:**

- First, the police and the security forces need to be better trained to avoid the incidents like the Gadchiroli
- Government should urgently provide basic amenities like drinking water, roads, healthcare and education in the Naxal-affected areas

2. Solution to Naxalism:

- Stopping the leakages in Government's policy implementation, creating jobs and delivering healthcare and educational services
- Despite suffering severe reverses the Maoists rebels wanted to send a message that they were still a force to reckon with through a string on attacks on the security forces.
- The Maoists should give up arms and engage in peaceful talks to take forward the peace process.

3. Identifying the Socio-Economic Problems which Provide Ground for the Growth of Naxalism:

- A lack of development, the non-availability of land
- The absence of basic health and education
- Transport and communication
- Infrastructure
- When these problems are neglected over the years they lead to violence.

4. Coherent Policy Required to Curb the Naxal Menace:

- Government needs to adopt a cohesive response to internal security challenges like the attack on CRPF personnel in Sukma in April 2017.
- To tackle the internal problems like LWE a whole government approach was required like reaching out, development, and political moves
- In Naxal areas intelligence and equipment for paramilitary forces needed to be stepped up

IV.10.ANTI-SATELLITE (ASAT) MISSILE TEST**1. Anti-Satellite (ASAT) Weapons:**

- Anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons are missile-based systems to strike moving satellites.
- ASAT weapons that directly strike a satellite or other targets are called 'Kinetic' physical weapons. There are two types of Kinetic weapons.
- **Direct Ascent Anti-Satellite (DAASAT) Weapon:** Hits the satellite using a trajectory that intersects the target without requiring an interceptor system already in orbit.

- **Co-orbital ASAT Weapon:** Needs to be placed into orbit and then when commanded moves to reach within striking distance of the targeted satellite.
- The US, Russia and China were the only countries reported to have the ability to shoot down space objects from ground or airborne sources.
- In January 2007, China conducted an Anti-satellite (ASAT) missile test targeting a Chinese weather satellite at an altitude of 865 km.
- In 2008, the US launched 'Operation Burnt Frost', the code name to intercept and destroy a non-functioning US National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) satellite.
- India had the capability to develop ASAT weapons since 2012.

2. Mission Shakti – India Successfully Conducted Anti-Satellite Missile Test (March 27, 2019, Dr. Abdul Kalam Island, Odisha):

- On March 27, 2019, India successfully conducted an Anti-Satellite (ASAT) missile test, named Mission Shakti, to become the fourth country in the world to demonstrate the capability to shoot down satellites in orbit. The US, Russia and China have this capability.
- The Defence and Research Development Organisation (DRDO) tested an Anti-Satellite (ASAT) missile which hit a live satellite in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) of 300 km.
- The ASAT was a modified exo-atmospheric interceptor missile of the Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system, according to a DRDO official.
- The interceptor missile was an 18-tonne three-stage missile with two solid rocket boosters. The kill vehicle was on the top.
- "A BMD interceptor missile successfully engaged an Indian orbiting target satellite in LEO in a 'hit to kill' mode", the DRDO said in a statement.
- The BMD interceptor missile made a direct-ascent 'kinetic kill' to destroy the targeted satellite.
- The satellite shot down by the ASAT missile was Microsat-R, an imaging satellite, according to a DRDO official.
- A Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite of 300 km was chosen to "minimise" debris. Most of the debris would disintegrate within 45 days. The US confirmed that the debris do not pose threat to the International Space Station (ISS) or other Low Earth Orbit (LEO) Satellites.
- The test was conducted from the Abdul Kalam Island launch complex, earlier known as Wheeler island, in Odisha.
- Addressing the nation after the successful ASAT missile test, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "India today registered itself as a space power," stressing that it was a deterrent and not directed against any country.
- "The ASAT missile will give new strength to India's space programme. I assure the international community that our capability won't be used against anyone. It's India's defence initiative for its own security," Mr. Modi said.

3. Significance of the Successful ASAT Missile Test by India:

- The capability achieved through the Anti-Satellite (ASAT) missile test provides credible deterrence against threats to India's growing space-based assets from long-range missiles. India has undertaken 102 spacecraft missions to launch satellites for communication, observation, navigation, scientific research and exploration, according to Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

- **Anti-Satellite (ASAT) weapons provide the capability to shoot down enemy satellites in orbit thereby disrupting critical communications and surveillance capabilities**
- **ASAT weapons also act as a space deterrent in dissuading enemies from targeting the country's satellite network**
- **Dr. G. Satheesh Reddy Chairman of DRDO pointed out that the successful shooting down of the satellite reflected that "accuracy in terms of centimetres" was achieved with the help of "Kinetic Kill" technology developed indigenously.**
- **The Mission Shakti ASAT missile test was a direct-ascent kinetic kill. The relative velocity between the missile and the orbiting satellite was around 10km per second**
- **With successful ASAT missile test, India now has the capability to disrupt telecom, internet, banking and GPS services of adversaries during a war.**
- **The technology is seen as crucial since China has been conducting ASAT missile tests since 2007.**
- **The successful ASAT missile test also provides a boost to India's ability to tackle high-altitude incoming missiles.**
- **The ASAT test demonstrated the capabilities of indigenously-developed Indian technologies to carry out a critical mission with high degree of precision, according to the DRDO Chairman.**
- **"The test happened as per design. We don't need any more tests in this orbit as of now. The guidance and control algorithm has been developed to do interception at 1,000 km above the earth. This test covers all LEO satellites, including those for military use", according to Dr. Reddy.**
- **Hitting multiple satellites was feasible, according to the DRDO Chairman.**
- **"When a country like India has done an exercise like this and shown capability of interception of a target, you have shown the capability for such operations. Best way of defence is to have deterrence," Dr. Reddy said.**
- **Former ISRO Chairman G. Madhavan Nair said, "ASAT demonstration is unique and a big movement towards strengthening the country's overall defence mechanism. If any hostile country were to place a satellite to spy on us, India now has the counter technology."**

4. India Assured the World that it did not Violate any International Treaty or Understanding:

- **India assured the world that it did not violate any international treaty or understanding with the ASAT missile test.**
- **The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said India believes in peaceful use of common outer space that belongs to humanity.**
- **"India is not in violation of any international law or treaty to which it is a party or any national obligation," the MEA stated.**
- **India is against weaponization of outer space and supports international efforts to reinforce the safety and security of space-based assets.**
- **India has been participating in all sessions of the UN Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and is a party to all the major international treaties relating to outer space.**
- **India registers its space objects with the UN register, notifies international bodies about its rocket launches and follows UN space mitigation guidelines.**
- **India is part of international projects on space debris coordination and collision avoidance analyses.**

- India supported UNGA resolution 69/32 on 'no first placement of weapons on outer space'.
- India supports the substantive consideration of the issue of 'prevention of an arms race in outer space (Paros) in the conference of disarmament.

IV.11. INDIA'S ARMS IMPORTS

I. India the World's Second Largest Importer of Arms from 2014-2018:

- "India was the world's second largest importer of major arms in 2014-18 and accounted for 9.5% of the global total," according to the latest report published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) on March 11, 2019.
- Saudi Arabia was the largest importer of major arms in 2014-18 and accounted for 12% of the global total, according to the SIPRI report.
- Russia accounted for 58% of Indian arms imports in 2014-18, compared with 76% in 2009-13.
- Israel, the US and France increased their arms exports to India in 2014-18.
- Russia's share in Indian imports of arms was likely to increase sharply for the next five-year period in view of India signing mega deals recently. These include S-400 Triumf Missile system, four stealth frigates, AK-203 assault rifles, a second nuclear attack submarine on lease, and deals for Kamov-226T utility helicopters, Mi-17 helicopters and short-range air defence systems.
- The SIPRI report pointed out that despite the long-standing conflict between India and Pakistan, arms imports decreased for both countries in 2014-18 compared with 2009-13.
- Pakistan stood at 11th in the list world's largest importers of arms accounting for 2.7% of all global arms imports. China was Pakistan's biggest source from which 70% of the arms being imported, followed by the US at 8.9% and Russia at 6%, according to the SIPRI report.
- The volume of international transfers of major arms in 2014-18 was 7.8% higher than in 2009-13, according to the SIPRI report.
- The five largest exporters of arms in 2014-18 were the US, Russia, France, Germany and China. These five countries accounted for 75% of the total volume of arms exported in 2014-18.
- "The flow of arms increased to the Middle East between 2009-13 and 2014-18, while there was a decrease in flows to all other regions," the SIPRI report said.
- China, which emerged as a major arms exporter, increased its share by 2.7% for 2014-18 compared to 2009-13. Pakistan and Bangladesh were the largest importers of Chinese arms.

IV.12. DEFENCE SPACE RESEARCH AGENCY

I. New Defence Space Agency to Develop Space Warfare Weapon Systems (June 2019):

- The government has approved the setting up of a new agency which would develop sophisticated weapon systems and technologies. It would enhance the capabilities of the Armed Forces to fight wars in space
- "The Cabinet Committee on Security headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has cleared the setting up of the Defence Space Research Agency (DSRA) which has been entrusted with the task of creating space warfare weapon systems and technologies," Defence Ministry sources told the media.

- It was reported that the agency has started taking shape under a Joint Secretary-level scientist.
- The agency would be provided with a team of scientists which would be working in close coordination with the tri-services integrated Defence staff officers.
- It would be providing the research and development support to the Defence Space Agency (DSA) which comprises members of the three services. The DSA has been created “to help the country fight wars in the space”.
- The Defence Space Agency is being set up in Bengaluru under an Air Vice Marshal-rank officer and will gradually take over the space-related capabilities of the three forces.

IV.13. EXTERNAL SECURITY THREATS

I. Measures taken by India to Counter External Security Threats :

On May 27, 2019, the former Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba who was also the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee explained some of the measures taken by India to counter external threats to its security as follows:

- “India’s pro-active action (the air strikes) has changed the discourse and dialogue viz-a-viz Pakistan. A new norm (retaliation to a terror attack) has been established. I am quite sure it will lead to behavioural changes in our adversary.”
- The Indian Navy also “forward deployed” its warships and submarines in the north Arabian Sea to deter and defeat any “misadventure” by Pakistan at that time. “It successfully worked,”
- China, which is rapidly expanding its military and economic clout, presents a major challenge for India.
- China established its first overseas base at Djibouti in Africa and also has naval facilities in Karachi. Currently, it has six to eight warships deployed in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- “The Chinese Navy is here to stay. But they face the tyranny of logistics in the IOR. We have adequate force-levels at present to look after our maritime interests.”
- However, China is “investing heavily” in building a “blue-water Navy”, having commissioned 80 warships and submarines at a stunning pace in the last five years, which could upset the balance of power in the future.
- China, with an aircraft carrier, 33 destroyers, 54 frigates, 42 corvettes, 50 diesel-electric and 10 nuclear submarines, is also posing a stiff challenge to the US Navy
- The Indian Navy currently has 140 warships and 220 aircraft. About 49 warships are under construction in domestic shipyards and two frigates in Russia.
- “We are not trying to match China. But naturally, we would also like to commission more ships every year.”
- India is also entering into military logistics pacts to expand its strategic reach. India’s pact with the US allows Indian warships refuelling facilities and access to US bases in Djibouti, Diego Garcia, Gaum and Subic Bay, the one with France will extend “our reach with south-western IOR” due to French bases in the Reunion Islands and Djibouti. “The MoU for the logistics pact with Russia has also been inked.”
- India is also upgrading military force-levels and infrastructure in its only theatre command in the strategically-located Andaman and Nicobar archipelago.
- A 10-year Rs.5,650 crore military infrastructure development plan for the Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) is being finalised. It would allow stationing of additional warships, aircraft, drones, missile batteries and infantry soldiers there.

II. Highlights of the External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's Address at the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Summit (Dushanbe, Tajikistan, June 14, 2019):

- Terrorism is the “gravest threat” in Asia. “Terrorism and their victims must never be equated.”
- “CICA has always shown a strong commitment to combat terrorism and extremism and adopt a comprehensive strategy to combat terrorism. Early finalisation of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism, proposed by India, is today even more essential and we seek your support in this regard.”
- “We confront unavoidable challenges such as terrorism, conflicts, trans-national crimes and maritime threats. There are also issues of sustainable development including the lack of energy security, low intra-regional trade and deficit of connectivity. These must be urgently remedied for our common good.”
- India supports a peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan that is Afghan-led and Afghan owned.
- “All initiatives and processes must include all sections of Afghan society, including the legitimately elected government.”

<p>IV.14. HYPERSONIC TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATOR VEHICLE (HSTDV)</p>

I. DRDO Successfully Conducted the Test of the HSTDV (June12, 2019):

- On June 12, 2019, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted the test of an indigenously developed Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV) along with other critical technologies.
- “The DRDO launched a technology demonstrator vehicle to prove a number of critical technologies for futuristic missions from Dr. Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha,” the Ministry of Defence (MoD) said.
- The missile was successfully launched and it was tracked by various radars, telemetry stations and electro optical tracking sensors through its course, the MoD said.
- In the test, a missile with the technology demonstrator vehicle mounted on it is launched and the vehicle is released only after the missile reaches a certain altitude and velocity, according to an official.
- Through the HSTDV project the idea was to demonstrate the “performance of a scram-jet engine at an altitude of 15 km to 20 km, is on,” the former DRDO Chief V.K. Saraswat had said in 2008.
- “Under this project, we are developing a hypersonic vehicle that will be powered by a scram-jet engine. This is a dual-use technology, which when developed, will have multiple civilian applications. It can be used for launching satellites at low cost. It will also be available for long-range cruise missiles of the future,” Mr. Saraswat had stated.
- In a scram-jet engine, fuel combustion takes place in a chamber in the missile at supersonic speeds.

IV.15. INDIA'S MISSILE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**SUMMARY****I. India's Missile Programme Self-Sufficient:**

1. India has Attained Self-Sufficiency in its Missile Programme
2. India's Decision Making a Key Factor in Regional Stability
3. India emerging as a Great Power in the Region
4. India's Nuclear Deep Strike Capability
5. India's Satellites Contribute to its Strategic Capabilities
6. Tactical Short-Range Missiles being developed:

7. Deployment of Missiles:

- The Prithvi-II Surface-to-Surface missile and Dhanush (the naval version of Prithvi missile) have been inducted in the Armed Forces.
- Raising of two Agni Missile Groups
- Agni-III Induction into the Army

8. Agni-V Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM):**A. Features of Agni-V:**

- **Surface-to-Surface Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM)**
- **Length** - 17.5 metres
- **Weight** - 50 tonnes
- **Warheads** - 1.5 tonne
- **Range** - 5000 km
- **Three-Stage Solid-Fuelled Missile**
- **Payload** - can carry nuclear warheads
- **Transportability** - Canister system to impart higher mobility.
- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has designed and developed Agni-V.

B. Second Successfully Test-Firing of Agni-V (Wheeler Island, Odisha, September 15, 2013)**C. Significance of the Successful Test-Firing of Agni-V:**

- With the successful test-firing of Agni-V, India joined the elite club of countries with Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) technology
- The significance of the successful test-firing of Agni-V is that it is the most formidable missile in India's arsenal with the longest range
- Agni-V would provide India with depth in deterrence as the country has a policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons
- One of the key features of Agni-V was that it could use satellite-based navigation systems, including GPS, GLONASS and India's Regional Navigational Satellite System (IRNSS)
- Agni-V can cover the whole of Asia, 70 per cent of Europe, east Africa and other regions
- Gives the Armed Forces the Required Flexibility to Launch the Missile from the Place of their Choice
- A great advantage in the configuration of Agni-V was that it could be further enhanced and its range expanded
- The rocket motor castings made up of carbon composites gave the Agni-V missile a better performance

- The successful test-firing of Agni-V represents the acquisition of strategic deterrence capability
- The Agni-III, Agni-IV and Agni-V are designed to counter the threat from China
- The successful test-firing of Agni-V represented another milestone in India's quest to add to the credibility of its security and preparedness and to continuously explore the frontiers of science.

D. Third Canister-based Trial of Agni-V Successful (Odisha, January 18, 2018):

- India successfully tested Agni-V, the most advanced missile in the Agni series with new technologies incorporated in terms of navigation and guidance warhead and engine.
- "This was the fifth test of the missile and the third consecutive one from a canister on a road mobile launcher. All the five missions have been successful,"
- The missile was tested for its full range from the Abdul Kalam island in Odisha. The trial was "fully successful" with Agni-V covering 4,900 km.
- After reaching the peak of its trajectory, Agni-V is programmed to turn towards the Earth to continue its journey towards the intended target with an increased speed to due to the attraction of the Earth's gravitational pull, according to an official of the DRDO.
- The path of Agni-V is precisely directed by the advanced on-board computer and inertial navigation system

E. Significance of the Successful Canister-based Trial of Agni-V:

- India's first-ever ICBM launch from a canister was a giant leap in the country's deterrence capability
- A canister launch gave India operational flexibility and freedom to launch the missile from anywhere along with easy and safer transportation
- The launch of Agni-V from a canister, integrated with a mobile sophisticated launcher, were in its deliverable configuration that enables launch of the missile with a short preparation time compared to an open configuration
- The canister launch has the advantage of higher reliability, longer shelf-life, less maintenance and enhanced mobility
- ICBMs can be moved around which makes it difficult for the adversary to locate and destroy them.
- Placing missiles in canisters also has the advantage of making decoys possible, which makes any attempt at first strike on India's nuclear missiles uncertain and thereby risky undertaking for the enemy

II. Comparison of the Missile Programmes of India and Pakistan:

1. India's Missile Programme:

A. Nuclear Triad:

- Aircraft
- Mobile land-based missiles
- Sea-based assets.

B. Significance of the Nuclear Triad:

- The nuclear triad refers to the three legs that comprise most nuclear forces
- They tend to cancel out the various disadvantages to create a robust, safe and relatively invulnerable deterrent force
- Reduces the dangers, vulnerabilities and insecurity associated with any single leg.
- India has a defensive nuclear doctrine with a no-first-use commitment and therefore it is crucial to ensure survivability of the nuclear arsenal to enable retaliation.
- Nuclear Triad is the only solution as per India's nuclear doctrine.
- A Nuclear Triad gives India the capability which will deter the aggressor

C. India's Missile Programme Superior to Pakistan's

2. Pakistan's Missile Programme:

- Clandestine Missile Programme
- India-Centric Missile Programme

3. Difference between the Nuclear Policies of India and Pakistan:

A. Nuclear Doctrine:

India: The Nuclear Doctrine is clear on the following:

- India having a policy of a credible minimum deterrent.
- No first use by India.
- Punitive retaliation by India.

Pakistan: There are ambiguous questions about its nuclear capability, precise doctrine and delivery systems.

B. Delivery Systems:

India: According to the Nuclear Doctrine there should be a triad of delivery systems consisting of land, sea and air forces.

C. Fundamental Difference in Nuclear Policies:

- No-first-use of nuclear weapons remains the key element of India's nuclear policy
- Pakistan maintains a first-strike option in its nuclear doctrine and has refused to sign an agreement on no-first-use.

D. Pakistan Banking on the Nuclear Weapons to Overcome its Conventional Disadvantages

III. Conclusion:

1. Missile Tests Needed as a Credible Delivery System for Nuclear Weapons
2. Missiles have Strategic Value in Shielding the Country from External Pressures, Coercive Diplomacy
3. Prerequisites of Credible Deterrence - Safety, Survivability, Reliability and Penetration of Missiles
4. Agni Missile Key Component of India's Nuclear Deterrence Capability
5. China's Large Nuclear Arsenal
6. Indian Scientists Working on Missiles with Multiple Warheads in line with India's Policy of "No-First-Use"
7. Technologically Intensive Battle-Field Scenario
8. Future of Missile Technology:
 - Warfare in future will be dominated by supersonic cruise missiles
 - The future of missile technology would be exciting with micro unmanned aerial vehicles
 - Control regimes, denial of technological know-how and sanctions are hurdles

IV.16. INDIAN OCEAN REGION

SUMMARY

I. Introduction:

1. Indian Ocean - A Region of Growing Strategic Significance Accounting for a Third of the World's Population and 40% of the World's Energy Sources
2. Sea Lanes of the Region are One of the Most Important Lines of Communication with 40% of Global Trade Passing Through the Region
3. High Level of Trade and Economic Growth Dictated the Need to Ensure Security of the Sea Lanes
4. Cooperation among the Navies of the Region in Preventing Trans-National Crimes is of Paramount Importance:
 - There was a rise in crimes such as terrorism, piracy and smuggling of narcotics and arms in the Indian Ocean region
 - The need for cooperation among the navies of the region in preventing such trans-national crimes was of paramount importance

5. Discussions on the Indian Ocean Must be Multidimensional - Security, Disaster Management, Oceanic Resources and Environment:

6. Maritime Security Must be Considered at Three Levels - Creating Transparency, Building Confidence and Building Security

II. India's Approach towards the Indian Ocean Region:

1. Security Threats for India:

- Piracy
- Terrorism
- Chinese Navy's increasing presence in the region.

2. India's Three-Pronged Approach to better Protect the Sea Lanes and Tackle Natural Calamities:

- Indian Ocean Critical to International Commerce and Energy Security
- India Ocean Littoral Countries Need to Tackle Three Issues - Humanitarian Disasters, Protection of the Environment and the Scourge of Piracy
- Proposal to Conduct a Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise
- Protection of Environment - Suggestion for the Formation of a Working Group to Propose Measures to Reduce Carbon Footprints
- Piracy - Limitations could be overcome through a well-Coordinated and Secure Information Exchange Network

3. Indian Navy Expanding Its Operations in the Indian Ocean:

- The Navy needed to maintain a high state of preparedness in view of the ever-increasing demands of maritime security in the littoral areas and high seas
- The Indian Navy maintained a continuous patrol in the Gulf of Aden with 17 ships on duty

4. India's Approach towards a Stability and Cooperation in the Region:

- India wants stability and cooperation in the Indian Ocean region, with maritime security for all and a collective resolve to deal with sources of non-traditional security threats.
- India is trying to strengthen the defence cooperation with island States in the western region of the Indian Ocean
- The India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Forum has started cooperation among the three navies of the member States through joint naval exercises, training and strategizing.
- In the eastern sector of the Indian Ocean India wants to enhance cooperation through the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC).
- India is also strengthening bilateral strategic dialogue with the countries of the east including Japan, South Korea, Myanmar, Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore and Australia.
- For a collective approach towards stability and cooperation in the Indian Ocean region India is utilising the existing security-related institutions like ASEAN, East Asia Summit (EAS) and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).
- India and China agreed to establish and institutionalise maritime dialogue, aimed at promoting cooperation and coordination between the navies of the two nations.

III. India Expressed Concern at the Increased Militarisation of the Indian Ocean (Goa, November 1, 2017):

- Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman expressed at the increased militarisation of the Indian Ocean region and the way extra-regional nations (an apparent reference to China) were maintaining a “near-permanent presence” there.
- “We have also witnessed extra-regional nations maintaining near-permanent presence within the region on one pretext or the other. In order to sustain such a presence through operational turnaround, these countries, which are extra-regional, are creating naval outposts as well as dual-use infrastructure in the region,”
- There was “incremental yet steady” increase in numbers of warships operating in the region. This militarisation “increases the complexities for the countries of this region,”
- “As international behaviour in the maritime domain is influenced considerably by land-based imperatives, cordiality or latent hostility prevalent among nations on land tends to get reflected in the seas too,”
- China, which recently opened its first overseas military base in Djibouti, acquired stakes in a number of infrastructure projects in the region.
- China’s navy has maintained the presence of a number of warships and submarines in the Indian Ocean under the pretext of anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden
- To counter China’s move, the Indian Navy has put in place a new concept of “mission-based deployment” to maintain round-the-clock surveillance on India’s vital areas of interest across the length and breadth of the Indian Ocean Region.
- “Last year, we had a relook at our deployment pattern and we reached a consensus within the Navy to have a mission-based deployment so that our areas of interest can be kept under permanent surveillance. So the ingress and egress routes of the Indian Ocean Region are being kept under surveillance so that we have better awareness and know what is happening,” according to Indian Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba.

IV. India Offered to Share Real-Time Maritime Data in the Indian Ocean with 10 Indian Ocean Littoral States

V. India Working with Like-Minded Countries to preserve the integrity, inviolability and Security of the Maritime Domain:

- India’s then Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar told a meeting of maritime experts at the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) held in Delhi that “as the Indian Ocean takes centre stage in the 21st century, the onus is on us, as equal stakeholders, to collectively secure and nurture our oceanic states.”
- “The Indian government has been working with like-minded countries to preserve the integrity, inviolability and security of the maritime domain,”
- China’s increasing assertiveness in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) has led to convergence between India and the US in Sri Lanka and the Maldives – two nations which are of strategic importance to India and where it had previously worked hard to restrict the US influence

VI. Third Indian Ocean Conference (Hanoi, Vietnam, August 27, 2018):

1. Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj’s Address at the Conference:

- “We support responsible and transparent debt financing matched by responsible lending practices. We understand that following universally recognized international norms, transparency, openness, financial responsibility, and promoting sense of local ownership are essential for better and more sustainable development outcomes.”
- This was seen as an indirect swipe at China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

- Referred to a number of initiatives undertaken by India in the Indo-Pacific region including Indian Ocean Region and ASEAN by taking countries on board from maritime security, disaster management and the development of Blue Economy.
- “In all these engagements, we are guided by the development and security priorities of our partners,... We are helping our maritime neighbours set up their coastal surveillance networks for developing shared Maritime Domain Awareness.”
- “We have signed White Shipping Agreements with a number of countries. In addition, our ships have undertaken coordinated patrolling and EEZ Surveillance on the request of our partners.”
- “Another element of ensuring safety of navigation in the IOR (Indian Ocean Region) has been the hydrographic support provided to our partners.”
- “Prime Minister Modi recently spoke of his vision of a free and inclusive Indo-Pacific. The Indian Ocean is a central component of this free and inclusive Indo-Pacific. The Indian Ocean is a region where some of the largest and smallest nations of the world have coexisted in harmony. The harmony is not only because of economic or cultural commonalities, but also of ideological and civilizational commonalities.”
- “...This region cannot be only a growth-engine; it has to be a community of ideas and commitments. We have to commit to the ideas of a rule-based order, equality under international law, peaceful resolution of disputes, and equitable distribution of the benefits of globalization.”
- Highlighted the significance of United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) for peaceful resolution of disputes in seas.

VII. Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) Inaugurated in India (December 22, 2018, Gurugram, India):

- On December 22, 2018, the Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) was inaugurated at Gurugram in India.
- The IFC-IOR would work closely with countries in the region and would be manned by the Indian Navy.
- The IFC-IOR has been established at the Indian Navy's Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC) at Gurugram, which will be the single point centre interlinking all the coastal radar chains to generate a seamless real time picture of the nearly 7,500 km long coastline.
- “The need for IFC-IOR stems from importance of the IOR for world trade and security. All stakeholders are equal in this maritime security and safety milestone,” India's Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.
- The aim of the IFC is to bring various countries in the region and pool in best practices to jointly monitor the vast IOR which is currently becoming the theatre of contention between great powers and is also witnessing natural disasters and trans-national threats like piracy, terrorism and trafficking.
- “All countries – about 21 – that have already signed White Shipping Information Exchange agreements with us are IFC partners and can post International Liaison Officers (ILOs) at the centre,”
- At least 10 countries including the US, France, Italy and Japan, have expressed interest in posting their officers.
- “It is for equals, it is for partners,”
- The IFC would be tracking and monitoring 75,000 to 1.5 lakh shipping traffic in the IOR in real time, round-the-clock.
- “The expertise of the resident ILOs would be utilised towards sharing of real-time information with partners as well as for generating timely and adequate response to developing situations,”

IV.17. NUCLEAR ARMS REDUCTION TREATIES**I. Nuclear Warheads in the Possession of World's 9 Nuclear Powers:**

- The 9 nuclear powers of the world – US, Russia, France, U.K., China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea – together possess 15,000 nuclear warheads
- 9,600 of the 15,000 nuclear warheads are in military service.
- The US and Russia have over 90% of the nuclear warheads in their arsenal.

II. Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty:**1. Introduction:**

- The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, signed in 1987 by the US President Ronald Reagan and the President of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev, required both parties to eliminate all ground-launched cruise missiles with a range of 500 km to 5,500 km.
- The INF came into force on June 1, 1988.
- By June 1, 1991, the US and Russia completed their reduction destroying a total of 2,692 missiles.
- Both the US and Russia have repeatedly raised concerns about the other side's non-compliance with the INF Treaty.
- In 2008, the US expressed concern over the Russian Novator 9M729 missile tests and in 2014 alleged that Russia was testing a ground-based cruise missile.
- On January 21, 2019, the US called on Russia to destroy a new cruise missile system which, according to was a "direct and continuing violation" of the INF Treaty. The US also accused Russia of destabilising security.
- The Disarmament Ambassador of the US, Robert Wood said the system was capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear warheads and represented a "potent and direct threat to Europe and Asia" as it had a range of 500 km to 1,500 km.
- In January 2019, the US also rejected a Russian offer to save the INF Treaty because it could not be properly verified.
- On January 23, 2019, Russia emphasised that the maximum range of the 9M729 missile was 480 km. The INF bans missiles with a range above 500 km.
- The US said it would not be satisfied with Russia's offer of a "static display of missiles, because they would not show whether they breach the INF Treaty.
- In December 2018, the US gave Russia a 60-day deadline till February 2, 2019, to dismantle the Novator 9M729 missile system or the US would begin the six-month process of formally withdrawing from the INF Treaty.

2. The US Suspended Its Obligations Under the INF Treaty to Withdraw after Six Months (February 2, 2019):

- On February 1, 2019, the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that the US was suspending its obligations under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty effective from February 2, 2019 and would withdraw from the Treaty in six months.
- The US would formally give Russia and the other treaty parties a formal notice that it was withdrawing under Article XV of the Treaty which mandates a six-month notice period before withdrawal.

- **"Russia has jeopardised the United States' security interests and we can no longer be restricted by the Treaty while Russia shamelessly violates it," Mr. Pompeo said.**
- **"If Russia does not return to full and verifiable compliance with the Treaty within the six-month period by verifiably destroying its INF-violating missiles, missile launchers and associated equipment, the Treaty will terminate," according to the US Secretary of State.**
- **The US has repeatedly alleged that Russia was violating the INF Treaty by fielding a ground-based cruise missile Novator 9M729 ("SSC-8", according to NATO's terminology) which could strike Europe at a short notice. The allegation has been denied by Russia.**

3. Russia Suspended Participation in the INF Treaty (February 2, 2019):

- **On February 2, 2019 Russian President Vladimir Putin said that his country was suspending its participation in the INF Treaty.**
- **"Our American partners have announced they are suspending their participation in the deal, and we are also suspending our participation," the Russian President said.**
- **Mr. Putin stressed that Russia would no longer initiate talks with the US on disarmament. "We will wait until our partners have matured enough to conduct an equal, meaningful dialogue with us on this important topic".**
- **Russian Defence Sergei Lavrov said that the US itself has been in violation of the deal for many years.**

4. Implications of the Suspension of Participation in the INF Treaty by the US and Russia:

- **The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty played a significant role in ending the arms race between the (then) two superpowers and helped protect the NATO allies of the US in Europe from Russian missile attacks.**
- **The Russian President Vladimir Putin said Russia would "not be drawn into a costly new arms race". Russia would only deploy intermediate and short-range missiles in Europe or elsewhere in answer to similar moves from the US.**
- **Leaders of the European Union (EU) have voiced concerns over the consequences of the INF Treaty's demise and called on Russia to address concerns before the US formally leaves in August 2019.**
- **The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) said: "The US is taking this action in response to the significant risks to Euro-Atlantic security posed by Russia's covert testing, production, and fielding of 9M729 ground-launched cruise missile systems".**
- **China expressed concern over the mutual suspension and called for the US and Russia to engage in "constructive dialogue".**
- **The Russian Defence Minister Sergei Lavrov expressed concern that the US decision to withdraw from the INF Treaty could jeopardise the extension of the New START Treaty (caps the nuclear warheads held by the US and Russia), which expires in 2021.**
- **The US has been concerned that China has been gaining a strategic advantage over it as it is not party to the INF Treaty and bound by its terms. The US withdrawal from the INF Treaty would increase its weapons options in the Pacific where China has been expanding its influence.**
- **There is a changing balance of power with the rise of China as a regional hegemon and its increasing nuclear arsenal is seen as a threat by the US.**
- **The US withdrawal from the INF Treaty would lead to a new unpredictable arms race between the US, Russia and China with the potential to destabilise the Indo-Pacific**

IV.18. NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION (NATO)**I. Current Situation:****1. NATO's Annual Rapid Trident and Trident Juncture 18 Military Exercises (September/October 2018):**

- In September 2018, Ukraine launched joint military exercises with the US and other NATO countries as tensions increased with Russia over the Russian-backed insurgency in Ukraine's east.
- The annual Rapid Trident military exercises took place in western Ukraine involving some 2,200 troops from 14 countries.
- “(The participants) stand in solidarity with Ukraine, for Ukrainian security, Ukrainian sovereignty, and Ukrainian territorial integrity,” the US Ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, said.
- The military exercise was held a week before Russia held its biggest military exercises since the Cold War, with the participation of China and Mongolia.
- NATO's Trident Juncture 18 military exercise was held at the end of October 2018. This was NATO's biggest military exercise since the Cold War.
- The Trident Juncture 18 exercise involved 45,000 troops and it was the biggest movement of NATO personnel and vehicles since the 1991 collapse of Soviet Union, according to the NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg.
- The then US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis sought to reassure the European countries of the US “iron-clad” commitment to NATO.
- Mr. Mattis said at the NATO headquarters in Brussels that the US was “keenly aware of the dangers close to your home”.
- “Every NATO ally is awake today to the reality of Russia's malicious behaviour. Every ally has now increased defence spending,” the US Defence Secretary said.
- “The US has acted, showing that our commitment to the transatlantic alliance remains iron-clad,” Mr. Mattis said.

2. Macedonia Became the 30th Member of NATO (February 6, 2019):

- On February 2, 2019, NATO said that its 29 members would clear the way for Macedonia to become the alliance's 30th member, following its historic name change.
- “On 6 February we will write history: #NATO Allies will sign the accession protocol with the future Republic of North Macedonia,” NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said.
- In January 2019, Macedonia signed an accord with Greece to change the name of the former Yugoslav republic to ‘Republic of North Macedonia’ ending one of the world's longest diplomatic disputes and paving the way for the Republic of North Macedonia to join NATO and the European Union (EU).

II. Conclusion:**1. Different Phases of NATO in the Post Cold War Era:**

- **First Phase - Eastward Expansion:** The first phase in the post Cold War era saw the eastward expansion of NATO.
- **Second Phase - Out of Region Operations under the War on Terror:** In the second phase - post 9/11, NATO's operations were stepped out of the European defence zone under the war on terror.

- **Third Phase - NATO Seeking Phenomenal Transformation:** With the revival of the US-German axis with the trans-Atlantic alliance after the takeover of Ms. Angela Merkel as the Chancellor of Germany, NATO is seeking a phenomenal transformation.

2. Factors Contributing to the Increasing Relevance of NATO:

- Europe's desire to bridge the trans-Atlantic rift over the Iraq war.
- The UN's diminishing role
- The rise of China and India
- The growing profile of Russia
- The uncertainties in the Middle East
- The global energy security

IV.19. INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

SUMMARY

I. IS Eliminated from Syria After 5 Years of Fighting (March 23, 2019):

- Kurdish-Arab Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) declared victory over the Islamic State (IS) in Syria after liberating the last pocket of territory held by the IS.
- The victory of SDF marked the end of a brutal caliphate created by the IS in large parts of Iraq and Syria in 2014.
- The five-year global campaign against the Islamic State (IS) witness more than 1,00,000 strikes by the US.
- The war against the IS left a trail of destruction in cities in Iraq and Syria and resulted in the death of tens of thousands and rendered homeless hundreds of thousands.
- IS still has a scattered presence and sleeper cells across Iraq and Syria.
- The affiliates of IS in Afghanistan, Egypt's Sinai Peninsula and other countries are considered to be a global threat.
- The IS ideology has also inspired lone-wolf terror attacks in some countries.
- The territorial defeat of IS in Syria was a "critical milestone" that delivered a crushing and strategic blow to the extremist group
- The Commander-in-Chief of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Gen. Mazloum Abdi, appealed for continued assistance to his group until the full eradication of the extremist group.

II. Impact on the Syrian Conflict:

- End of the IS caliphate in Syria marked a new phase in Syria's civil war which is in its ninth year.
- Currently, Syria is divided with the government of President Bashar al-Assad, backed by Iran and Russia, controlling the west, centre and south, the US-backed Kurdish forces controlling the north and east, and Turkish allies controlling a pocket in the north.
- There are concerns about a new conflict breaking out in Syria between these players

- The elimination of IS from Syria also set the stage for withdrawal of most of the 2,000 US troops stationed in north Syria as announced by the US President Donald Trump in December 2018.
- Mr. Trump had later agreed to leave a small peacekeeping force of 200 soldiers in Syria to ensure Turkey would not get into a conflict with Kurdish-led SDF.
- The Kurds are squeezed between Turkey from the north, which regards them as a national threat, and the Syrian government forces from the south.

III. Terror Attack on Mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand (March 15, 2019):

- “Right-wing extremist,” armed with semi-automatic weapons, rampaged through two mosques in Christchurch in New Zealand during the afternoon prayers on Friday, killing 49 people and wounding many.
- Prime Minister of New Zealand Jacinda Ardern said that the attack was an act of terrorism and appeared to have been well planned.
- The attacker livestreamed footage of his going room to room, victim to victim, shooting the wounded from close range.
- The attacker, a 28-year-old Australian man named Brenton Tarrant, was arrested and charged with murder
- New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced a ban on military style semi-automatics (MSSA) and assault rifles. She stressed that the changes to the gun laws were aimed at making New Zealand a safer place.
- Attacker of mosques in Christchurch was influenced by far-right terrorists and their anti-Muslim, anti-immigration and anti-Semite ideology.
- Globally, societies need to be aware of the danger posed by right-wing racist terrorism and take measures to counter them

IV. India Joined the Christchurch Call for Action to Remove Extremist and Violent Online Content (Paris, May 15, 2019):

- India became one of the signatories to the Christchurch Call for Action to remove extremist and violent online content.
- The Christchurch Call for Action, a global document, spearheaded by the French President Emmanuel Macron and New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, was signed in Paris on May 15, 2019.
- The Christchurch Call for Action brought together governments and technology giants to commit to action that would weed out extremist and violent online content from online spaces like Facebook etc.
- The document “outlines collective, voluntary commitments from governments and online service providers intended to address the issue of terrorist and violent extremist content online and to prevent the abuse of the internet as occurred in and after the Christchurch attacks.”
- Facebook pledged to tighten restrictions and committed \$7.5 million to fund research for technology to remove such content.
- The issue of removing and fighting terrorist content online would be one of the key issues to be discussed at the G7 and G20 Summits.
- The Christchurch Call for Action was a rare instance where governments and private sector made similar pledges with the same intent amid a growing concern among countries about the need to regulate online content

V. Terror Attacks on Churches and Luxury Hotels Across Sri Lanka (April 21, 2019):

- Over 300 people were killed and nearly 500 injured in a series of bomb attacks on churches and luxury hotels across Sri Lanka. At least 10 Indians were among the blast victims.
- “Most of the blasts appear to have been suicide bombings,”
- Sri Lankan authorities blocked access to social media to “prevent” misinformation and a curfew was declared.
- The Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for the Easter blasts in Sri Lanka and identified seven suicide bombers who were involved in the attacks.
- “The preliminary investigations have revealed that what happened in Sri Lanka was in retaliation for the attack against Muslims in Christchurch,”
- India condemned the terror attacks in Sri Lanka in the “strongest terms” and offered assistance in treating the injured. Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Sri Lanka’s President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and conveyed India’s condolences.
- India had issued an alert to Sri Lanka in early April on possible bomb attacks at different spots in the island, including the Indian High Commission building, according to media reports.
- Sri Lankan police sources said that brothers from a wealthy Sri Lankan Muslim family plotted and carried out two of the Easter suicide blasts in Colombo.
- Investigators found that two suspects involved in the Easter attacks were Islamic State (IS) returnees from Syria and Iraq. Two years ago, over 30 youth from Sri Lanka had joined the IS in Syria.
- The scale and sophistication of the Easter attacks on churches and hotels in Sri Lanka suggested the involvement of an external group such as the Islamic State (IS).
- Some of the suicide bombers who carried out the country’s worst terror attack on Easter Sunday had visited Kashmir and Kerala for “some sorts of training” or to make some more links” with other foreign units.
- Mobs attacked several mosques and torched several shops and homes of Muslims in Sri Lanka’s west coast and north-west of capital Colombo.
- Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena told diplomats based in Colombo that Sri Lanka was 99% secure, and urged countries to lift the travel ban imposed following the Easter attacks.

VI. Conclusion:

- Easter suicide bomb attacks in Sri Lanka have raised concerns about the Islamic State’s expansion into South Asia.
- After losing territories in Iraq and Syria, the IS has changed its strategy from expanding territories to expanding insurgency and terror
- South Asia has been one of the key targets of IS as seen by the terror attacks carried out by the IS in the last few years in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh
- The increasing terror attacks by the IS in South Asia is a security concern for India. Indian intelligence agencies need to be on high alert and policing, rigorously
- The suicide bombings in Sri Lanka highlighted the need for international cooperation on terror. Nations need to enhance security-intelligence cooperation among them. Security agencies need to coordinate to share real-time actionable intelligence regarding terror suspects and plots

- To defeat the sort of terror unleashed by the IS, it is essential to win the psychological war and isolate and eliminate terrorists

UPDATE – PART-III

I. FATF Warns Pakistan to Complete Action Plan by October 2019 to Avoid being Blacklisted (Orlando, Florida, June 16-21):

- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) held its plenary meeting in Orlando, Florida from June 16-21, 2019.
- Pakistan which continued to remain on a greylist of FATF was given a warning and told that it lacked a proper understanding of transnational terrorist financing.
- In line with India's efforts to isolate Pakistan on the international stage for its support to terror in Kashmir, the mention of transnational terrorist financing by FATF was significant.
- "The FATF expresses concern that not only did Pakistan fail to complete its action plan items with January deadlines, it also failed to complete its action plan items due May 2019. The FATF strongly urges Pakistan to swiftly complete its action plan by October 2019 when the last set of action plans are set to expire. Otherwise, the FATF will decide the next step at that time for insufficient progress," a FATF statement said.
- Pakistan failed to complete 25 of the 27 action points given by FATF.
- Pakistan was also pulled up by FATF on four counts, including "no investigation done by Pakistan against terror funding done by UN designated terrorists", not freezing weapon stores, ammunition dumps of the terror outfits, lack of implementation of legal provisions for targeted financial sanctions against all UN designated entities and not stopping the sustenance allowance to terrorists given by the Pakistan government.
- Multilateral lenders like IMF, the World Bank and the EU will continue downgrading Pakistan, making its financial situation more difficult, according to analysts.
- In April 2019, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi had said that being greylisted by FATF could cost Pakistan \$10 billion per year.
- In order to stay off the FATF blacklist, Pakistan needs the support of at least three of a total of 36 (excluding two regional organisations) FATF members.
- A country needs the support of 15 members to move off the greylist, as per the FATF charter.

II. Actions taken by Pakistan:

- On July 3, 2019, Pakistan announced a crackdown against Hafiz Saeed, leader of the Lashker-e-Taiba (LeT) responsible for the Mumbai terror attacks in 2008.
- Pakistan's counter-terrorism department said it had launched 23 cases against Saeed and 12 aides for using five trusts to collect funds and donations for the LeT.
- Two banned LeT-linked charities, the Jamaat-ud-Dawa and the Falah-i-Insaniat Foundation, were also targeted, the department said.
- The department said that the action was in accordance with UN sanctions against the individuals and entities.
- The action was a direct result of the FATF plenary's ultimatum to implement all 27 points of action by October 2019.
- On July 15, 2019, Hafiz Saeed and three of his aides were granted pre-arrest bail by an anti-terrorism court in Pakistan in a case pertaining to the banned outfit's illegal use of land for its seminary.

- The US Department of Treasury has designated Saeed a Specially Designated Global Terrorist, and the US has offered a \$10 million reward for information that brings him to justice.
- On July 17, 2019, Hafiz Saeed was arrested in a terror financing case. His arrest was announced as part of renewed efforts under the “national action plan” to clamp down on terror financing

III. India's Stand:

- India said it expected Pakistan to fully comply with the action plan set out by FATF by taking “credible, verifiable, irreversible and sustainable measures to address global concerns related to terrorism and terrorist financing”.
- “Pakistan claims that they have taken steps against terrorists and terrorist outfits, but when it comes to taking action against the people that we have demanded, they go into a denial mode, they even deny that they exist in their country. On the other hand they try to show the international community that they are taking some action against terrorist groups operating from their soil. They stand completely exposed as far as their claim of taking steps against terrorist groups in Pakistan is concerned,” India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said on July 4, 2019.
- “This is not the first time that Hafiz Saeed has been arrested or detained. This drama has taken place at least eight times since 2001. The question is whether this time it would be more than a cosmetic exercise and whether Saeed will be tried and sentenced for his terrorist activities,” the MEA spokesperson said on July 18, 2019.
- “Effective action mandated internationally against Saeed and his terrorist organisations is an obligation on the part of all UN member states,” Mr. Kumar said.

V. FOREIGN POLICY

1. INDO-US RELATIONS

SUMMARY

I. Introduction:

1. New Level of Maturity in Indo-US Ties

2. Basic Shift in US Policy towards India:

- Offer for Cooperation in Civilian Nuclear Technology
- Defence Cooperation Agreement
- Institutional Means to Convert Aspects of NSSP into Tangible Projects
- Defence Cooperation and Nuclear Energy were Centrepieces of Indo-US Ties

3. US Proposed Scaling-Up of Strategic Relations with India (January 11, 2018):

- The objective was to take the relations “from the strategic to the durable.”
- Proposed a multi-service military exercise, involving Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force of the two countries
- The US looks at India as a major power in “the Indo-Pacific and beyond”. The US is now referring to the “Asia-Pacific” region as “Indo-Pacific” emphasising the centrality of India.
- “A related and equally important objective is to continue our support to India as a net provider of regional security, capable of responding successfully to threats to peace, especially in the Indian Ocean and its vicinity”
- Indian and US Air Forces would significantly ramp up operational cooperation to complement the strategic interests of the two countries in the Indo-Pacific region, where China has been increasing its military influence.

- India was a “central strategic partner” of the US in the region and two of the world’s largest Air Forces were going to shift the focus jointly on the Indo-Pacific region.
- The US Air Force Chief stressed that the rules-based order must be preserved in the critical lanes.
- “Quadrilateral” coalition among the US, India, Japan and Australia would provide deeper cooperation between the Indian and American Air Forces.
- “We have common interests in preserving the rules-based order. So while we look for opportunities for partnerships, it is actually appropriate also for us to be critical of those who are trying to change,”

II. India's Defence Deals with the US:

1. Arms Supply:

- Since 2007, the US has won defence deals worth \$15 billion with India including the following:
 - 11 C-17 Globemaster-III strategic aircraft
 - 13 C-130J Super Hercules planes
 - 12 P-8I maritime patrol aircraft
 - 145 M-777 ultralight howitzers
 - 22 Apache attack & 15 Chinook heavy-lift helicopters
- The defence deals under pipeline include the following:
 - 6 Apache attack helicopters
 - 24 S-70B multi-role, anti-submarine helicopters
- The defence deals under discussion include the following:
 - F/A-18 or F-16 fighter production line in India for 110 jets for \$20 billion
 - Supply of 22 MQ-9 Reaper or Predator-B drones
 - Joint production of advanced infantry combat vehicles

2. Four Foundational Defence Pacts Required by the US for Its Defence Partners:

- The US enters into four ‘foundational agreements’ with its defence partners:
 - General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA)
 - Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)
 - Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA)
 - Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) for Geospatial Cooperation
- India has so far signed Three foundational agreements with the US – GSOMIA, LEMOA and COMCASA

3. The US Eased Export Controls on High-Technology Product Sales to India (July 30, 2018):

- On July 30, 2018, the US eased export controls on high-technology product sales to India by designating it as a Strategic Trade Authorisation-1 country.
- In 2016, the US recognised India as a “Major Defence Partner”, a designation which allows India to buy more advanced and sensitive technologies from the US.
- “We have granted to India Strategic Trade Authorisation STA-1,” the US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross announced. He stressed that it was “a very important change” in India’s status in the export control regime.

4. Significance of Designating India as Strategic Trade Authorisation Country (STA-1):

- The decision of the US to upgrade India from Strategic Trade Authorisation (STA-2) to STA-1 category is significant for the bilateral relations between the two countries
- In STA-2 category India was allowed to import only a limited number of dual-use technologies.
- In the STA-1 category India could import more than 90% dual-use technologies, whose export was severely restricted by the US and permitted only to its NATO allies and few trusted partners.

III. Current Irritants in Indo-US Relations:

1. US Sanctions on Russia
2. US Sanctions on Iran
3. Trade Issues

1. US Sanctions on Russia:**A. US Senate Passed the CAATSA Without any Waiver Provision (June 18, 2018):**

- India is concerned about CAATSA as it has defence relations with Russia and is dependent Russian military hardware.

B. India's Stand:

- On July 13, 2018, India's Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that India was going ahead with the purchase of S-400 air defence system from Russia despite US concerns, and has told the US that it is for them to address concerns over its recent sanctions on Russia.
- "We have made it clear that CAATSA is a US law and not a UN law," the Defence Minister said.
- India's stand was conveyed to a delegation of the US Congress, headed by Chairman of the US House Armed Service Committee Mac Thornberry in May 2018.
- Negotiations had reached a "conclusive stage" with Russia for the purchase of five S-400 air defence systems worth ₹39,000 crore.

C. The US Stand:

- The US administration has said waivers would be incorporated in CAATSA to protect friends and allies, but it is yet to be done.
- The US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis sought waivers from sanctions on some countries making a transition from their military dependence on Russia, stressing that it would allow them to build closer security ties with the US and strengthen US' allies in key regions.
- Several US lawmakers said that they were working to get CAATSA waivers for India.

2. US Sanctions on Iran:**A. US Stand:**

- In May 2018, the US pulled out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) multilateral nuclear deal with Iran and subsequently brought the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) law which sanctions countries dealing with US "adversaries."
- The US decided to re-impose sanctions on Iran which would be implemented in two batches; on August 6, 2018 and November 4, 2018.
- The US officials have been asking all countries including India to bring oil imports from Iran to zero by November 4, 2018.
- On June 28, 2018, the US envoy to the UN Nikki Haley, who was on a visit to India, called Iran a "threat" to the world and said she had raised concerns over trade with Iran at her meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

B. Implications for India:

- India is the second largest importer of crude from Iran after China.
- India's Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said that government will go by "national interests".
- "In fact, there is not a single oil-producing country from where we don't buy crude today. So there is no threat of supply disruptions because of the latest threat of US sanctions," according to the Oil Minister.

- For India finding replacements for the supply of oil from Iran is not a problem as other countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq could fill the gap.
- The challenge for India is to balance its bilateral relations with Iran and the financial/strategic stake in Chabahar Port project with imperative of avoiding the US sanctions.
- India had committed to increase its crude imports from Iran by 25% during the visit of the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in February 2018.
- Analysts point out that India's decision on importing crude from Iran would have a cascading effect on its bilateral ties with both Iran and the US.
- If India ignores the US pressure on stopping crude imports from Iran, it could invite sanctions from India's powerful friend and defence partner
- If India gives in to US pressure by cutting oil imports from Iran, then it risks damaging its relations with Iran, apart from losing access to important trade routes through the Chabahar Port and the International North South Transport Corridor, and damaging its international reputation
- India is seeking a waiver from sanctions for its investment in the Chabahar Port.

3. Trade Issues:

- From August 4, 2018, India's retaliatory tariffs worth \$235 million on 29 US products will come into effect, in response to the US decision to increase import duties on Indian steel and aluminium.
- The US and India are also divided over a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) ruling that would make firms operating in India to move all data servers to India alone, by October 2018.
- The first round of US sanctions against Iran would come into effect from August 6, 2018. A US team visited India in July 2018 to discuss US demand for India to zero out its oil imports by November 4, 2018.
- India and the US need a framework trade agreement that deals with all the trade issues they face like tariff wars, price caps, data localisation and sanctions on energy trade with Iran

IV. India and the US Held the Inaugural 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue (New Delhi, September 6, 2018):

1. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue:

- During the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the US in 2017, India and the US agreed to have a 2+2 dialogue.
- The 2+2 talks were held between India's Defence and External Affairs Ministers Nirmala Sitharaman and Sushma Swaraj and the US Defence Secretary James Mattis and the US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo.
- The two-plus-two dialogue covers the entire spectrum of bilateral relations between India and the US and looks to further expand their global strategic cooperation, including in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo described the 2+2 dialogue as being important for the US' Indo-Pacific policy.
- Mr. Pompeo said India was a "true strategic partner who, frankly, is our only designated major defence partner, with whom we have a great relationship and who is very important to our success in our Indo-Pacific Strategy."
- "We hope we can find opportunities to continue to expand the relationship not only diplomatic and military-to-military but a good set of business relationships as well".

2. Focus of the First 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue:

- Deepening global strategic partnership between India and the US

- Resolving differences over India's defence engagement with Russia and crude oil import from Iran.

3. Agreements Signed:

- India and the US signed the landmark Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA).
- Hotlines between the Defence and Foreign Ministers of both countries.
- India and the US would a first-ever tri-service joint exercise on the east coast of India in 2019.
- A Memorandum of Intent was signed between the US Defence Innovation Unit (DIU) and the Indian Defence Innovation Organization – Innovation for Defence Excellence (DIO-iDEX), which would look into joint projects through the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI).

4. Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA):

- With the signing of the Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) India has concluded three of the four foundational agreements with the US.
- The COMCASA would allow the US to transfer specialised equipment for encrypted communications for US-origin platforms like C-17, C-130 and P-8I aircraft.
- The COMCASA would come into force immediately and is valid for 10 years.
- The Indian government has negotiated an India-specific agreement and “specific additional provisions” had been incorporated in the text to safeguard security and national interests
- “While the text of COMCASA is confidential, we have ensured that we have full access to the relevant equipment and there will be no disruptions. Data acquired through such systems cannot be disclosed or transferred to any person or entity without India's consent. Both countries will implement the agreement in a manner consistent with the national security interests of the other”.

5. Significance of COMCASA:

- The foundational agreement Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) would allow India access to cutting-edge military technology and platforms with encrypted and secure communications and data links
- The COMCASA would ensure that the militaries of India and the US can share operational intelligence in real time.
- The COMCASA would also enable Indian military to get a better picture of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) which is witnessing enhanced Chinese movements
- “With CISMOA [COMCASA is an India-specific version of CISMOA], Indian armed forces will get to fully exploit the capability of the military platforms procured from the US. For instance, the P-8I reconnaissance aircraft of the Navy which have emerged as a major force multiplier are currently operating at limited capacity,”
- With the signing of the COMCASA, India can access the Combined Enterprise Regional Information Exchange System, or CENTRIXS, which is a secure communication system of network of the US.
- Indian Navy ships with CENTRIXS on board could communicate with the US Navy when required and could benefit from the wider situational picture of the region as the US has a large number of ships and aircraft deployed.
- “This would reduce the stress on our assets and allow us prioritise our deployments more efficiently”.

- Concerns were expressed that the CENTRIXS would allow the US Navy access to India's own secure communication network and that the information shared with the US would be accessible by Pakistan.
- Specific measures were incorporated in the agreement to "have full access to the relevant equipment and there will be no disruptions."
- "Data acquired through such systems cannot be disclosed or transferred to any person or entity without India's consent".

6. Highlights of the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue:

- COMCASA
- Negotiations on an Industrial Security Annex (ISA)
- Expansion of Two-Way Trade in Defence
- Strategic Partners
- Called on Pakistan to Stop Terrorist Strikes on Other Countries
- India and the US also called on Pakistan to bring to justice expeditiously the perpetrators of the Mumbai, Pathankot, Uri, and other "cross-border terrorist attacks."
- "India supports President Trump's South Asia policy. His call for Pakistan to stop its policy of supporting cross-border terrorism finds resonance with us,"
- India and the US welcomed the launch of a bilateral dialogue on designation of terrorists in 2017 which, according to theme, was strengthening cooperation and action against terrorist groups, including al-Qaeda, Islamic State (IS), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammad, Hizb-ul Mujahideen, the Haqqani network, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, D-Company and their affinities.
- "Our counter-terrorism cooperation has acquired a new qualitative edge and purpose... We welcome the recent designations of Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists by the US. They underscore the international community's scrutiny over the threat of terrorism emanating from Pakistan," according to Ms. Swaraj.
- Working Collectively in the Indo-Pacific Region to Support Transparent, Responsible and Sustainable Debt Financing Practices in Infrastructure Development
- Free, Open and Inclusive Indo-Pacific Region
- Support for an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned Peace Process
- US Support to India's Immediate Accession to the NSG
- Trade:
- The US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo said trade barriers for US companies in India have to "be reduced."
- India's Purchase of S-400 Air Defence Systems from Russia:
- "Our effort here, too, is not to penalise great strategic partners like India, a major defence partner. The sanctions aren't intended to adversely impact countries like India," Mr. Pompeo said.

7. Significance of the 2+2 Dialogue:

- The outcome of the 2+2 talks would help unleash the untapped potential of the relationship between India and the US and further elevate the level of engagement
- The talks were "productive" and the two sides took stock of "impressive strides" in the bilateral relationship and discussed steps to take the relationship to an "even higher trajectory,"

- “During the discussion, we noticed a growing convergence of views, among others on the Indo-Pacific.”
- “The recent decision by the United States to put India in the list of countries eligible for Strategic Trade Authorization Tier-I License Exemption reflects New Delhi’s robust and responsible export control policies. In our meeting today, we also agreed to work together to secure India’s membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group at the earliest,”
- 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue between India and the US is significant as it upgrades bilateral ties. After Japan and Australia, India is the third country to have such a dialogue with the US.
- The upgradation in bilateral ties with the US is not at the expense of India’s independent foreign policy and strategic engagement with other countries as it is clear from the US’ acceptance of India’s defence relations with Russia and trade engagements with Iran, according to analysts.
- The 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue is a platform for both countries to discuss issues of strategic importance and also deepens diplomatic and security cooperation.
- Strengthening defence ties is the core of Indo-US strategic engagement with India’s designation as the Major Defence Partner of the US creating the opportunity for enhanced defence and security cooperation
- The defence cooperation enhances the two-way trade in defence items and defence manufacturing supply linkages.
- The signing of the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) increased the inter-operability between the militaries and military systems of India and the US
- Another significant outcome of the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue was the expansion of counter-terrorism cooperation between the two countries and the naming of Pakistan-based terrorist outfits.
- The 2+2 talks, held after two previous cancellations, brought the focus on the Indo-US ties after months of drift.

UPDATE – PART II

SUMMARY

I. The Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) – US Trade Preference Programme:

- A US trade preference programme that is intended to aid developing countries by eliminating duties on some of the products imported from them.
- 121 countries designated as beneficiaries of the GSP programme.
- The GSP was established by the US Trade Act of 1974.
- Helps spur sustainable development in beneficiary countries by helping them increase and diversify their trade with the US
- Moving GSP imports from the docks to US consumers, farmers, and manufacturers supports tens of thousands of jobs in the US.
- “GSP boosts American competitiveness by reducing the costs of imported inputs used by US companies to manufacture goods in the United States.”
- The GSP is important to US small businesses, many of which rely on the programmes’ duty savings to stay competitive
- In 2017, India was the biggest beneficiary of the GSP. India exported products worth \$5.6 billion under the GSP programme in 2017.

II. US President Donald Trump Issued a Proclamation Ending Concessions for Indian Exports under the GSP:

- US President Donald Trump issued a proclamation ending the GSP trade benefits to India effective from June 5, 2019.
- "I have determined that India has not assured the United States that India will provide equitable access to its markets. Accordingly, it is appropriate to terminate India's designation as a beneficiary developing country effective June 5, 2019,"
- The benefits under the GSP programme could be reinstated subject to India and the US reaching an agreement

III. Impact on India & India's Stand:

- "Minimal and moderate impact", amounting to only \$190 million on the value of \$5.6 billion in exports to the US that fall under the GSP category
- Sectors like gem and jewellery, leather and processed foods will lose the benefits of the programme.
- In 2018, Indian merchandise exports to the US under the GSP programme were \$6.3 billion. This represented 11% of all merchandise from India.
- India was the largest beneficiary of the GSP programme, accounting for over 25% of all the GSP covered imports of the US.
- "India, as part of our bilateral trade discussions, had offered resolution on significant US requests in an effort to find a mutually acceptable way forward. It is unfortunate that this did not find acceptance by the US,"
- "India, like the US and other nations, shall always uphold its national interests in these matters. We have significant development imperatives and concerns and our people also aspire for better standards of living. This will remain the guiding factor in the Government's approach,"
- The government of India was confident that India and the US would continue to work together for further growing ties following the US decision to withdraw concessions under the GSP.
- "In any relationship, in particular in the area of economic ties, there are ongoing issues which get resolved mutually from time to time,"

IV. US Firms Not Happy with the US Government's Decision to Withdraw Concessions to Indian Exports Under the GSP Programme:

- It would cost US companies \$300 million in additional annual tariffs.
- "American importers will pay more, while some American exporters will continue to face current market access barriers in India and others, including farmers, are very likely to be subject to new retaliatory tariffs,"
- GSP provides important benefits for both India and the US.

V. Strains in India-US Trade Relations:

- US decision to withdraw the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) status given to India 30 years ago was one of the aspects of the strains in India-US trade relations.
- For the past one year, India-US Trade Relations have been under strain over the US claims of unfair trade restrictions on sale of dairy products and medical equipment, as well as proposed Indian regulations on data localisation and e-commerce companies operating in India

- After several rounds of talks on a comprehensive trade package, there was no breakthrough.
- The new External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and the Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal will have to work to revive the talks.
- On US ban on Iranian oil, India is yet to categorically state its stand, although it has not purchased Iranian oil since May 2, 2019.
- US would impose sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) against India, if it goes ahead with its purchase of the S-400 Triumf missile shield from Russia.
- India has already announced that it would get its first S-400 Triumf missile system from Russia in 2020 and the contract of \$5.5 billion would be completed by 2030.

VI. Indian Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale's Visit to the US (March 11-13, 2019):

- India's Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale visited the US for discussions with his US State Department counterparts and others in the administration and the US Congress.
- The visit was part of the Foreign Office Consultation and Strategic Security Dialogue.
- Mr. Gokhale met the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and discussed the India-US 2+2 Dialogue, the Pulwama situation, Afghanistan, and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region and trade
- "[The] Foreign Secretary conveyed appreciation to the US Government and to Secretary Pompeo personally for the firm support that India received from the US in the aftermath of the terrorist attack in Pulwama, in the State of Jammu and Kashmir,"
- "They agreed that Pakistan needs to take concerted action to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure and to deny safe haven to all terrorist groups. They agreed that those who support or abet terrorism in any form should be held accountable,"

VII. 9th Round of India-US Strategic Security Dialogue (March 13, 2019):

- Co-chaired by India's Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale and the US Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, Andrea Thompson.
- "They committed to strengthen bilateral security and civil nuclear cooperation, including the establishment of six US nuclear power plants in India,"
- The two sides exchanged views on a wide range of global security and non-proliferation challenges and reaffirmed their commitment to work together to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and to deny access to such weapons by terrorists and non-state actors

UPDATE – PART III

I. India to Impose Retaliatory Tariffs on 29 US Goods:

- In March 2018, the US imposed 25% tariff on steel and 10% import duty on aluminium. India was one of the major exporters of steel and aluminium.
- India decided to impose retaliatory tariffs on 29 goods imported from the US from June 16, 2019, a year after it had initially decided to do so.
- The tariffs will apply to \$220-290 million worth of goods and will have about the same impact as the tariffs imposed by US on India in 2018.

II. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's Visit to India (June 25-26, 2019):

1. Agenda for the Visit:

- Strategic relations and people-to-people talks were on the agenda.
- The focus of the talks would be on Trade issues between India and the US.
- The other issues to be discussed included the US objections to the purchase of S-400, its sanction on imports of oil from Iran and Venezuela and its demand that India must not allow Chinese telecom major Huawei to participate in 5G network trials.

2. Meeting between India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo:

- India and the US resolved to "work through" their differences which have led to an impasse on trade issues during the meeting between India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.
- "If you trade with somebody, and particularly if they are your biggest trading partners, it's impossible that you don't have trade issues. But I think the sign of a mature relationship is that ability to negotiate your way through that and find common ground," Mr. Jaishankar said.
- Mr. Jaishankar and Mr. Pompeo discussed and tried to sort out issues including tariffs and counter-tariffs imposed by the US and India on each other in the past year, apart from the specific concerns of the US with India's proposed laws on e-commerce and data localisation, on price caps and market access.
- "The US is clear that it seeks greater market access and the removal of trade barriers in our economic relationship, and today I addressed these differences in the spirit of friendship and I think we will be able to resolve these issues in the interests of our two countries," Mr. Pompeo said.
- Both sides had come away with a "better understanding" of each other's concerns on a wide variety of issues between trade, including energy, defence, investment concerns and people-to-people contacts, as well as the growing conflict in the Gulf with Iran and the peace process in Afghanistan, India's External Affairs Minister said.
- India rejected calls the US and the threat of sanctions under the CAATSA law. Mr. Jaishankar said that India will take its decision on the purchase of the Russian S-400 Triumf anti-missile system in its own "national interest", and conveyed this to Mr. Pompeo.
- "On the CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act) issue I explained to Secretary Pompeo in some detail that we have many relationships with many countries, and many of them have some standing and they have a history," Mr. Jaishankar said.
- India's External Affairs Minister also raised India's concerns over growing US-Iran tensions and their impact on India's energy security.
- "We know that Iran is the world's largest state sponsor of terror, and the Indian people have suffered from terror around the world. So I think there is a shared understanding of the threat and a common purpose to ensuring that we keep energy at that right prices and deter this threat," the US Secretary of State said.

III. Meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump on the Sidelines of the G20 Summit (Osaka, Japan, June 28, 2019):

- On June 28, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a meeting with the US President Donald Trump on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Osaka, Japan.

- The two leaders held “very open and productive” talks on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Osaka, Japan on a host of issues, ranging from trade disputes to the crisis in the Gulf.
- Both leaders also pledged to provide a “strong leadership” to the world to address pressing global challenges like terrorism.
- Mr. Modi thanked Mr. Trump for expressing his “love towards India” in a letter delivered by the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who visited India on June 25-26, 2019.
- The Indian Prime Minister said India stands committed to further deepening economic and cultural relations with the US.

IV. US Senate Bill Grants India NATO Ally-Like Status:

- In June-end 2019, the US Senate passed a Bill that brings India on par with US NATO allies Japan, Australia and South Korea to increase defence partnership including transfer of advanced technology.
- The National Defense Authorisation Act, or NDAA for the fiscal year 2020, which contained this proposal, was passed by the US Senate.
- The Bill was introduced by Senate India Caucus co-chair Senator John Cornyn with support of Senate India Caucus co-chair Senator Mark Warner.
- The amendment provides for increased US-India defence cooperation in the Indian Ocean in the areas of humanitarian assistance, counter-terrorism, counter-piracy and maritime security.
- The Bill would be signed into law after both the chambers of the US Congress – the House of Representatives and the Senate – pass it.
- The Defence Budget passed by the Senate said, “It is the sense of the Senate that the United States should strengthen and enhance its major defence partnership with India,” and listed six specific actions it wanted US President Donald Trump’s Administration to take.
- The US Senate directed the Trump Administration to explore “additional steps to implement the major defence partner designation to better facilitate interoperability, information sharing, and appropriate technology transfers” and to undertake “strategic initiatives to help develop the defence capabilities of India”.
- The Senate also urged for “increasing the frequency and scope of exchanges” between senior civilian officials and military officers “to support the development and implementation of the major defence partnership”.
- The Budget document also suggested an increase in engagement with India in multilateral frameworks “to promote regional security and defend shared values and common interests in the rules-based order”.
- The document said the quadrilateral dialogue among the US, India, Japan and Australia should be enhanced.

V. India-US Trade Talks (New Delhi, July 11-12, 2019):

- “A delegation led by Assistant United States Trade Representative (AUSTR) Christopher Wilson visited India on July 11-12 to explore potential for enhanced bilateral trade and economic engagement with India under the new government,” the Commerce Ministry said in a statement.
- The US delegation held bilateral talks on July 12, 2019 with the Indian delegation led by Sanjay Chadha, Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce.

- “The Meeting aimed at providing new impetus to bilateral trade and commercial ties, in line with the mandate given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the US President Donald Trump during their meeting at Osaka, Japan on June 28, 2019,” the statement said.
- “Both sides discussed broad contours of bilateral trade and commercial ties and agreed to continue their discussions for achieving mutually beneficial outcomes aimed at further growing the economic relationship and addressing mutual trade concerns,” the statement said.
- The US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) estimated that US-India bilateral trade will increase from \$143 billion to \$238 billion by 2025. This increase will occur if trade increases by 7.5% each year, as has been the trend since the last seven years.

VI. Conclusion:

- As a growing strategic power, India is seen by the US as counterweight to China in the region. India is seen as a nation where economic and political freedoms go hand in hand.
- The visit of US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to India and the meeting between India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the US President Donald Trump on the sidelines of the G20 summit signalled the importance assigned by the US to India in its overall strategic vision of the world.
- The Bill passed by the US Senate to grant India a NATO-ally like status also points to India's importance in the US strategic vision.
- Both countries have differences on trade issues, India's purchase of S-400 Triumf anti-missile system from Russia and oil imports from Iran and Venezuela. These differences are being sorted out through negotiations.
- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said that the differences between the two countries will be discussed in the framework of the big picture. The big picture, according to the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is that the two countries share both common interests and values. This is the right framework to resolve differences.
- The positive messages from both countries point to the commitment of both countries to work through their disputes. This commitment is based on the realisation that there is a strategic imperative to take relationship forward.
- India and the US have a shared vision of Asia which is free, open, rules-based system. This shared vision would ensure a strong partnership between the two countries.

V.2. INDO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

SUMMARY

I. The Main Sectors of Indo-Russian Partnership:

1. Defence:

- Russia is India's largest defence supplier.
- The current proposed defence supplies from Russia worth over \$12 billion include frigates, Kamov helicopters, S-400 air defence system and lease of a second nuclear powered submarine.
- On October 4, 2018, India and Russia signed the contract for five S-400 'Triumf' missile systems.
- Both countries have jointly produced the BrahMos cruise missile and are in the process of jointly building the Fifth Generation Combat Aircraft.
- Russian made Sukhoi fighter aircraft are the main stay of Indian Air Force.
- Russia's technical support is critical for the maintenance of Russian origin defence equipment in India.

- Russia is also India's major partner in counter-terrorism.
- Currently, both countries are trying to circumvent the US sanctions on Russia's defence sales to India.

2. Nuclear Energy:

- Russia is, currently, the only foreign civil nuclear plant supplier in India.
- Two units of Russian-origin nuclear reactors are operational at the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant in Tamil Nadu. Four more units are under construction.
- Russia has also been supplying fuel for other nuclear power plants in India.
- India and Russia have also agreed on an Action Plan for Prioritization and Implementation of Cooperation Areas in the Nuclear Field which would expand civil nuclear partnership, comprising a second site for Russian nuclear reactors in India and cooperation in other markets in West Asia, Africa and Latin America.

3. Oil and Gas:

- India has over \$10 billion investment in the Russian oil and gas sector.
- India's biggest FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) came from Russian oil major Rosneft for Essar Oil.
- India and Russia have agreed to launch joint projects on exploration of hydrocarbons in the Arctic Shelf of the Russian Federation.
- A gas pipeline from Russia to India was also proposed.

4. Connectivity:

- The International North-South Transport Corridor through Iran will be play a key role in connectivity.
- India's is taking part the construction of the Chabahar Port in Iran which will help in connecting Russia through Afghanistan.
- Russia has offered incentives for investment in its far-eastern region which could be connected with India.
- Russia also wants India to join the Russian-led connectivity projects in the Eurasian region.

5. Space:

- India's first satellite Aryabhata was launched on a Russian (USSR) launch vehicle Soyuz 43 years ago.
- India and Russia are exploring the possibility of cooperation in manned space flight.

II. Russian President Vladimir Putin's Visit to India for the Annual India-Russia Summit (October 4-5, 2018):

1. India and Russia Signed the S-400 'Triumf' missile system Contract:

- On October 4, 2018, India and Russia signed the contract for five S-400 'Triumf' missile systems after the annual summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin in New Delhi.
- "The sides welcomed the conclusion of the contract for the supply of the S-400 long range surface to air missile to India," the Joint Statement said.

- The agreement for the estimated \$5.43 billion (₹40,300 crore) S-400 system was concluded by India and Russia after the annual summit.
- The US Embassy issued a statement warning that any waiver for the S-400 deal would be considered on only a “transaction-by-transaction basis.”
- The US has warned that the deals could attract sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) law that restricts defence purchases from Russia, Iran and North Korea.
- India has been negotiating with the US administration for a “sanctions waiver”, but the US officials have given no clear signal that India will be given a waiver.

2. India and Russia Signed Eight Key Agreements:

- Protocol for Consultations
- Economic Development
- Space Cooperation
- Nuclear Cooperation
- Transport Cooperation
- Railways
- Small Industries Cooperation
- Fertilizers

3. Talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin:

- “Russia has always stood by India's development...Russia and India agree on multipolarity multilateralism in the world,” Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.
- The talks between the two leaders included the issue of Iran's nuclear deal, situation in Afghanistan, Syria and cross-border terror.
- “The Sides reaffirmed their commitment to the principles of international law and centrality of the United Nations in International relations,” according to the Joint Statement.
- “Both Sides share the view that implementation in good faith of generally recognized principles and rules of international law excludes the practice of double standards or imposition by some States of their will on other States, and consider that imposition of unilateral coercive measures not based on international law, is an example of such practice.”
- “Both sides would continue to work together to promote a democratic world order based on global and shared interests.”
- India and Russia supported the idea of establishment of Regional Security Architecture that provides equal and indivisible security to all countries in Asia and the regions of Pacific and Indian Oceans.
- Both countries stressed on the importance of the continuation of the multilateral dialogue on this theme within the framework of the East Asia Summits and other regional fora.
- India welcomed the initiative of Russia to create a Larger Eurasian Partnership in the backdrop of India's SCO membership.
- “Both Sides agreed that all new initiatives aimed at strengthening of the regional order are to be based on multilateralism, principles of transparency, inclusiveness, mutual respect and unity in the common pursuit of progress and prosperity and not directed against any country. In this regard, the Sides welcomed the constructive consultations held in Moscow on 24 August 2018,” the Joint Statement said.

4. Significance of the India-Russia Annual Summit:

- “India gives top priority to its relations with Russia. In this rapidly changing world, our relations have become more relevant,” Prime Minister Narendra Modi said

- Conclusion of the S-400 missile systems deal with Russia could have lasting implications for the Indo-US relations.
- The agreements signed between India and Russia including the S-400 deal during the Russian President's visit to India was seen as a reaffirmation of India's desire for "strategic autonomy"
- India, which is also the Major Defence Partner of the US, has to delicately balance its relations with the US and Russia amid deepening tensions between the US and Russia.
- India and Russia signed deals in the fields of nuclear energy and space cooperation, which would take the strategic partnership between the two countries to a next level
- The Action Plan for Prioritization and Implementation of Cooperation Areas in the Nuclear Field would expand civil nuclear partnership, comprising a second site for Russian nuclear reactors in India and cooperation in other markets in West Asia, Africa and Latin America.
- The MoU signed by ISRO and ROSCOSMOS for joint activities in the field of Human Spaceflight Programme would enable Indian astronauts to be trained in Russia. Both sides stressed on longstanding India-Russia cooperation in outer space.
- "Under President Putin's leadership, India-Russia relations have reached new heights. Our 'Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership' shows our mutual interests," Mr. Modi said.
- "Our relations have grown even stronger due to the efforts of businesses on both sides. In the past two years alone, the trade between the two nations has increased a lot and in particular grown by 20% in 2017-18," Mr. Modi said.
- "India considered Russia its most important partner in its economic growth," the Prime Minister said.
- The Russian President Vladimir Putin also emphasised the importance of India as a trade partners for Russia, highlighting opportunities for trade in energy, digital economy, infrastructure and start-ups.
- Both countries agreed to work together to address customs issues as well as any other barriers to trade, according to Mr. Putin.

III. Conclusion:

1. Annual Summits Strengthen Mutual Understanding
2. Indo-Russian Partnership Based on Long-Standing Friendship, Mutual Trust and Convergence of Interests
3. Energy and Defence are the Core Elements of Indo-Russian Strategic Partnership:
4. Russia Reclaiming Its Position as India's Top Defence Partner:
5. Sustaining the Indo-Russian Relations

UPDATE – PART II

I. India and Russia Signed a Deal on Nuclear Submarine (March 7, 2019):

- On March 7, 2019, India signed a \$3-billion deal with Russia for leasing a nuclear-powered attack submarine for the Indian Navy for a period of 10 years.
- Under the deal Russia will have to deliver the Akula class submarine, to be known as Chakra III, to the Indian Navy by 2025.
- Chakra III would be the third Russian submarine to be leased by the Indian Navy.

- Nuclear-powered submarines have the advantage of remaining submerged for months and there is no need to surface like conventional submarines which needs to come out to recharge their batteries.
- India's first indigenously built ballistic missile firing submarine INS Arihant, entered into service in 2016.
- India is also keen to extend the lease of Chakra II, which ends in 2022.
- India has been significantly increasing its naval prowess in the backdrop of China's attempts to expand its influence in the Indian Ocean region.

II. Prime Minister Narendra Modi to be Conferred Russia's Highest Civilian Award:

- On April 12, 2019, Russia announced that President Vladimir Putin would confer its highest civilian award, the 'Order of the Holy Apostle Andrew the First', on Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his work on bilateral ties.
- "The order was presented to the Prime Minister of India for his distinguished contribution to the development of a privileged strategic partnership between Russia and India and friendly ties between the Russian and Indian peoples," according to a statement from the Russian President's office.
- India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi thanked the Russian President Vladimir Putin for the honour and said that cooperation between India and Russia led "to extraordinary outcomes for our citizens."
- "President Putin remains a source of great strength for the India-Russia friendship. Under his visionary leadership, bilateral and multilateral cooperation between our nations has scaled new heights," Mr. Modi said.

UPDATE – PART III

I. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, June 13, 2019):

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi met the Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the SCO summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on June 13, 2019.
- Both leaders decided to further expand the scope of their economic partnership in the sectors of energy, Arctic region, transfer of technology, joint projects under Make in India initiative and manpower.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi accepted the Russian President Vladimir Putin's invitation to be the Chief Guest for the Eastern Economic Forum to be held in Vladivostok in September 2019.
- India and Russia would also hold their annual summit during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Vladivostok.
- The two leaders also agreed to India's wider presence in the resource-rich Far-East Russia in the backdrop of India's Act East Policy and Russia's focus towards the Pacific.
- Both leaders meeting amid tumultuous geo-politics agreed on a roadmap for consolidating strategic and economic partnership.
- Mr. Modi and Mr. Putin also focused on their energy partnership including in the sector of fossil fuel in Russian oil fields as well as in Arctic amid rising tensions in the Gulf which could adversely impact global oil prices.
- "There was no discussion on any international or regional issue as the focus was entirely on how to make Prime Minister's visit for the next annual summit successful," Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said.

- Prime Minister Modi also sought Russian transfer of technology including in railway sector.
- Defence ties were also discussed in the context of Make in India initiative and the two leaders referred to AK-203 rifles factory in Amethi as Joint Venture. "I am very grateful for your support for the rifle manufacturing unit in Amethi," Mr. Modi told Mr. Putin.

II. India-Russia Space Cooperation:

- On June 12, 2019, India and Russia explored the "possibilities for production of space systems in India" during the discussions between the National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and the visiting Director General of Russia's space agency ROSCOSMOS and former Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin.
- "Cooperation in futuristic technologies, including new space systems, rocket engines, propellants and propulsion systems, spacecraft and launch vehicle technology were also discussed," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.
- Both sides would take a strategic approach to "elevate bilateral cooperation to the next level keeping in mind the privileged partnership and India's priorities such as Make in India programme," the MEA said.
- "There have been frequent contacts between the two space agencies to finalise the details of Gaganyaan, which will carry Indian astronaut to space in 2022, to coincide with India's 75th anniversary of Independence. Russia has promised all assistance. Details regarding cooperation for the mission were discussed," the MEA said.

V.3. INDIA-CHINA RELATIONS

I. Current Status:

1. India-China Preparing for a Summit between their Leaders as a follow-up to the Wuhan Summit:

- On April 19, 2019, China said its relations with India had a "bright future" and they were preparing for a summit between their leaders as a follow-up to the Wuhan informal Summit between President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018.
- Chinese Foreign Minister and State Councillor Wang Yi stressed that ties between India and China were insulated from their differences on China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- "The two leaders [President Xi and Prime Minister Modi] had a very successful meeting in Wuhan. Particularly, they established mutual trust and they jointly planned for the future of improvement and the strengthening of the China-India relationship. After the Wuhan summit, we see progress in all areas of cooperation," Mr. Wang said.
- The Chinese Foreign Minister pointed out that India and China were currently limiting the threshold of their differences so that overall development of ties remained unhampered.

2. India's Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale's Visit to China (21-22, April 2019):

- India's Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale visited China on April 21-22, 2019, for "bilateral consultations", amid indications that China could change its position on lifting its "technical hold" on listing Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) founder Masood Azhar as a global terrorist.
- Mr. Gokhale held talks with China's Foreign Minister and State Councillor Wang Yi on April 22, 2019.
- During the bilateral consultations, Mr. Gokhale said that India and China should remain "sensitive to each other's concerns".

- India's Foreign Secretary stressed that India "will work together with the Chinese side to deepen mutual understanding, strengthen mutual trust to implement the decisions taken by our leaders and do it in a manner where we are sensitive to each other's concerns".
- During the talks India appeared not to endorse China's position that Masood Azhar's designation should only be confined to the 1267 Committee.

UPDATE – PART III

I. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, June 13, 2019):

- On June 13, 2019, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Bishkek the capital of Kyrgyzstan.
- "The two leaders have asked the Special Representatives to meet and carry forward the discussion and have instructed them to expedite the discussion in this regard for achieving a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution," Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said.
- Both leaders discussed the status of the bilateral relationship since the Wuhan summit in April 2018, which came in the backdrop of tension following the 73-day Doklam standoff.
- Border issue acquires significance as the Chinese President is expected to visit India in October 2019 for an informal summit with the Indian Prime Minister.
- The Foreign Secretary described the interaction as "substantive in content" and was held in the presence of Special Representatives.
- The last round of border talks was held in November 2018.
- "President Xi Jinping very warmly confirmed his readiness to visit India this year. He said that he looked forward to discussing all issues from a strategic and long-term perspective," Mr. Gokhale said.
- Both leaders agreed that the approach to the border issue should be "constructive", keeping in mind the ties between the two sides in the coming years, according to the Foreign Secretary.
- "After our meeting in Wuhan, we have seen a new momentum and stability in our relations. There has been a rapid progress in the strategic communication between the two sides, leading to be more sensitive towards each other's concerns and interests. And there has been new areas for further cooperation since then," the Indian Prime Minister told the Chinese President.
- The Chinese President highlighted the need for regional cooperation and connectivity and singled out the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) economic corridor as an example for expanding the India-China ties, which had entered a "new phase" after the Wuhan informal summit.
- Mr. Xi emphasised that the two sides should adhere to the basic judgement that China and India are the opportunities for development and do not pose a threat to each other.
- "They must persist in deepening mutual trust, focusing on cooperation, and accepting differences, so that China-India relations become a more positive asset and positive energy for promoting the development of the two countries," the Chinese President said.
- Mr. Modi conveyed to Mr. Xi that his efforts for a dialogue with Pakistan were derailed and Pakistan needs to create an atmosphere free of terror which appears difficult at this stage.
- India conveyed that it has a bilateral mechanism to engage with Pakistan thereby reiterating that a third party was not needed.

- “Had an extremely fruitful meeting with President Xi Jinping. Our talks included the full spectrum of India-China relations. We shall continue working together to improve economic and cultural ties between our nations,” the Indian Prime Minister tweeted after the delegation-level talks with the Chinese President.

II. Second Informal Summit between the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Varanasi on October 12, 2019:

- The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Chinese President Xi Jinping would hold their second informal summit in Varanasi on October 12, 2019. The first informal summit was held in Wuhan, China in April 2018.
- The second informal summit is part of a fresh drive to energise ties following their meeting in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on the sidelines of the SCO summit in June 2019.
- The decision to hold the second informal summit following the Wuhan Summit is in line with China's decision to celebrate the 70th anniversary of China's diplomatic relations with India, according to a Chinese official.
- The second informal summit is also based on the “consensus” between Mr. Modi and Mr. Xi to raise bilateral relations to a higher level, especially after the Doklam military stand-off in the summer of 2017.

V.4. INDO-JAPANESE RELATIONS

SUMMARY

I. Introduction:

1. Asia-Centred Global Order

2. Expanding Indo-Japan Relations – Japan is the Only Country besides Russia with which India Holds Annual Summit Meetings:

- Japan is the only country besides Russia with which India holds annual summit meetings.
- Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has made relations with India a central pillar of Japan's foreign policy objectives for the region.
- Global Partnership with a Strategic Orientation
- On July 20, 2017, the India-Japan Civil Nuclear Agreement entered into force.

3. Economic Relations:

- Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between India and Japan being Implemented from August 2011
- Japan's investments have played a key role in building India's infrastructure, including the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor.
- Japan Agreed to Fund Six Infrastructure Projects Worth Rs.10,500 Crore - India Highest Recipient of Official Development Assistance (ODA) from Japan
- In 2015, Japan offered a loan of \$12 billion for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project and created a \$12 billion fund for Japanese companies to manufacture in India for the 'Make in India' initiative, apart from pledging \$5 billion as part of its Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) to India.
- Japan would extend a loan of ₹2,239 crore to India for 'North East Road Network Connectivity Improvement Project' to improve the National Highway 40 (NH-40) and construct a bypass on NH-54 in the Northeast.

4. Transformation in Indo-Japanese Bilateral Relations – Strategic Partnership and Growing Defence Ties

II. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Visit to Japan for the 13th India-Japan Annual Summit (October 28-29, 2018):

1. Informal Talks between the Prime Ministers of India and Japan:

- Mr. Modi said that the India-Japan Partnership had fundamentally transformed and strengthened as a “special strategic and global partnership”.
- The 13th India-Japan summit sought to review the progress in bilateral ties and deepen the strategic dimension of the relationship.
- Strengthening of bilateral security, economic cooperation and talks on the “Indo-Pacific” region were on the agenda of the 13th India-Japan summit.

2. Highlights of the 13th Annual India-Japan Summit:

A. Vision Statement:

- India and Japan released a Vision Statement at the end of the talks which envisioned a partnership for peace, prosperity and ‘global action’.
- Both sides expressed commitment to strengthen security cooperation and measures aimed at pursuing a “free and open Indo-Pacific”.
- Both sides emphasised their “unwavering commitment to.”
- The Vision Statement mentioned the willingness of India and Japan to “expand concrete cooperation with the US and other partners”.
- The Statement also referred to the necessity of ensuring the freedom of navigation and importance of upholding the UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea)

B. Defence:

- Start of negotiations on an Acquisition and Cross-servicing Agreement, a logistics-sharing pact, that would allow Japanese ships to get fuel and servicing at Indian naval base.
- Once the pact is signed, the Maritime Self-Defence Force of Japan would be able to secure access to Indian naval facilities in the Andaman and Nicobar islands, strategically located close to the western Malacca Straits, a key route for trade and fuel imports of Japan and China.
- A new Foreign and Defence Ministerial Dialogue, termed 2+2, was announced.
- The new 2+2 Dialogue would supplement the already robust bilateral defence dialogue mechanism including the Annual Defence Ministerial Dialogue, Defence Policy Dialogue and National Security Advisers Dialogue.

C. Economy - \$75 billion Currency Swap Agreement:

- “The Prime Ministers of India and Japan, building on great friendship between the two countries and to further strengthen and widen the depth and diversity of economic cooperation, agreed during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Japan, to conclude a Bilateral Currency Swap Agreement for an amount of \$75 billion,”
- Under the India-Japan Bilateral Currency Swap Agreement, India can acquire yen or dollars from Japan up to \$75 billion in exchange for rupees. The exchange has to be reversed after an agreed period.
- The Currency Swap Agreement was an important measure in improving the confidence in the Indian market and would not only enable the agreed amount of capital being available to India, but would also bring down the cost of capital for Indian entities while accessing the foreign capital market

- “The swap arrangement should aid in bringing greater stability to foreign exchange and capital markets in India,”
- **Bilateral Currency Swap Agreement with Japan** would improve India's prospects in tapping foreign capital for its development requirements.
- The Prime Minister of Japan said that 57 Japanese companies had committed to invest 320 billion yen in India, which is expected to create 3,000 new jobs.
- India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised on deepening bilateral business ties and invited Japanese collaboration in India's efforts to establish smart cities; metro networks; port, road and rail construction; inland water transportation and green energy.

3. Significance of the 13th India-Japan Annual Summit:

- India and Japan signed 32 pacts including a **Bilateral Currency Swap Agreement** for \$75 billion which is substantially more than the \$30 billion currency swap arrangement between China and Japan.
- Both sides outlined a **Vision Statement** which envisions strengthened bilateral relations and lays down a framework for an alternative for global alliance and development.
- The talks between the two Prime Ministers focussed on enhanced strategic and defence cooperation and a “free and open Indo-Pacific” region.
- India-Japan bilateral relationship was invested in upholding the rule of law and democratic values.
- One the most significant aspect of the 13th India-Japan annual summit was the decision to deepen bilateral security and defence cooperation and the announcement of a new Foreign and Defence Ministerial 2+2 Dialogue
- The commencement of negotiations on **Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement**, a logistics-sharing pact is also significant
- India and Japan would work together in research into **Unmanned Ground Vehicle (UGC)** technology, robotics, space and **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**.
- The expansion of India-Japan partnership in the Indo-Pacific and Africa is significant as it provides an alternative to China's expansionist approach
- India and Japan had intensive consultation on projects Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Kenya.
- Japan decided to join the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** initiated by India.
- It was the fifth bilateral meeting between Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Shinzo Abe. “It provided a very strong springboard for our special strategic and global partnership across fields: political, economic, business, strategic, connectivity, people-to-people exchange or global issues,”
- “It was important not only for Japan and India but also for the free open and prosperous Indo-Pacific,”

III. Conclusion:

1. Viewing Bilateral Relations from the Prism of Strategic Interests a Major-Shift in Indo-Japanese Relations:

- Agreed move to view the bilateral relations from the prism of strategic interests in the regional and global perspectives signifies a major shift in Indo-Japanese relations.
- The long-term strategic interests of India and Japan coincide.

- The India-Japan security cooperation was projected as a force of stabilisation in the Asia-Pacific region.

2. Japan and India are Natural Allies with No Conflict of Strategic Interest and Share Common Goals of Building Stability, Power Equilibrium and Multilateral Cooperation in Asia

3. Indo-Japanese Economic Ties Mutually Beneficial:

- Japan has aided infrastructure projects in India with many projects in the pipeline. The aid provided by Japan is to the tune of billions of dollars.
- The markets in India could stimulate Japan's economy and Japan could meet India's growing needs for capital and technologies

4. Two Critical Areas of Indo-Japanese Cooperation – Maritime Security and Strategic Connectivity:

- In maritime security both India and Japan are strengthening their cooperation through the trilateral Malabar exercises with the US
- For strategic connectivity, India and Japan have been cooperating in building Infrastructure projects in India's Northeast. Both countries are also constructing the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor with stress on development projects, quality infrastructure, capacity building, and people-to-people partnership.
- The Asia-Africa Growth Corridor is seen as a counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

5. India and Japan have to Work Together for the UN Reforms as both are Aspiring for Permanent Security Council Seats

V.5. INDO-FRENCH RELATIONS

I. Indian Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Visit to France (October 11-13, 2018):

- India's Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman visited France on October 11-13, 2018.
- Ms. Sitharaman visited a production facility of Dassault Aviation near Paris where the Rafale jets to be supplied to India were being manufactured, according to officials.
- During her visit to the production facility, Ms. Sitharaman spoke to officials of the Dassault Aviation, the manufacturers of Rafale jets, and took stock of the situation of progress in production of the fighter jets whose delivery to India would begin in September 2019.
- The Indian Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman held wide ranging talks with her French counterpart Florence Parly, on strategic and defence cooperation.
- Both sides discussed a bilateral tri-service military exercise to take forward the strategic cooperation and also explored ways to operationalise the logistics agreement.
- The tri-service military exercise with France would be India's third such joint exercise. The other two being with Russia and the US.
- Currently, India and France hold bilateral exercises between Individual services – Shakti, Varuna and Garuda respectively for the Army, Navy and Air Force.
- In March 2018, India and France signed a logistics agreement which gives access to their militaries to each other's bases for logistics support.
- The agreement gives India access to French bases throughout the world on a "reciprocal basis". However, for India the French bases in the Indian Ocean – Reunion Island, Djibouti and Abu Dhabi are of special interest.

- The Defence Minister of India and the French Defence Minister discussed how to operationalise the logistics agreement.
- The three bases of France in the Indian Ocean would give the Indian Navy and the Air Force operational turnaround to the far end of the Indian Ocean, enhancing its monitoring and surveillance of the region, in the backdrop of increased presence of China in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

II. French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian's Visit to India (December 15, 2018):

- The Foreign Minister of France Jean-Yves Le Drian visited India on December 15, 2018.
- The French Foreign Minister held talks with his Indian counterpart Sushma Swaraj.
- India's External Affairs Minister said both sides were working in the field of energy and also intensifying international development and counterterrorism cooperation.
- "Both countries are working to start the Jaitapur nuclear energy project as soon as possible. We are glad that NPCIL AND EDF have made progress based on the Industrial Way Forward Agreement. Today we have adopted the Status of Progress for Implementation of Industrial Way Forward Agreement," Ms. Swaraj said.
- The Foreign Minister of France said the project, which involved build six European Pressurised Reactors (EPRs), would also help the 'Make in India' project of the Government of India as it would include transfer of technology.
- India and France declared common plans to work in development projects in the African continent.
- ".....We have decided to launch projects together in Africa, particularly in the area of sustainable development in connection with the International Solar Alliance," Mr. Le Drian said.
- The French Foreign Minister referred to the 10th anniversary of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, and reiterated that India and France would expand collaboration to prevent terrorism in the world.
- "Both sides need to work if we want to take bilateral trade to the target of €15 billion," India's External Affairs Minister said.

III. Significance of the French Foreign Minister's Visit to India:

- "We had very fruitful talks. We closely looked at all the aspects of our mutual ties. We are taking our cooperation forward in the Indo-Pacific region, which will not only benefit these two countries but also other countries in the region," Ms. Swaraj said.
- "Our defence relations are historic and we have been involved in a number of exchanges in the form of training and joint exercises," India's External Affairs Minister said.
- The French Foreign Minister said both sides reviewed the EPR project in Jaitapur, Maharashtra, and adopted an action plan to provide guidance to the work in the coming months so as to advance as efficiently as possible towards the final decision for building this power plant.
- French Ariane centre recently launched India's heaviest satellite and both countries were working to strengthen ties in space sector and also leading the fight against climate change, according to Ms. Swaraj.
- Le Drian said, "It is not by chance that France and India are celebrating the 20th anniversary of their strategic partnership this year. It is because we attach the same importance to multilateralism, respect for the rule of law, the same ambition to usher in a just and sustainable world".

V.6. INDO-SRI LANKAN RELATIONS**I. Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's visit to India (October 19-20, 2018):****1. Agenda for the Visit:**

- India's proposals for projects that are yet to be cleared by Sri Lanka, including port projects in Colombo, an LNG terminal, an oil storage facility in Tincomalee, and a proposed joint venture to run the Mattala airport near Hambantota.
- The revised version of the India-Sri Lanka preferential trade treaty
- The Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement (ETCA).
- The Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe started his visit with a meeting with Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh.
- India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj called on the Sri Lankan Prime Minister.

2. Talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Sri Lankan counterpart Ranil Wickremesinghe discussed the progress of a number of pending development projects, with Mr. Modi expressing "concern" over delays, according to a press release by the Sri Lankan Prime Minister's office.
- "Mr. Narendra Modi has expressed his concern over the implementation of Indo-Sri Lankan joint development projects in accordance with the MoU signed between India and Sri Lanka in 2017.... Mr. Modi said he was not satisfied with the response he received from the Sri Lankan government to his overtures,"
- India's projects completed in Sri Lanka have largely been in the housing sector. Mr. Modi agreed in the meeting to finance another 10,000 houses for the tea estate workers
- "Prime Ministers discussed the entire gamut of bilateral relations and ways to further deepen the historically close and friendly relations between the two countries..... They also reviewed the progress in implementation of various decisions taken during the high-level exchanges in the recent past," a statement by India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.
- The Indian Prime Minister told his Sri Lankan counterpart that the Indian government was successfully diverting Indian fishermen towards deep-sea fishing, away from the harmful trawlers that were the cause of strife on Palk Straits.
- Mr. Modi also expressed gratitude for the release of fishermen who had been apprehended by Sri Lanka

3. Reasons behind the Delay of Indian Projects in Sri Lanka:

- Some of the Indian projects in Sri Lanka have been delayed over concerns that India would be allowed to acquire Sri Lankan land.
- The Indian projects in Sri Lanka have also been delayed due to deep disagreements between the Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena and the Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe

4. Significance of the Sri Lankan Prime Minister's Visit to India:

- Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's visit to India in October 2018 needs to be seen in the backdrop of the increasing internal political crisis within the leadership of Sri Lanka.
- Mr. Wickremesinghe's visit to India came after a visit by the Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena earlier in 2018 and a visit by former President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

II. Conclusion:

1. India's Broad Engagement with Sri Lanka in the Post-War Period:

- In the post-war period, India's broad engagement with Sri Lanka is focused on rebuilding the infrastructure in North Sri Lanka and catering to the livelihood concerns of the Sri Lankan Tamils to ensure an early return to normalcy in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka.
- India helped in the resettlement of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) by providing four million sheets of roofing and 40,000 tonnes of cement.
- India also provided 95,000 family packs of basic agricultural implements valued at \$3.2 million distributed through the UNHCR; it was the single largest contribution to the UNHCR. It helped the people to start low-scale agricultural work.
- India supplied 500 tractors for use in the north. About 75 buses were provided to overcome the shortage of vehicles.
- In imparting skill development India build a vocational training centre in the Muslim-dominated Puttalam and two more centres in Batticaloa.
- India also helped in refurbishing teaching hospital in Jaffna and providing medical equipment.
- India helped in de-mining in the north with seven Indian teams working to clear the areas.
- India is also engaged in building the Northern Railway line.
- The Sri Lankan Government approved the handing over of the Kankesanthurai port, to be developed by India. Fishing equipment and boats were distributed to Tamil fishermen to commence operations.
- The reconciliation, land rights and rehabilitation issues remain to be addressed.
- The long-term solution for the ethnic crisis can be found through a political solution to the aspirations of the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka, according to analysts.

2. Issues of Concern in Indo-Sri Lankan Relations:

- The new Sri Lankan government needs to implementation of the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution and deliver on devolution of powers.
- The new Sri Lankan government also has to take action for the repatriation of more than 100,000 Sri Lankan refugees from Tamil Nadu.
- The new Sri Lankan government has to address India's security concerns about Chinese submarines docking in Sri Lankan ports. The new Sri Lankan government has said that Sri Lanka's relations with China would not be detrimental to India.
- India and Sri Lanka have to resolve the problem of fishermen from both sides in an amicable way.

4. India's Involvement in Sri Lanka's Reform Process:

- The visit to Sri Lanka by India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj in February 2016 brought about the question of the extent to which India could get involved in Sri Lanka's Constitutional reform process
- Since the signing of the 1987 India-Sri Lanka Accord, India has emphasised that the 13th Amendment, which was an outcome of the Accord, should be fully implemented.
- The 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution, despite its weakness, led to the establishment of Provincial Councils all over Sri Lanka

- Opinions have been divided in Sri Lanka on India's involvement in that country's Constitutional reforms process.
- India needs to adopt a "hands-off" approach, but Sri Lanka should assure India through an agreement that it would not do anything to endanger India's security

UPDATE – PART III

I. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Visit to Sri Lanka (June 9, 2019):

1. Sri Lanka Eager to Welcome Indian Prime Minister:

- Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena announced on May 31, 2019, that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi would be the first major foreign dignitary to visit Sri Lanka following the Easter bombings.
- "We are eagerly looking forward to welcoming Prime Minister Modi," Mr. Sirisena said. The Sri Lankan President thanked India for supporting Sri Lankan investigations into the Easter suicide attacks and urged for a global fight against terrorism.
- Mr. Sirisena also extended support to regional frameworks like the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) as effective mechanisms that can help the dialogue process at regional and bilateral levels on necessary issues.
- The Sri Lankan President was one of the BIMSTEC leaders invited for the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Modi and his Council of Ministers.

2. India and Sri Lanka Agreed that Terrorism is a Joint Threat and Needs Collective and Focused Action:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Sri Lanka on June 9, 2019 on the invitation of Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena. He was the first foreign head of state to visit Sri Lanka after the Easter terror attacks that killed over 250 people.
- The Indian Prime Minister held discussions with Sri Lanka's top leadership – both in the government and the opposition.
- The focus during the interactions was cooperation in economic initiatives and countering terrorism.
- Mr. Modi visited St. Anthony's Church in Colombo and paid respects to those who died in the April 21, 2019, bombings.
- "Since both Sri Lanka and India have been victims of terrorism, both leaders condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and decided to step up cooperation in this critical area," a statement from the Sri Lankan President's media division said.
- "President Sirisena and I agreed that terrorism is a joint threat that terrorism is a joint agreed threat that needs collective and focused action. Reiterated India's commitment to partner with Sri Lanka for a shared, secure and prosperous future," the Indian Prime Minister said.
- "Assured India's full support to further strengthen bilateral development partnership including through people oriented projects in Sri Lanka," Mr. Modi said after meeting the Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe.
- Mr. Modi also met a delegation of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), led by senior politician R. Sampanthan, representing the war-affected Tamil minority from the Sri Lanka's north and east.
- The Tamil leadership emphasised that India urge the Sri Lankan government to frame a new Constitution as has been promised by the Sri Lankan President and Prime Minister, when the coalition came to power in 2015.

3. Significance of the Visit:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi described his visit to Sri Lanka as a 'solidarity visit', "short but immensely fruitful".
- "Thank you @narendramodi, for your brief, but highly productive visit to our country today, thus proving you are a true friend of ours. I highly appreciate and value your kind gesture, support and cooperation extended to Sri Lanka," the Sri Lankan President tweeted.
- The Sri Lankan Prime Minister tweeted that he looked forward to holding discussions including on increasing multi-lateral investment projects and collaborations in counter-terror actions.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the Maldives and Sri Lanka were in line with India's Neighbourhood First Policy

II. Sri Lanka, India and Japan Signed a Deal to Develop Container Terminal:

- On May 28, 2019, Sri Lanka, Japan and India signed an agreement to jointly develop the East Container Terminal at the Colombo Port.
- The joint initiative is estimated to cost between \$500 million to \$700 million, according to a senior official of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Southern Development.
- As per the agreement signed on Tuesday, the Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) retains 100% ownership of the East Container Terminal (ECT), while the Terminal Operations Company is jointly owned, the SLPA said in a statement.
- Sri Lanka will hold 51% stake in the project and the joint venture partners will retain 49%.
- The ECT is located about three km away from the China-backed international financial city known popularly as "port city".
- More than 70% of the trans-shipment business at the strategically located ECT is linked to India

V.7. INDO-BHUTAN RELATIONS

I. Bhutan's New Prime Minister Lotay Tshering's Visit to India (December 27-29, 2018):

1. Three-Day Visit:

- Bhutan's new Prime Minister Lotay Tshering visited India for three days from December 27-29, 2018.
- The visit by Mr. Tshering was the first since he took charge as the Prime Minister of Bhutan on November 7, 2018.
- Visit by the Bhutanese Prime Minister is based on Bhutan's 'India First' policy and signalled India's eminent position in South Asia.
- The 12th Five-Year Plan of Bhutan was among the several topics expected to come up during the official level talks.
- "The visit by Prime Minister of Bhutan is essentially to get to know him and also to have discussion on how we can be supportive of the 12th Five-Year Plan,"

2. Highlights Report of a Parliamentary Panel on the Doklam crisis with China:

- The Standing Committee on External Affairs in its report on India-China relations including Doklam said that it took 13 rounds of diplomatic discussions between India and China to resolve the military stand-off with China in Doklam in 2017.

- China's intrusion in Doklam a "blatant but unsuccessful" attempt to change the status quo.
- Concerned that "Chinese infrastructure built uncomfortably close to the tri-junction has not yet been dismantled".
- "Even if they have withdrawn their troops from Doklam for the time being. China's strategic intentions should not be taken casually. The Committee would, there urge the Government not to let its vigil down in order to prevent any untoward incident in future,"

3. Talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bhutan's Prime Minister Lotay Tshering:

- "I have assured the Prime Minister that India will continue to be a reliable friend and a partner of Bhutan's development needs. India will provide ₹4,500 crore for Bhutan's 12th five-year plan. This contribution will be processed according to Bhutan's preferences and necessities," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.
- Bhutan's Prime Minister Lotay Tshering pointed to his Government's commitment to maintain warm relations with India.
- Bhutan has remained as one of the key recipients of development assistance from India. India has provided ₹4,500 crore for the 11th five-year plan (2013-2018), according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
- To share the benefit of the South Asian Satellite, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is going ahead with its plans to set up a ground station in Bhutan which would assist in telemedicine, disaster relief and climate trends, according to Mr. Modi.
- Indian Prime Minister welcomed the democratic process in Bhutan that led to the election of the new Prime Minister Lotay Tshering who assumed office on November 7, 2018.
- Mr. Modi expressed confidence that the Mangdechhu hydro power project would be completed soon.
- Mangdechhu is a 720 MW hydroelectric project on the Mangdechhu river in central Bhutan. The river projects would help in increasing the already close economic linkages between India and Bhutan
- Dr. Tshering acknowledged that hydropower had been the main source of revenue for Bhutan.
- "We are very, very happy that the Government of India is fully committed to support whatever negotiations that are going on for determining tariff for power from Mangdechhu project as well as to make Sankosh (hydropower) project happen as soon as possible," according to the Bhutanese Prime Minister.
- Both leaders reiterated their commitment to jointly develop 10,000 MW of hydropower generating capacity in Bhutan.
- Mr. Modi thanked Dr. Tshering for deciding to introduce in Bhutan the Indian RuPay card which is a debit and credit card payment network.

V. Conclusion:

1. India's Relations with Bhutan an Enduring Element of India's Foreign Policy
2. Restructuring India's Relations with Bhutan

UPDATE – PART III

I. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's Visit to Bhutan (June 7-8, 2019):

- On June 8, 2019, India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar visited Bhutan and met Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck.
- This was Mr. Jaishankar's first overseas visit after assuming charge of the External Affairs Ministry on May 30, 2019.
- India's External Affairs Minister said that the special bilateral friendship has always benefitted from the enlightened guidance of the Head of State of Bhutan.
- "Honoured to have had an audience with His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck. The special friendship between India and Bhutan has always benefitted from the enlightened guidance of the Druk Gyalpos (the head of state of Bhutan)," Mr. Jaishankar tweeted.
- The External Affairs Minister also met Bhutan's Prime Minister Lotay Tshering and discussed important elements of the bilateral ties.
- Mr. Jaishankar also met his Bhutanese counterpart Tandi Dorji and discussed issues of mutual interest with emphasis on development partnership and hydropower.
- "The visit has brought the countries even closer and highlighted India's Neighbourhood First policy," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Raveesh Kumar tweeted.

V.7. INDO-AFGHAN RELATIONS

SUMMARY

I. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's Visit to India (September 19, 2018):

1. Focus of the Visit:

- To discuss bilateral ties and regional security situation
- Before the visit of the President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani, India's Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale visited Afghanistan to chair the meeting of the "Joint Working Group on Political and Security Cooperation between India and Afghanistan".
- Mr. Ghani met India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and addressed a civic reception organised by the think-tank India Forum.
- The Afghan President apprised the Indian Prime Minister on the reconciliation efforts with the Taliban.
- India has backed the Afghan President on an "Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process".

2. Talks between the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani:

- India reiterated its commitment and support to the efforts of the Afghanistan government towards an Afghan-led, Afghan owned and Afghan controlled peace and reconciliation process.
- Both countries agreed to strengthen their cooperation at various international fora and decided to work even more closely with their regional and international partners for prosperity, peace, stability and progress in the region.
- Both sides expressed determination to strengthen connectivity among the two countries, including through Chabahar Port and direct air-freight corridor.
- The Afghan President Ashraf Ghani briefed Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the initiatives taken by his government towards peace and reconciliation and also in confronting the challenges of terrorism and extremism imposed on Afghanistan and its people.

- Prime Minister Modi condemned terrorist attacks and violence in Afghanistan and expressed solidarity with the people and national defence forces in their fight against terrorism.
- Mr. Modi expressed India's "unwavering commitment" to support efforts of the Afghanistan government to continue as a united, peaceful, inclusive and democratic nation and emerge as an economically vibrant country.

3. Highlights of the Afghan President's Address at a Civic Reception by India Forum:

- "Taliban are part of our society, Foreigners, members of Da'esh, these international networks are different. So we need to devise a way to separate what is international to what is regional and global."
- Made a strong pitch for talks with the Taliban and said that the talks had the support of the Afghan people, which was seen during the ceasefire for Id in June 2018.
- "During the ceasefire, over 30,000 Taliban came to cities. Were they greeted with hatred? Were they lynched? Were they shot at? No. You saw scenes of all Afghans join in the celebrations and accepting each other. The most important thing we learned from the ceasefire is that Afghan people as a nation are willing to forgo the past in order to gain the future."
- Peace with the Taliban was important so that security forces could concentrate on fighting other terrorist groups like the Islamic State (Da'esh).

II. Conclusion:

1. India's Stakes in Afghanistan:

- Afghanistan India's Gateway to the West.
- High Strategic and Economic Stakes
- India has Regained Influence in Afghanistan
- India's Growing Profile in Afghanistan
- Engagement with Afghanistan Vital for the Fight Against Terrorism in the Region
- India's Participation in Afghanistan's Reconstruction
- Bright Prospects of Enhanced Trade and Investment between the Two Countries
- A Close Relationship with Afghanistan Neutralises Pakistan's Clout in the Region
- Need to Strengthen People-to-People Contacts in Afghanistan

2. Focus of India's Afghan Policy:

- Ensuring Afghanistan's territorial integrity and political stability
- Preventing the Return of Taliban-inspired terrorism and religious extremism.
- Afghanistan will emerge as a key land passage for the Caspian basin gas and oil which are crucial for India's growing energy requirements.

3. Securing India's Interests in Afghanistan:

- India's development projects in Afghanistan remain the target of the Taliban.
- India's role in the long-term stability of Afghanistan is opposed by the Taliban as it would strengthen the democratic Government in that country
- India Needs to Consider Long-Term Scenarios of Its Political, Diplomatic and Military Options in Afghanistan
- India can work towards the Creation of a Regional Grouping for Long-Term Stability in Afghanistan
- India also Needs to Widen Its Engagement with Different Sections in Afghanistan
- India, Iran and Afghanistan signed an agreement for Trilateral Transport Transit Corridor connecting Chabahar with Afghanistan's road and rail network.
- The trilateral agreement would give India access to Afghanistan, Central Asia and beyond bypassing Pakistan

V.9. INDIA-MALDIVES RELATIONS**I. Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih's Visit to India (December 16-18, 2018):****1. 'India First' Policy of the New Maldivian Government:**

- The President of Maldives Ibrahim Mohamed Solih visited India from December 16-18, 2018.
- Both sides firmed up the Mr. Solih's visit during the visit of Maldives Foreign Minister Abdullah Shahid to India in late November 2018.
- Mr. Shahid highlighted the "India First" policy of the new Government of Maldives, according to a Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) statement.
- "Maldives and India have been friends since time immemorial. India is our closest neighbour and our people have ties of friendship and cultural affinity, and within those close links, trade and commerce have flourished. India is not only our closest friend, it is also our largest trading partners," the Maldivian President said.
- Mr. Solih, who was accompanied by senior members of his Government, pointed out that Maldives was a developing country that was building its infrastructure sector consisting of ports and other connectivity facilities.
- Maldivian President's visit to India was significant as it came after a month after his swearing-in in Male that was attended by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- Welcoming Mr. Solih, India's Minister of Commerce and Industry and Civil Aviation Suresh Prabhu urged Maldives to seek India's partnership in addressing its development challenges. He stressed that Indian Government's flagship projects also had scope for Maldives-India partnership.

2. Talks between the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih:

- India and Maldives declared a financial package of \$1.4 billion to Maldives. The financial assistance would be in the form of budgetary support, currency swap and concessional lines of credit for development programmes, according to the Joint Statement issued during the visit.
- The financial package was significant as Maldives was facing a debt of \$3.2 billion with China. It was also expected to boost Maldives global financial standing.
- "Cooperation between our countries is necessary for maintaining stability in the Indian Ocean Region and we are willing to take our relationship to its fullest potential," India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.
- Mr. Modi also conveyed that India would support the Maldives in its human-centric development plans. India would also support Maldives in improving connectivity between India and the Maldives.
- The Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih said his Government would walk the path of cooperation and development and added that his discussions with India covered a wide range of issues like health, education and defence.
- India and the Maldives signed four agreements, including one easing visa procedures for Maldivian citizens.
- "The two leaders agreed to strengthen cooperation to enhance maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region through coordinated patrolling and aerial surveillance, exchange of information and capacity building," according to the Joint Statement.

- The Joint Statement said that **both countries have agreed to work together to create institutional linkages and to establish a framework of cooperation in areas of health, mutual legal assistance on criminal matters, investment promotion and tourism.**
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi complimented Maldives' decision to re-join the Commonwealth and welcomed it to the Indian Ocean Rim Association family.**

3. Significance of the Maldivian President's Visit to India:

- **Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih's visit to India, which was his first overseas visit after taking charge, was seen as an effort to repair relations which came under severe strain during the rule of Abdulla Yameen, who had drawn Maldives closer to China.**
- **Mr. Solih's first overseas visit was significant as both sides emphasised their close relations. The Maldives President called India the island nation's "closest friend" and emphasised his Government's 'India-First' policy.**
- **India announced a financial assistance package of \$1.4 billion in the form of budgetary support, currency swap and concessional lines of credit for development programmes.**
- **Both countries agreed to ensure each other's security interests as they consolidate their cooperation in Indian Ocean Region. They agreed to strengthen maritime security cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region through coordinated patrol and aerial surveillance.**
- **The resolve of India and Maldives to deepen maritime relations in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is significant in view of China's expanding military presence in the region.**
- **To increase trade relations, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi "welcomed the expanding opportunities for Indian companies to invest in the Maldives."**
- **Under the previous President Abdulla Yameen, Maldives was tilting towards China welcoming Chinese investments in infrastructure projects and signing of a controversial Free Trade Agreement (FTA). China's role in Maldives economy is being probed amid concerns of the huge debt that Maldives owes to China.**
- **India needs to support Maldives as it faces challenges of restoring the institutional fabric and strengthening the democratic foundations disturbed under Mr. Yameen.**

UPDATE – PART II

I. Indian External Affairs Minister's Visit to the Maldives (March 17-18, 2019):

- **India's then External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj visited the Maldives on March 17-18, 2019. This was the first "full-fledged substantive bilateral" engagement at a political level with the new government of the Maldives.**
- **Ms. Swaraj held talks with the top leadership of the Maldives to discuss ways to boost bilateral relations across all spheres, particularly defence, development cooperation, capacity building and healthcare.**
- **Three agreements were signed during the visit including the agreement for visa exemption for diplomats and another for MoUs for development projects.**
- **"Foreign Minister Shahid reiterated his government's "India first policy", and said his government looks forward to working closely with the Government of India on all issues. He also reiterated that Government of Maldives would remain sensitive towards India's security and strategic concerns," a joint statement said.**
- **Ms. Swaraj inaugurated the renovated Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital, built in 1995, and met with several senior leaders including the President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih and Speaker of the Assembly Gasim Ibrahim.**

- The two countries agreed to remain mindful of each other's concerns and aspirations for the stability of the Indian Ocean region and not allow their respective territories to be used for any activity inimical to their interests, according India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

II. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Visit to the Maldives (June 8, 2019):

1. First State Visit by the Prime Minister in his Second Term

2. Prime Minister Modi Conferred with 'The Most Honourable Order of the Distinguished Role of Nishan Izzuddeen':

3. Highlights of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Address at the Maldivian Parliament or the Majlis:

- Relations between India and the Maldives are older than history.
- "Today I want to emphasise that every Indian is with you for the strengthening of democracy in the Maldives."
- "State sponsorship of terrorism is the biggest threat the world is facing today."
- "Combating terrorism and radicalisation is the most accurate test of the leadership in the world."

4. Six Agreements Signed:

- The visit was marked by the signing of six agreements.
- The agreements covered such areas as hydrography, health, passenger and cargo services by sea, capacity-building in customs and civil service training.
- A technical agreement on sharing 'White Shipping Information' between the Indian Navy and the Maldives National Defence Force was also signed to facilitate exchange of prior information on the movement of commercial and non-military vessels.

5. Highlights of the Joint Statement:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih jointly inaugurated a Coastal Surveillance Radar System and a training facility of the Maldives National Defence Force by remote link.
- "Both leaders welcomed the signing of the \$800-million Line of Credit Agreement in March 2019 for assisting the Maldives in achieving sustainable social and economic development."
- The leaders "reaffirmed their unequivocal and uncompromising position against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations."

6. Significance of the Visit:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the Maldives was marked by the signing of six agreements and substantive bilateral level talks which reaffirmed cooperation between the two countries.
- The Prime Minister's visit was in line with his government's "neighbourhood first policy".
- Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih reaffirmed his country's "India-First Policy", pledging his government's "full support towards deepening the multifaceted, mutually beneficial partnership" between India and the Maldives.
- India-Maldives bilateral relations are back on track after five years of drift under the Yameen administration.
- India and the Maldives need to build a shared strategic vision for peace and harmony to take root in the region.

V.10.INDIA-SAUDI ARABIA RELATIONS**SUMMARY****I. Introduction:****1. Realignment of India's Foreign and Security Policy****2. Shift in Saudi Arabia's Domestic and Foreign Policies****3. Importance of Saudi Arabia to India:**

- Largest Supplier of Oil to India
- Nearly 3 Million Indians Employed in Saudi Arabia
- Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf Countries are vital for India's economic growth
- Saudi Arabia has shown interest in India after the Indian economy started growing at an impressive rate
- Saudi Arabia's Indication to De-Hyphenate Relations with India and Pakistan
- Better Relations with Saudi Arabia will Help India to Balance Its Relations in West Asia
- Common Concerns Against Terrorism
- Strategic Importance - Important for India's Energy Security and Peace and Stability Across West Asia

4. India's Importance to Saudi Arabia:

- India Could Become a Gateway for Deeper Relations Between Saudi Arabia and South Asia and South-East Asia
- India Could Mediate Between the Gulf Countries and Iran
- Saudi Arabia can take Advantage of India's Intellectual Resources
- India's Emerging Military and Diplomatic Clout can Contribute to Peace and Stability in West Asia

II. Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman's Visit to India (February 19-20, 2019):**1. Visit came in the Backdrop of Escalating Tensions between India and Pakistan****2. Talks between India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman:**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman explored ways to further deepen strategic ties.
- "In Pulwama, we saw a barbaric attack of terrorism that casts a shadow on humanity, and according to us, terrorists and supporters of terrorism should face all-out pressure from the international community," Mr. Modi said.
- "As far as terrorism and extremism are concerned – I want to tell India that we will extend all cooperation to you, be it intelligence sharing.... not only with India but also with the neighbouring countries," Prince Salman said.
- "We have agreed that terrorism should not be supported in any form, and we should put pressure on countries that back terror. To end terror infrastructure, ending support to terror groups and punishing them is essential, so that young people don't take up arms... I'm glad Saudi Arabia agrees with India on this," Mr. Modi said.
- The Crown Prince said relations with India were in the blood of Saudi people. "We have common goals in energy and agriculture and we will diversify this spirit to other sectors."
- On the request of Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman ordered the release of 850 Indian prisoners lodged in jails of Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced.
- India's Haj quota was also increased to two lakh by the Crown Prince.
- Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince said, "We have also diversified to the petrochemical sector in India. Since 2016, we have achieved many goals with India and we think there is potential for investing \$100 billion."
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised Saudi Arabia's role as a crucial energy supplier to India and said that both sides are moving towards sustainable energy.

3. Agreements Signed:

- The Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA) signed four investment agreements worth more than \$28 million and 11 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) during the visit of the Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman.
- Five government-to-government pacts were also signed by the two sides including infrastructure, energy and tourism sectors.
- Saudi Arabia also joined the International Solar Alliance (ISA) during the visit of the Crown Prince.

4. Highlights of the Joint Statement:

- Both leaders “condemned in the strongest terms, the recent terrorist attack on Indian security forces on 14 February, 2019, in Pulwama in Jammu and Kashmir.”
- Urged for early adoption of the UN Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism and emphasised on “comprehensive sanctioning of terrorists and their organisations by the UN.”
- Both sides also resolved to create a “Comprehensive Security Dialogue” consisting of National Security Advisers and set up a Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism.
- Both sides also launched a Strategic Partnership Council that would be led by the Prime Minister and the Crown Prince.
- “With regards to regional connectivity projects, both sides agreed that they should be based on international laws, including respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of states.”
- Both leaders welcomed recent developments in India-Saudi cooperation in the defence sector, particularly in the fields of exchange of expertise and training.
- Both sides agreed to hold the inaugural joint naval exercises at the earliest and to further expand bilateral exercises in other domains.
- The two sides also agreed to work together with other Indian Ocean Rim countries for enhancing maritime security.
- Both sides also agreed to cooperate in the areas of space, science and technology, including remote sensing, satellite communication and satellite-based navigation.

5. Significance of the Visit to India by Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince:

- A diplomatic victory for India based on the numerous outcomes.
- India ensured that the visit was not hyphenated with Pakistan
- Highlights of the Crown Prince's visit to India were the following:
 - Measures to upgrade defence partnership
 - Creating a 'Strategic Partnership Council' to coordinate on security issues
 - Enhancement of cooperation on maritime security and intelligence sharing
 - Saudi Arabia's commitment to invest up to \$100 billion in projects in India
- Saudi Arabia, which condemned the Pulwama attack, stated that it would not play mediator between India and Pakistan.
- India and Saudi Arabia agreed on the need to increase “all possible pressure” on countries offering support to terrorism, and pledged greater cooperation to tackle terrorism through intelligence sharing.
- India and Saudi Arabia have enhanced their bilateral ties over the last two decades and have taken care to de-hyphenate them from Saudi Arabia's relations with Pakistan.

III. Conclusion:

- India's relations with Saudi Arabia have been deepening over the past two decades based on energy ties and both countries now want to move beyond the buyer-seller relations in the energy sector and start joint ventures and investments in refineries and oil fields
- Saudi Arabia has been a source of energy and remittances for India, but the bilateral ties have acquired a security element with both countries enhancing cooperation in counterterrorism and intelligence sharing
- India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought further involvement of Indian companies in upstream and downstream oil and gas projects in Saudi Arabia whose economy has been adversely impacted by low oil prices, cut in oil exports and slowing down of domestic consumption.
- Currently, Saudi Arabia is trying change from an oil-dependent economy to one driven by services by creating the world's largest sovereign wealth fund.
- India could channelize Saudi Arabia sovereign wealth fund to fulfil its investment and infrastructure needs
- Invest India and Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority have signed a framework agreement on investment promotion.
- Apart from its expertise in IT and its expatriate workforce already present in Saudi Arabia, India can also provide help to Saudi Arabia's new service driven economy
- India has maintained equilibrium in its ties with Saudi Arabia and Iran and has avoided taking sides in the current diplomatic standoff between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

V.11. INDO-SOUTH AFRICAN RELATIONS
I. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's Visit to India (January 25-26, 2019):**1. Agenda:**

- South African President Cyril Ramaphosa visited India on January 25-26, 2019. He was accompanied by nine Ministers and a 50-member business delegation.
- Mr. Ramaphosa was India's Chief Guest at the Republic Day parade on January 26, 2019.
- India and South Africa would update their Strategic Partnership by agreeing on a comprehensive "roadmap" on the way ahead, as well as relaxing visa restrictions, according to officials.
- The India-South Africa bilateral Strategic Partnership called the Red Fort Declaration, was signed in March 1997 by the then South African President Nelson Mandela and India's then Prime Minister H.D. Deva Gowda.
- All aspects of the Strategic Partnership would be reviewed and updated with a three-year plan of action on security cooperation, trade and investment, tourism, harnessing the 'blue economy', maritime cooperation, agriculture, science and technology projects.

2. Talks between the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the South African President Cyril Ramaphosa:

- India and South Africa agreed on a three-year Strategic Partnership agreement to enhance relations.
- The Strategic Partnership agreement covers defence and security, blue economy cooperation and sustainable development.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted the scope for cooperation at the end of the delegation-level talks.
- “Our countries have compatible world views. We have strong partnership in platforms such as the BRICS, the G-20, the Indian Ocean Region Association and the IBSA Dialogue Forum. We can work together for the reform of the UN Security Council,” Mr. Modi said.
- India invited South Africa to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and congratulated it on securing the non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council for 2019-20.

3. Highlights of the Joint Statement:

- Acknowledged the growing interaction between the Navies of the two countries, and the Indian leader welcomed the South African participation in the India-Africa Field Training Exercise next March.
- Reiterated the role of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) that ensures freedom of navigation by keeping sea lanes free and secure.

4. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa the Chief Guest at India's 70th Republic Day Celebrations:

- South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, who was the Chief Guest at India's 70th Republic Day, joined a select group of world leaders, including Nelson Mandela, to have graced India's Republic Day celebrations.
- Mr. Ramaphosa became the second South African President to grace India's Republic Day celebrations as Chief Guest after Nelson Mandela attended the event 24 years ago.

5. Significance of the South African President's Visit to India:

- South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's visit to India and his participation in the 70th Republic Day celebrations as the Chief Guest was significant and gave an opportunity for both countries to renew and reinvigorate the relations between the two countries.
- Significant in strengthening the bilateral relations, especially the people-to-people aspect, and taking forward the Strategic Partnership between the two countries to a new level covering defence and security, blue economy cooperation and sustainable development.
- India-South African Cooperation in multilateral groupings was closely reviewed for further enhancement especially the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) forum and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).
- South African President's visit was significant in deepening India's relations with Africa. The strengthening of India-South Africa relations is important to provide an alternative to the China model for development in Africa.

V.12. INDIA-SOUTH KOREA RELATIONS

I. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Visit to South Korea (February 21-22, 2019):

1. Last Foreign Trip of the Prime Minister before the General Elections:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited South Korea on February 21-22, 2019. This was the Prime Minister's last foreign trip before the General Elections. This was Mr. Modi's second visit to South Korea.
- Mr. Modi addressed an India-Korea Business Symposium and launched an India-Korea Startup Hub.

- The Indian Prime Minister unveiled a bust of Mahatma Gandhi at Yonsei University, Seoul, in the presence of South Korean President Moon Jae-in.

2. Talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and South Korean President Moon Jae-in:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and South Korean President Moon Jae-in reviewed the entire gamut of the bilateral relationship. Both leaders stressed that the relationship is based on the shared vision of people, peace and prosperity.
- The bilateral trade between the two countries is \$21 billion. A target of \$50 billion was set to be achieved by 2030.
- Both leaders exchanged views on global and regional situations. South Korean President Moon Jae-in strongly condemned the Pulwama terrorist attack and expressed his support and solidarity in the fight against terrorism.
- India and South Korea signed a MoU on transnational crime and terrorism.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi appreciated the South Korean President's personal contribution to the ongoing discussions in the Korean peninsula and expressed hope that peace and stability will arrive in the Korean peninsula through dialogue. He also extended India's support in this regard.
- India and South Korea concluded a MoU on Startup Cooperation.
- Both leaders announced the roadmap for future cooperation in defence co-production and in defence technology.
- The South Korean President expressed interest in the defence corridors that India is developing in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.
- India and South Korea agreed to have a post stamp on Princess Suriratna.
- To promote tourism South Korean President announced visa facilitation for group tourism.
- Mr. Modi said that visas for South Koreans working in India would be extended for three years.

3. Prime Minister Narendra Modi Conferred with the Seoul Peace Prize:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with the Seoul Peace Prize for 2018 for his contribution to international cooperation and fostering global economic growth.
- The Prime Minister said, "This award belongs not to me personally, but to the people of India. The success that India has achieved in the last five years is due to aspirations, inspiration and efforts of the people of India. On their behalf, I accept the award and express my gratitude."
- Mr. Modi said he was honoured that the award is being conferred on him in the year that India celebrated the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- Mr. Modi dedicated the \$200,000 (₹1.42 crore) prize money to the Namami Gange programme to stop pollution in the Ganga and rejuvenate the river.
- "Our endeavour towards peaceful developments has only too often been derailed by cross-border terrorism. While India has been the victim of cross-border terrorism for over 40 years, all nations today face this grave threat which respects no borders," the Prime Minister said.

4. Conclusion:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to South Korea was significant in enhancing bilateral relations as India and South Korea have deepened their relations as special strategic partners.
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in said that India and South Korea could lead the Fourth Industrial Revolution by combining their strengths.

V.13. INDO-PAK RELATIONS**I. Kulbhushan Jadhav Case:****1. ICJ Asked Pakistan to Review Jadhav Sentence and Grant Consular Access to Indian Government (Hague, Netherlands, July 17, 2019):**

- On July 17, 2019, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), based in Hague in the Netherlands, accepted India's plea that former Indian naval officer Kulbhushan Jadhav's trial under espionage and terror charges in Pakistan violated international law.
- The ICJ ruled that Pakistan should "review and reconsider" Mr. Jadhav's conviction and death sentence.
- The ICJ also ruled that the Pakistan should give the Indian government consular access to Mr. Jadhav and to stay the execution of his sentence, pending the review process.
- The Court held that the denial of consular access to Mr. Jadhav constituted a "breach" of article 36 para 1(b) of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (1963) which Pakistan is a signatory to, which stipulates that all foreign nationals arrested must be given access to their government or local embassy.
- The ICJ rejected Pakistan's counter-claim that Vienna convention didn't apply in a case of espionage.

2. India's Stand Vindicated:

- India said that the ICJ verdict in the Kulbhushan Jadhav case vindicated its position that Pakistan violated the Vienna Convention.
- "The court directed that Pakistan is under an obligation to inform Shri Jadhav without further delay of his rights and to provide Indian consular officers access to him in accordance with the Vienna Convention," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.
- "We once again call upon Pakistan to release and repatriate him forthwith. Pakistan was found to have deprived India of the right to communicate with Shri Jadhav, have access to him, visit him in detention and arrange his legal representation. The government will vigorously continue its efforts to ensure his safety and wellbeing, as well as his early return to India," the External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said in a statement in both Houses of Parliament.
- On August 1, 2019, Raveesh Kumar, spokesperson of the MEA said: "We have received a proposal from Pakistan. We are evaluating the proposal in the light of the judgement of the International Court of Justice (ICJ)."
- On August 2, 2019, India sought unimpeded consular access to Kulbhushan Jadhav.

3. Implications of the ICJ Verdict:

- ICJ judgement in the Kulbhushan Jadhav case is a vindication of India's stand and a major relief to India.
- The Court directed Pakistan to reconsider and review Mr. Jadhav's conviction.
- The ICJ ruled in favour of India's petition on six counts, and found that Pakistan was in breach of its own commitments to the Vienna Convention on consular relations, and also rejected its contention that the Convention doesn't apply to the charges of espionage and terrorism levelled against Mr. Jadhav.
- ICJ's judgement castigated Pakistan's legal process against Jadhav – from the initial failure to inform India of the arrest, besides the failure to inform him of his rights, to provide him legal representation, and to provide him an open and fair trial.

- Pakistan needs to recognise India's resolve in securing the safety of Mr. Jadhav and order comprehensive review of the trial process and implement ICJ's detailed recommendation for an effective process of justice
- India needs to step up on the pedal and exert pressure on Pakistan to rescind the death sentence and allow Mr. Jadhav consular access and legitimate legal platform to launch his defence

II. Kartarpur Corridor:

1. Background:

- The Kartarpur corridor is a proposed border corridor between India and Pakistan which will connect the Sikh shrines of Dera Baba Nanak Sahib in India's Punjab State with Gurudwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur in Pakistan's Punjab province.
- The under construction 4.7 km corridor is intended to allow religious devotees from India to visit the Gurudwara in Kartarpur.
- In November 2018, the government of India decided to develop the Kartarpur corridor from Dera Baba Nanak Sahib in Gurdaspur district of Punjab to the International border.
- On November 26, 2018, India's Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu laid the foundation stone for the Kartarpur corridor project.
- On March 14, 2019, the first round of talks between India and Pakistan were held.
- From March-May the meetings of the technical committees from both sides were held.

2. Meeting of Indian and Pakistan Officials at the Attari-Wagah Border (July 14, 2019):

- Officials from India and Pakistan met at the Attari-Wagah border on July 14, 2019 to discuss issues, including ways to bridge gaps related to the Kartarpur Corridor that is to be made operational by November 2019, ahead of the commemoration of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak.
- Pakistan agreed to give year-long visa-free access to Indian pilgrims to the holy Gurudwara of Kartarpur Sahib.
- "It was agreed to allow visa-free travel for the Indian passport-holders and OCI card-holders seven days a week. Throughout the year, 5,000 pilgrims will be allowed to visit the Kartarpur Sahib Gurudwara per day. The pilgrims will be allowed to travel as individuals or in groups and also on foot," India's Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement.
- India proposed that the holy shrine be open to Indian citizens of all faiths. Pakistan reiterated that there will be provision for a permit system for the pilgrims travelling through the religious corridor.
- India urged that at least 5,000 pilgrims be allowed to visit the Gurudwara and insisted that 10,000 more be allowed to visit on special occasions and festivals.
- India also asked Pakistan to prevent Khalistan supporters from misusing this historic initiative.
- "A dossier was handed over to the Pakistan side to highlight concerns in this regard," the MEA statement said.
- The Indian team made up of delegates from the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs cautioned Pakistan against building an earth-filled embankment that could create flooding problems at Dera Bana Nanak side in India.
- The Meeting highlighted the preparatory work under way on both sides of the border for the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak.

- India said that significant progress had been made in building the infrastructure needed to handle the pilgrims from India and abroad and pointed out that the infrastructure on the Indian side would be able to handle 15,000 pilgrims a day. The work is expected to be complete by October 31, 2019.
- India urged Pakistan to allow 'Nagar Kirtan' from Delhi to Nankana Sahib in Pakistan in July and during Oct-Nov 2019 as part of the celebrations to mark the birth of the first Sikh Guru.

3. India's Dossier to Pakistan:

- India handed over a 23-page dossier to the Pakistan delegation during the Kartarpur corridor talks held at Wagah border.
- In the dossier, India mentioned nearly 30 instances in the past four years when Sikh pilgrims visiting Pakistan were subjected to "anti-India propaganda" such as espousing the Khalistani cause.
- Gopal Singh Chawla, a key "Khalistani element", instigated the Sikh community to support Kashmiris for the formation of "Azad Kashmir", according to the dossier.

V.14. DIRECTION OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY (UPDATE)

I. South Asia Top Priority in Line with India's Neighbourhood First Policy:

- On June 6, 2019, India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said that building connectivity in the South Asian region and coordinating economic issues will be the top priorities of the External Affairs Ministry.
- Mr. Jaishankar pointed to the fact that South Asia is among the least inter-connected regions in the world, but efforts were being made to make the region more integrated.
- India has strong synergy with other BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) countries. BIMSTEC connects South Asia with Southeast Asia.
- "SAARC has certain problems and I think we all know what it is even if you were to put the terrorism issue aside, there are connectivity and trade issues. BIMSTEC leaders were invited for PM's swearing-in, because we see today an energy and a possibility in BIMSTEC and a mindset which fits in with that very optimistic vision of economic cooperation that we want," the External Affairs Minister said.
- "If we want to propel economic growth, then there is greater responsibility for Indian foreign policy to focus on the external aspect of it," Mr. Jaishankar said.
- The External Affairs Minister said he would launch PRAGATI with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to review projects undertaken or piloted by the Ministry abroad.
- Mr. Jaishankar said "global rebalancing" is taking place and the "sharpest manifestation" of that is the rise of China, and to an extent, India as well.
- The External Affairs Minister emphasised the need for more regional exchanges, stressing that India needed to "incentivise cooperation in the neighbourhood" by being "generous" to its smaller neighbours.

VI. INTERNATIONAL CURRENT EVENTS

1. CHINA

SUMMARY

I. Current Situation:

1. Xinjiang Problem:

UN Committee – China Holding 2 Million Uighurs & Muslim Minorities in Secret Camps (August 10, 2018):

- UN human rights experts expressed concern over what they feel were many credible reports that China had detained a million or more ethnic Uighurs in the western Xinjiang region and forced about two million to submit to re-education and indoctrination.
- In the name of combating religious extremism, China had turned Xinjiang into “something resembling a massive internment camp, shrouded in secrecy, a sort of no-rights zone.”
- Accounts from the Xinjiang region pointed to the Muslims “being treated as enemies of the state solely on the basis of their ethno-religious identity,” according to Mr. McDougall.
- Praised China’s policies toward minorities, stressing that they were aimed at promoting unity and harmony, and said that economic progress in the region had lifted 20 million people out of poverty in the past five years.
- Tightened security measures and limits on the religious practices of Uighurs, who were mostly Sunni Muslims, were aimed at preventing violent, anti-state activities in Uighur areas, which they attributed to separatism, terrorism and religious extremism.
- The Uighur advocates stressed that the harsh security measures adopted by the Chinese fuel resentment.

2. Defence:

A. Highlights of Annual Pentagon Report on China (August 16, 2018):

- Highlights China’s increasing military, economic and diplomatic power and how China is leveraging it to rapidly build its international stature and establish regional dominance.
- Chinese bombers are developing capabilities to hit targets as far from China as possible.
- “Over the last three years, the PLA has rapidly expanded its overwater bomber operating areas, gaining experience in critical maritime regions and likely training for strikes against US and allied targets.”
- The PLA may demonstrate the “capability to strike US and allied forces and military bases in the western Pacific Ocean, including Guam.”
- The PLA in 2017 undertook a massive transformation of operational and tactical units as part of its structural reforms.
- With around a million troops, the PLA is the largest standing ground force in the world.
- “The purpose of these reforms is to create a more mobile, modular, lethal ground force capable of being the core of joint operations and able to meet Xi Jinping’s directive to ‘fight and win wars’.”

B. China Tested Its Most Powerful ‘Mother of All Bombs’ (December 2018):

- China tested its most powerful non-nuclear weapon, dubbed the “Mother of All Bombs” in reference to the US bomb used in Afghanistan

- The bomb was airdropped by an H-6K bomber and caused a gigantic explosion. The video was shown on the website of state arms manufacturer NORINCO at the end of December 2018.
- The bomb is dubbed as the Chinese version of the “Mother of All Bombs” due to its large destruction potential that is claimed to be only second to a nuclear weapon.
- The bomb is five to six metres long (16 to 20 feet), but is lighter than its US version
- “The massive blast can easily and completely wipe out fortified group targets such as reinforced buildings, bastions and defence shelters,”

C. Chinese President Xi Jinping asked the Armed Forces to Always be Battle-Ready (January 4, 2019):

- China faced increasing risks and challenges, and the armed forces must work to secure its security and development needs.
- Asked the armed forces to devise strategies for the new era and take on responsibilities for preparing and waging war.
- “The world is facing a period of major changes never seen in a century, and China is still in an important period of strategic opportunity for development,”
- Armed forces needed to upgrade their joint operations capabilities and nurture new types of combat forces.
- Mr. Xi signed an order to open the annual training session of the armed forces. The order demanded that the troops hone their combat capability and that military units organise events on a regular basis to verify soldiers’ ability.
- The Chinese President’s comments followed his remarks on January 2, 2019 that China still reserved the right to use force to achieve “reunification” with Taiwan and prevent Taiwan’s independence.
- Chinese President’s remarks on Taiwan came days after the US President Donald Trump signed the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act into law, reaffirming the commitment of the US to Taiwan’s security.
- Mr. Xi’s call to the armed forces to be battle prepared also came after the acting US Defence Secretary Patrick Shanahan told the US forces that he saw China as a key priority.
- China is keen to its armed forces alert amid territorial disputes in the South China Sea and escalating tensions with the US over issues like trade and the status of Taiwan.

D. China Expanding its Strategic Footprint in the Indo-Pacific Region – Pentagon Report (January 2019):

- China established its first overseas naval base at Djibouti in the Horn of Africa in 2017 and is now looking at Pakistan, Cambodia and Vanuatu and other countries for additional military bases to expand its strategic footprint and emerge as the pre-eminent power in the Indo-Pacific region
- “China’s global expansion by military and non-military means” pointed out that China “completed” over \$20 billion of military sales and transfers as a component of its foreign policy just between 2012 and 201 to become the world’s fifth largest arms supplier.
- The military sales included \$8 billion in arms to Indo-Pacific countries, specifically Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. The second largest military sales of China were to the Middle East and North Africa.
- Pakistan is receiving eight Yuan-class diesel electric submarines, two Type-054A multi-role frigates and other weapons.
- The Djibouti base, where China is presently constructing a 450-metre pier capable of berthing at four warships by mid-2019, and “probably follow-on bases at other locations” signal “a turning point” in the expansion of operations of the People’s Liberation Army in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and beyond

- “These bases, and other improvements to the PLA’s ability to project power during the next decade, will increase China’s ability to deter the use of conventional military force, sustain operations abroad, and hold strategic economic corridors at risk,”

E. China Overhauling Its Military:

- China is on course to overhaul its military by enhancing its technology and cutting down personnel, to enable its leaner armed forces to project power far beyond their borders
- “The Army’s share of the total number of troops in the military has fallen below 50%; the number of active duty members in non-combat institutions has been reduced by nearly half, and the number of officers has decreased by 30%.”
- Navy, Air Force, rocket force, and strategic support force, which handle areas such as cyber warfare, comprise more than half of China’s armed forces.
- The entire chain of command in the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) has been changed to enable integrated warfare of all combat units, steered by a joint operational chief of staff
- China’s military reforms started in 2016 when President Xi Jinping as head of the Central Military Commission (CMC) inaugurated the formation of five theatre commands.
- Despite China’s long-term goal of military advancement, it will have to consistently add new aircraft carriers to dominate the high seas far away from its shores.
- China has one aircraft carrier, while another has begun sea trials. The construction of a third aircraft carrier had commenced

F. China’s 2019 Defence Budget:

- A separate budget report released at the start of the National People’s Congress (NPC) – China’s Parliament on March 5, 2019, said that China’s 2019 defence spending would rise 7.5% from 2018.
- The \$177.55 billion defence budget meant that “....China’s military development is decided by its defence needs.... and that it will not join an arms race,”
- The US President Donald Trump has backed plans to request \$750 billion from the Congress for defence spending in 2019.
- China has plans to build up to six aircraft carriers by 2035. The media quoted military sources as saying that the cost of the aircraft carriers development and construction would not be counted into the defence budget.

3. Economy:

- China’s economy slowed down in the fourth quarter of 2018 under pressure from faltering domestic demand and increasing US tariffs resulting in the lowest growth in nearly three decades.
- The increasing signs of weakness in the Chinese economy – which has generated global growth in recent years – has raised concerns about the risks to the world economy.
- China set an economic growth target of 6%-6.5% for 2019, after factoring in a number of things, including the trade war with the US, the financial bottlenecks for its private enterprises. This was revealed in government work report, presented by Prime Minister Li Keqiang during the opening session of the National People’s Congress (NPC) – the Chinese Parliament.
- GDP growth target of China would be tested after the full impact of the trade war with the US is felt in the first half of 2019.
- The Government of China hopes to counter downward pressure on the economy by increasing domestic demand, using monetary and fiscal instruments at its command

UPDATE – PART II**I. Chinese President Xi Jinping's Tour of Europe (March 2019):****1. Italy became the 1st G7 Country to Join China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI):**

- On March 23, 2019, Italy became the first G7 country to join China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) during the Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Italy.
- Italy signed a "non-binding" protocol with China to take part in China's new "Silk Road" of transport and trade links stretching from Asia to Europe.
- Italy's joining of China's BRI caused concern in the US and the European Union (EU).
- Mr. Xi and the Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte attended a ceremony for the signing of 29 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) which were worth €5 billion-€7 billion, according to the Italian media.
- Chinese investments in Italy could increase to €20 billion but would now be limited to the strategic ports of Genoa and Trieste, according Italian media.
- The Chinese President sought to allay western concerns about his transformational infrastructure Initiative – the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) – by emphasising on the \$1 trillion project's mutual benefits.

2. Chinese President's Visit to France:

- During his visit to France on March 26, 2019, Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasised on the growing convergence between China and the European Union (EU) on global issues from climate change to trade. He urged both sides to overcome their "suspicions."
- At Paris, Mr. Xi met French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker. The leaders declared their desire to work together.
- "Of course there are differences and competition, but it's positive competition," the Chinese President said. "We are advancing together. We shouldn't let suspicions lead us to be constantly looking backwards."
- Both European and Chinese leaders have faced challenges from US President Donald Trump's "America-first" nationalism and his attacks on international agreements covering global warming, trade or Iran's nuclear programme.
- The joint statement issued at the end of the visit stated that Mr. Xi and Mr. Macron committed to working together to promote rules-based international order.

II. China's Second Belt and Road Forum (BRF) (Beijing, April 25-27, 2019):**1. India Turned Down the Invite from China to Attend the Second Belt and Road Forum (BRF):**

- China's Second Belt and Road Forum (BRF) was held from April 25-27, 2019 to highlight China's trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- The BRF was attended by 37 Heads of Nations, the IMF Chief Christine Lagarde and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, and representatives of several other nations.
- India turned down an official invite from China to attend the second BRF. India had also boycotted the first BRF held in Beijing in 2017.
- India has maintained that China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) undermines India's sovereignty in the form of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which passes through the disputed Gilgit-Baltistan region.

2. Chinese President's Keynote Address at the BRF:

- Announced that financial model for funding projects under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) had been revamped, countering criticism that it was opening “debt traps” for enhancing China’s geopolitical influence.
- “We have also formulated guiding principles of financing the development of the Belt and Road and published debt sustainability framework for participating countries to provide guidance for BRI financing cooperation.”
- China “will work with others” to write new rules of international trade within the framework of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).
- “In pursuing Belt and Road cooperation, everything should be done in a transparent way. We should have zero tolerance for corruption.”
- “We also need to ensure the commercial and fiscal sustainability of all projects so that they will achieve the intended goals as planned.”
- BRI projects would encourage participation by multilateral and national financial institutions and encourage joint ventures in third countries.
- The BRI projects would seek the involvement of “multiple stake holders”, for projects pursuing a “people-centered” approach focused on “job creation” and countering poverty.

3. China Announced Guiding Principles for the BRI:

- The three-day Belt and Road Forum (BRF) ended with the Chinese President Xi Jinping announcing that new project deals worth \$62 billion were signed with several countries.
- China also announced new guiding principles for the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- Mr. Xi said that the BRI would adopt market-driven practices, which meant opening up the infrastructure business to foreign companies and making financing terms negotiable between the lender and borrower.
- The Chinese President stressed that the countries adopting the programme would not be burdened with heavy debt.
- “We must implement the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits to see all that voices are heard, all reached their full potential and all stand to benefit,” Mr. Xi said.
- A statement issued at the end of the BRF highlighted that the BRI cooperation should respect openness, transparency, inclusiveness and level playing field.
- “We respect sovereignty and territorial integrity of each other and affirm that each country has the right and primary responsibility to define its development strategies in accordance with its national priorities and legislation,” the statement said.
- The reference to territorial integrity assumed significance in the context of India’s boycott of the BRF in protest of the CPEC passing through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), according to analysts.

4. Conclusion:

- The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) unveiled in 2013 is a massive land and maritime connectivity project, driven to revive the Ancient Silk Road.
- The BRI connects China with Europe and Africa and aims to create a network of ports, bridges and rail lines.

- The BRI has faced some hurdles in the past one year due to cooling of the Chinese economy and the accusations by the US and other countries that China is burdening developing countries with too much debt.
- Sri Lanka, Nepal, Thailand and Tanzania have scrapped, scaled back or renegotiated projects under the BRI due to complaints that they are too costly and give too little work to local contractors.
- China said that 150 countries have signed the BRI related agreements since its launch in 2013.
- China claims that the BRI is solely an economic initiative with no political motives.
- Some countries including India, Japan and the US are concerned that China is trying to build a China-centered sphere of influence that would undermine their own influence, bringing the developing countries into “debt traps” that would give China more control over their territories.
- At the second Belt and Road Forum (BRF), Chinese President Xi Jinping stressed on “transparency and sustainability” of BRI projects, and greater debt sustainability in the “financing model” of the BRI under the new guiding principles.

UPDATE – PART III

I. Highlights of the Chinese President Xi Jinping's Address to Conference in Beijing (May 2019):

- China must prepare for difficult times as the international situation is increasingly complex.
- Urged people to learn the lessons of the hardships of the past.
- **“Today, on the new Long March, we must overcome various major risks and challenges from home and abroad.”** (Reference to the 1934-36 trek of Communist Party members fleeing a civil war to a remote rural base, from where they re-grouped and eventually came to power in 1949).
- **“Our country is still in a period of important strategic opportunities for development, but the international situation is increasingly complicated.”**
- **“We must be conscious of the long-term and complex nature of various unfavourable factors at home and abroad, and appropriately prepare for various difficult situations.”**

II. Chinese Economy under Pressure:

- China's economy is showing signs of strain after long years of sustained growth based on cheap labour and high volumes of exports.
- Data released by the National Bureau of Statistics on July 15, 2019, showed that the Chinese economy grew by 6.2% the slowest in 27 years.
- The slow economic growth of the Chinese economy is attributed to a fall in exports and investments due to China's ongoing trade war with the US.
- The government of China has tried to boost the economy with measures like tax cuts, increased public spending and a relaxation in bank reserve requirements to encourage banks to increase lending. The measures are aimed at increasing domestic demand for the goods to hold up the economy
- The challenges facing the Chinese economy is to first improve the credibility of the data released by the government and to restructure the economy driven by state-led investments and exports to one that is driven by market forces
- The pressure on the Chinese economy will ease only if there is an increase in domestic consumption and less reliance on exports.

III. China Launched its First Sea-based Space Rocket (June 5, 2019):

- On June 5, 2019, China launched a space rocket from sea for the first time, the Chinese space agency announced.
- This is seen as a step by China to become a major space power. Currently, China spends more than Russia and Japan on its civil and military space programmes with ambitious plans for moon missions and beyond in the coming years.
- The China National Space Administration said in a statement: "This is the first time that China has.... (tested a) launch vehicle at sea."
- The Long March 11 rocket carried two experimental satellites and five commercial ones.

IV. Highlights of the White Paper titled 'China's National Defence in the New Era' (July 24, 2019):

- China was striving to promote security and stability along the India-China border.
- China has "taken effective measures to create favourable conditions for the peaceful resolution of the Donglang (Doklam) standoff".
- China called Taiwan "the most important and sensitive issue in China-US relations".
- "If anyone dares to separate Taiwan from China, the Chinese military will certainly fight, resolutely defending the country's sovereign unity and territorial integrity", Chinese Defence Ministry spokesperson said.
- The deployment of a US missile defence system in South Korea had severely undermined the regional strategic balance.
- China stressed on its resolve to counter supporters of separatism in Tibet as well as the Xinjiang region.
- The White Paper accused the US of adopting "unilateral policies", and emphasising that the US "has provoked and intensified competition among major countries, significantly increased its defence expenditure, pushed for additional capacity in nuclear, outer space, cyber and missile defence, and undermined global strategic stability".

VI.2. SINO-PAK RELATIONS**I. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's Visit to Pakistan (September 7-9, 2018):**

- Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Pakistan from September 7-9, 2018.
- During the visit China rejected accusations that its financial backing for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was a "debt trap" that could compromise Pakistan's sovereignty.
- China has projected the CPEC – Gwadar to Kashgar corridor – as the flagship of China-led Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- Mr. Wang said that among the 22 projects within the framework of the CPEC, 18 involved investment and aid and only four of them used concessional loan. He pointed out that nine of these projects were already completed and 13 were under construction.
- Only \$19 billion had been invested in the CPEC, which had generated 70,000 jobs.
- During the first phase of the CPEC, the focus was on energy and infrastructure projects. It was now up to Pakistan to drive the trajectory of the "next phase" of the undertaking.
- During the talks in Pakistan, the Chinese Foreign Minister received full support for the CPEC from Pakistan's military.

- Pakistan army chief Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa assured the Chinese Foreign Minister that the military would “guarantee” the smooth development of CPEC
- “[Mr] Wang said that the Pakistan military is the protector of the China-Pakistan friendship, and the bilateral military relations are an important part of the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership between the two countries and a symbol of their high political mutual trust,”
- The Pakistan army chief also reassured the Chinese Foreign Minister of Pakistan’s commitment to firmly fight the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) as part of its counterterrorism effort.
- Mr. Wang also emphasised on the relevance of the trilateral China-Pakistan-Afghanistan dialogue as a platform to align perceptions between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

II. CPEC to Give Priority to Developing Social Infrastructure in Pakistan:

- China and Pakistan were looking afresh at projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), in line with Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan’s focus on development of social infrastructure.
- “China will give more assistance on a priority basis to such areas as agriculture, education, medical service and drinking water, delivering tangible benefits to more people,” the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said.
- “The two sides will enhance the building of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and decide the future development path and the course for cooperation through negotiations in the light of Pakistan’s next-stage socio-economic development priorities and the needs of its people,” the spokesperson said.
- “We will prioritise the faster development of industrial cooperation and livelihood projects, gradually extend them to the western part of Pakistan and enable more Pakistanis to benefit from the CPEC,” the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said.

III. India Opposed to the Bus Service between China-Pakistan Via PoK:

- On November 1, 2018, India strongly opposed a proposed luxury bus service between Pakistan and China that would pass through parts of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Gilgit-Baltistan – territory that India claims – calling it “a violation of India’s sovereignty”.
- “We have lodged strong protests with China and Pakistan on the proposed bus service that will operate through areas of Pakistan Occupied Jammu and Kashmir State under the so-called ‘China-Pakistan Economic Corridor,’ the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson said.
- “Any such bus service through Pakistan Occupied Jammu & Kashmir State will be violation of India’s sovereignty and territorial integrity,” the MEA spokesperson said.
- Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said that the CPEC was an “economic project”, and did not reflect China’s position on Kashmir.
- Pakistan said that India’s objections were “frivolous”.
- India has always opposed the 193 “China-Pakistan Boundary Agreement” that recognises PoK as under “actual Pakistani control” without prejudicing a final dispute resolution with India.
- India has also protested the Karakoram Highway as well as subsequent infrastructure projects built by China in the disputed area.

V. Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan’s Visit to China (November 2-4, 2018):

1. Meeting between the Chinese President and Pakistan’s Prime Minister:

- Mr. Khan’s visit to China came at a time when Pakistan’s economy is in deep trouble and could benefit from China’s help.

- Pakistan's Prime Minister said: **"Countries go in cycles. They have their high points, they have their low points. Unfortunately, our country is going through a low point at the moment with two very big deficits, a fiscal deficit and a current account deficit. And so we, as I've said, have come to learn."**
- The Chinese President Xi Jinping stated that **China-Pakistan "all weather" friendship should enter a "new era". "I attach great importance to China-Pakistan relations and am willing to work together with the Prime Minister to strengthen the China-Pakistan all-weather strategic partnership and build a new era of China-Pakistan destiny."**
- **The meeting between the two leaders was "very productive" and signalled that Pakistan would secure a major economic package from China,** media reports said quoting Pakistan's Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry.
- **China needs Pakistan's full support to make the CPEC a success. China has projected the \$62 billion CPEC as the flagship undertaking in its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).**

2. Talks between the Prime Ministers of China and Pakistan:

- **"The country [Pakistan] has entered a new stage of social and economic development... Hence it is fair to say that the current China-Pakistan relationship has reached a new starting point. It needs new dynamics. Against such a backdrop, the Prime Minister's visit is highly significant,"** according to the Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Kong Xuanyou.
- **Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan and his Chinese counterpart Li Keqiang held talks.**
- **Both leaders signed 16 agreements, including one to open a strategic dialogue between the Foreign Ministers.**
- **"During the visit, the two sides have made it clear in principle that the Chinese government will provide necessary support and assistance to Pakistan to tide over the current economic difficulties. As for the specific measures to be taken, the competent authorities of the two sides will have detailed discussions,"** the Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister said.
- **The two countries were fine-tuning the CPEC, giving a people friendly orientation to the \$62 billion project.**

3. Highlights of the Joint Statement:

- **China appreciated "Pakistan's quest for peace through dialogue, cooperation and negotiation, on the basis of mutual respect and equality, and supports Pakistan's efforts for improvement of Pakistan-India relations and for settlement of outstanding disputes between the two countries."**
- **"Pakistan supported active participation of China at the platform of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)."**
- **The joint statement "underscored the need for all States to avoid politicisation of the UN Sanctions regime and the work of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)."**
- **Both countries said that they were not yet ready to join a global counterterrorism treaty, pointing out that a "consensus" should be forged on the text of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) first.**
- **"China supports Pakistan's engagement with the Nuclear Suppliers Group and welcomes its adherence of NSG Guidelines."**
- **The two sides slammed "the growing negative propaganda against the CPEC and "expressed determination to safeguard the CPEC projects from all threats."**

4. Joint Statement Against Wuhan Spirit:

- Commentators in India said that China has not shown the 'Wuhan spirit' by praising Pakistan for its role in South Asia.
- "China would have frozen all fresh initiatives with Pakistan if it had any respect for the Wuhan spirit that took off after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met President Xi Jinping earlier this year. By appreciating Pakistan for its role in relationship with India, China is clearly interfering with India's affairs in South Asia," according to former Foreign Secretary Kanwal Sibal.
- "The bus service is a clear sign that China does not intend to respect the Wuhan spirit," Mr. Sibal said.

5. China's Belt and Road Initiative Takes a Military Turn – Highlights of the New York Times Report:

- "Pakistani Air Force and Chinese officials were putting the final touches on a secret proposal to expand Pakistan's building of Chinese military jets, weaponry and other hardware."
- "The confidential plan, reviewed by the New York Times, would also deepen the cooperation between China and Pakistan in space."
- "All those military projects were designed as part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a chain of infrastructure development programmes stretching across some 70 countries, built and financed by Beijing."
- "Chinese officials have repeatedly said the Belt and Road is purely an economic project with peaceful intent. But with its plan for Pakistan, China is for the first time explicitly tying a Belt and Road proposal to its military ambitions."
- "For the most part, Pakistan has eagerly turned more toward China as the chill with the US has deepened."
- "Even before the revelations of the new Chinese-Pakistani military cooperation, some of China's biggest projects in Pakistan had clear strategic implications."
- "A Chinese-built seaport and special economic zone in the Pakistani town of Gwadar is rooted in trade, giving China a quicker route to get goods to the Arabian Sea. But it also gives Beijing a strategic card to play against India and the US if tensions worsen to the point of naval blockades as the two powers increasingly confront each other at sea."
- "A less scrutinised component of BRI is the central role Pakistan plays in China's Beidou satellite navigation system. Pakistan is the only other country that has been granted access to the system's military service, allowing more precise guidance for missiles, ships and aircraft."
- "Military analysts predict that China could use Gwadar to expand the naval footprint of its attack submarines, after agreeing in 2015 to sell eight submarines to Pakistan in a deal worth up to \$6 billion. China could use the equipment it sells to the South Asian country to refuel its own submarines, extending its Navy's global reach."

UPDATE – PART II**I. Pakistan Prime Minister's Visit to China to attend the Belt and Road Forum (BRF) (April 25-28, 2019):****1. Meeting between Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan and Chinese President Xi Jinping:**

- Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan visited China to attend China's second Belt and Road Forum (BRF) from April 25-28, 2019.
- The BRF was held from April 25-27, 2019 to highlight China's trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in which the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), connecting China's Xinjiang Province with Pakistan's Gwadar port is a flagship project.

- Chinese President Xi Jinping met Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan and expressed hope that Pakistan and India can meet each other halfway to improve their strained relations following the Pulwama terror attack.
- "We want to build a civilised relationship with our eastern neighbour and there is a possibility that if we can resolve the Kashmir issue through dialogue, things can improve," Mr. Khan was quoted as saying by Radio Pakistan.
- Both leaders also exchanged views on the situations in South Asia, according to an official Chinese statement.
- The meeting between the Pakistan Prime Minister and the Chinese President came at a time when China was reviewing its stand on designation of the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) chief Azhar Masood as a global terrorist.
- Mr. Xi described Pakistan as "China's all-weather strategic cooperative partner".
- "No matter how international and regional situations change, China firmly supports Pakistan in safeguarding its sovereignty and national dignity, choosing its own development path suited to its national conditions, combating terrorist and extremist forces, striving for a sound external security environment, and playing a constructive role in international and regional affairs," Mr. Xi said.

2. Agreements Signed Under CPEC:

- China and Pakistan signed a number of agreements as part of the next phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).
- The agreements included upgradation of a Karachi-Peshawar railway line, launching of second phase of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and establishment of a dry port.
- Under the second phase of the FTA signed, China would open up 90% of its market for Pakistani goods in a bid to address the trade deficit which stood at \$9.7 billion in 2018. The new FTA is estimated to increase Pakistan's exports by \$500 million.
- Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan met his Chinese counterpart Li Keqiang during which they signed the deal to build a double railway track from Karachi to Peshawar covering a distance of 1,680 km. China would provide 8.4 billion funding for it as part of the CPEC projects.

VI.3. SINO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

SUMMARY

I. Deepening Sino-Russian Relations:

1. Global Tensions Leading to Closer Sino-Russian Relations:

- Growing global tensions between the US and China over the South China Sea and the current crisis in Syria were leading to closer Sino-Russian relations with US as the common denominator.
- China's closer relations with Russia, which deepened in 2015, were also seen as a response to the US policy of 'pivot to Asia'.
- Sino-Russian strategic partnership is on course to make a paradigm shift in global power and bring in multipolarity.
- As the US focused on its 'Asia pivot' doctrine, which is focused on containing China through enhancement of forces in the western Pacific, China started building Pacific-centred nuclear and conventional deterrents in the past year

- China's credible Pacific-centred nuclear deterrents include its nuclear second strike capability with the mounting of the JL-2 missiles (range of 7,350 km) on its JIN class submarines

2. Sino-Russian Defence Cooperation:

- Russia has become a key partner in building China's military deterrent.
- Russia and China concluded a S-400 air defence deal which negates the threat by fighter jets or ballistic missiles by the US or Japan.
- On December 8, 2015, Russia and China concluded a deal for the supply of 24 Su-35 planes by Russia to China.
- The \$2 billion deal includes the transfer of technology by Russia, which is badly required by China for developing its next generation of weapons
- Acquisition of the Su-35 fighter jets would enhance China's reach over the South China Sea if deployed from China's newly developed artificial islands in the South China Sea.
- The Su-35 fighter jets could also counter the US F-35 stealth fighters, as the Irbis-6 radars on the Su-35 could track the US stealth fighters around 90 km away
- The Su-35 deal with China would also be very significant for cash-strapped Russia as it could help in addressing the increasing expenses both domestic and foreign
- Russia also benefitted financially from the S-400 air defence missile systems deal with China

3. Sino-Russian Energy Cooperation:

- The deepening Sino-Russian strategic relations have also been reinforced through wide-ranging energy cooperation between the two countries
- Currently, China is looking towards enhancing its clean energy drive from natural gas, nuclear and renewable energy.
- Russia's untapped oil and gas reserves in the Siberian zone would be very useful for China
- China has signed a \$400 billion deal with Russia to import gas for the next 30 years through the Siberia Power Pipeline.
- Russia has become China's key energy security partner with another energy deal expected to be finalised through the western Altai route

4. Sino-Russian Economic Cooperation:

- Russia and China are working towards undermining the hegemony of the US dollar.
- Both countries are trading in the Chinese currency yuan and the Russian currency rouble and the currency swap has helped Russia to some extent in neutralising the sanctions imposed by the West after the Ukraine crisis
- Trading in local currencies by Russia and China has also been reinforced through the New Development Bank (NDB) of BRICS and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) led by China.
- China has utilised its surplus funds in constructing railways, highways, industrial parks, and cyber-cities along its Silk Road Economic Belt, which extends from Xian in the East to Europe in the West.
- China is keen on extending the collective influence of Silk Road countries by partnering Russia as the key partner of the Silk Road countries along the Eurasian corridor

5. Deepening Sino-Russian Partnership Could Lead to a New Cold War or a More Multipolar World

II. Implications of Closer Russia-China Relations:

- China, the world's second largest consumer of oil, and Russia, the world's second largest exporter of oil, have been deepening their relationship in recent years.
- Security and energy cooperation have been the driving forces behind the rapprochement.
- China and Russia have also allied with each other on international issues, generally in opposition to the US.
- Russia has been focusing on enhancing relations with China after the Ukraine crisis and sanctions imposed by the US and EU.
- China did not condemn Crimea's reunification with Russia and adopted positive neutrality over Ukrainian crisis
- The sanctions imposed by the West on Russia over Ukraine were pushing Russia towards a military alliance with China
- While a military alliance between Russia and China was unlikely, elements of such an alliance were shaping up.
- Russian President Vladimir Putin said that relations between Russia and China were at their all-time best
- With the signing of the gas deal the two countries were steadily moving towards building a strategic energy alliance
- Russia-China alliance underlines a major change in the global balance of power challenging the post-Cold War unipolar world dominated by the US.
- Enhanced partnership between Russia and China marked the emergence of a global coalition against US hegemony in the post-Cold War era.

III. Sino-Russian Joint Exercise – Vostok 2018 (Russia, September 11-15, 2018):

- China, Russia and Mongolia held a giant military exercise named Vostok 2018 at Russia's Tsugol training range in the trans Baikal region from September 11-15, 2018.
- The mammoth five-day Vostok 2018 involved 3,00,000 troops. The troops engaged in tri-service mock-operations involving 1,000 military aircraft, two of Russia's naval fleets and all its airborne units
- Nearly 36,000 military vehicles participated in the drills.
- China despatched about 3,200 troops, along with more than 900 pieces of weaponry apart from 30 fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters
- The Vostok 2018 military exercises were held amidst growing friction between the US, Russia and China. In January 2018, the Pentagon's national defence strategy had highlighted Russia and China as principle strategic challenges to the US.
- The exercises were a "clear indication to the US that it's a response to their national security strategy, as well as a response to the US and NATO posturing in South China Sea, in the Taiwanese Straits, as well as... the permanent stationing of troops that we are seeing on Russia's western border,"
- Russia-China joint exercise Vostok 2018 was the biggest military exercise since the end of Cold War.
- The Vostok 2018 exercise underlined Russia's pivot to the east and marked the rise of a power centre which is an alternative to the US

UPDATE – PART III**I. Chinese President Xi Jinping's Visit to Russia (June 5-7, 2019):****1. Meeting between the Chinese and Russian Presidents:**

- Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Russia from June 5-7, 2019. During the visit he held talks with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin and also attended the St. Petersburg Economic Forum.
- **"President Putin is for me a best friend,"** Mr. Xi said during a joint statement following the meeting between the two leaders.
- **"We decided that we would raise our bilateral relations to a new, higher level – increasing our mutual support and assistance, and promote our relations in a new era,"** the Chinese President said.
- The Russian President Vladimir Putin said the Chinese President's visit was a **"key event"** in relations between the two neighbours.
- **"In recent years, thanks to your direct participation, the relationship between Russia and China has reached an unprecedentedly high level,"** Mr. Putin said.
- China and Russia **"have strong political mutual trust, and support each other firmly on issues concerning each other's core interests and major concerns,"** Mr. Xi said.
- President Putin's foreign policy aide, Yury Ushakov, said that the **Chinese and Russian President's would sign a new declaration on their "global partnership and strategic cooperation, which are entering a new era"**.

2. China and Russia Signed Deals worth \$20 Billion:

- China and Russia signed agreements worth \$20 billion in the presence of the Presidents of both countries.
- The agreements included an accord for Huawei Technologies Co to start pilot zones in Russia with Mobile TeleSystems PJSC.
- Major Chinese and Russian companies signed cooperation agreements.

3. St. Petersburg International Economic Forum:

- **"Along with the emergence of reverse-globalisation and hegemonism, global society faces increasing new challenges,"** the Chinese President said at the St. Petersburg Economic Forum.
- The US is attempting to **"impose its jurisdiction across the entire world,"** the Russian President said. This is pushing the world on a **"path to permanent conflicts, trade wars, and maybe not only trade ones,"** he added.
- Mr. Putin praised Russia-China cooperation as a major factor in maintaining global stability.
- The Russian President named the US President Donald Trump's campaign against Huawei as an example of US efforts to monopolize the world economy, along with threats of sanctions to derail the construction of the Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline to Europe.
- The use of the dollar as an instrument of pressure was undermining its role as a global reserve currency, Mr. Putin said.
- The world risks **"sleepwalking into a Cold War"** amid the international tensions, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said. **"This has to stop,"** he added.

4. Significance of the Visit:

- Visit of the Chinese President Xi Jinping to Russia underlined the strengthening of Sino-Russian relations amid tensions with the US.
- The St. Petersburg Economic Forum, Russia's annual investment gathering was boycotted by the US Ambassador to Russia, Jon Huntsman.
- Huawei, Chinese telecommunication equipment manufacturer signed an agreement with Russia's principal mobile operator to start 5G networks. This was seen as a rebuff to the US attempts to isolate Huawei internationally.
- Chinese and Russian Presidents clearly demonstrated that the tensions with the West had drawn them closer.
- Both leaders emphasised that bilateral relations were at a high, marked by deepening diplomatic and strategic cooperation.
- China participated in Russian military exercises on its eastern border in September 2018 and both sides have adopted common positions at the UN Security Council on critical international issues

VI.4. BANGLADESH**I. 11th General Election in Bangladesh (December 30, 2018):****1. General Election for Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament):**

- On December 30, 2018, the 11th General election was held in Bangladesh for the Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament).
- The elections were held for 299 seats in the 300 seat National Parliament of Bangladesh.
- Jatiya Sangsad or National Parliament of Bangladesh has 300 seats + 50 seats are reserved for women.
- The main contest was between the ruling Awami League led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Jatiya Oikya Front (JOK) a broad coalition of 20 Opposition parties including the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).
- There are 10 crore voters in Bangladesh

2. Landslide Victory for the Ruling Awami League:

- The ruling Awami League won a thumping majority to return to power for a third consecutive term in Bangladesh.
- The Awami League won 288 of the 299 seats for which elections were held. The Opposition coalition JOK won only seven seats and others three seats.
- Awami League leader and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina blamed the Opposition for its electoral debacle.
- Ms. Hasina said her government's pro-people policies helped the party to a landslide victory – the Awami League won 96% of the seats in the National Parliament. "The election was free and fair," the Prime Minister said.
- India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Ms. Sheikh Hasina for her resounding victory in the Parliamentary election.

3. Opposition Rejects the Results of the Parliamentary Election and Called for Fresh Vote:

- The Opposition members of Bangladesh's Parliament boycotted the swearing-in ceremony, after rejecting the results of the Parliamentary election that they said was rigged to give Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina her third consecutive term.
- The Opposition called for a fresh election but the Election Commission of Bangladesh rejected the call.

4. Sheikh Hasina Sworn in as Bangladesh's Prime Minister for a Record Fourth Term:

- On January 7, 2019, Sheikh Hasina was sworn in as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh for a record fourth time – she has been the Prime Minister in 1996, 2008 and 2014.
- The President Md. Abdul Hamid administered the oath of the office to the 71-year-old Ms. Hasina for a record third consecutive term.
- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina would lead a Cabinet of 24 Ministers.

II. Conclusion:

- Landslide victory for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League was mainly due to her immense popularity due to her government's record of enhancing the country's economic growth and social progress.
- The scale of Awami League's victory has taken many by surprise. Although, the Opposition has demanded a fresh poll, the Election Monitoring Forum and the SAARC Human Rights Foundation said the election was "much freer and fairer".
- Challenge before Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is to heal the country battered by bitter political divisions and violence.
- Ms. Hasina needs to be more inclusive and her government needs to set an example of respecting the rule of law, the basic rights of citizens and institutional freedom
- For India, the return of Ms. Hasina for a third consecutive term is significant as both countries have deepened economic, security and strategic relations under her leadership
- Ms. Hasina's victory is also significant for India in the context of countering China's influence in the region.
- India needs to continue its cooperation with Bangladesh in its economic growth, and work together on issues of terrorism, migration, energy and climate change

VI.5. BHUTAN

I. Third Parliamentary Elections in Bhutan:

1. Tri-Cameral Parliament System in Bhutan:

- **Head of the State:** King Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck
- **National Council or Upper House:** 25 members with five of them being appointed by the King and 20 elected from 20 districts.
- **National Assembly or Lower House:** 47 members elected from 47 constituencies.
- **Prime Minister Nominated by the Party that wins most seats in the National Assembly.**
- **The Prime Minister has a fixed term of five years.**

2. Preliminary Round of Voting (September 2018):

- The Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa (DNT), a new party won 92,722 votes
- The Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT) won 90,020 votes.

3. Final Round of Voting (October 18, 2018):

- The Centre-Left DNT led by Lotay Tshering won 30 seats in the 47-member National Assembly, the Lower House of the Bhutanese Parliament.
- The ruling Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT) won the remaining 17 seats.

4. Bhutan's New Prime Minister Lotay Tshering:

- The leader of the DNT Lotay Tshering is the new Prime Minister of Bhutan.
- The 50-year-old Mr. Tshering is a consultant urologist who had joined politics in 2013.
- Mr. Tshering vowed to work for "nation building" in the country which has a burden of a high foreign debt, mainly owed to India, as well as youth employment and rural poverty.

5. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi Congratulated Lotay Tshering:

- On October 19, 2018, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Mr. Lotay Tshering for his DNT party's win the Parliamentary elections in Bhutan.
- India's Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson said that **Mr. Modi reiterated India's commitment to work with the new government for socio-economic transformation in Bhutan.**
- **Mr. Modi "conveyed that India attaches the highest priority to further strengthening unique ties of friendship and cooperation with Bhutan, which is based on shared interests and values, utmost trust, goodwill and mutual understanding,"** according to the MEA statement.
- Mr. Tshering accepted Mr. Modi's invitation to visit India, according to the MEA statement.

II. Conclusion:**1. Significance of Bhutan for India:**

- Bhutan's transition to democracy is very significant for India which has long-standing bilateral ties based on trust and cooperation.
- From India's security point of view a democratic, friendly and confident Bhutan is very significant.
- Although Bhutan is a small nation it is strategically very important for India.
- By 2020, India is targeting to generate 10,000 MW of electricity from hydel projects in Bhutan.

2. India's Significance to Bhutan:

- India is very significant for Bhutan as over half of India's foreign development assistance goes to Bhutan.
- Bhutan's income is also primarily through the sale of electricity to India via various hydro-electric projects, which are mostly paid through grants and lines of credit.
- Bhutan's first generation of professionals was educated in India which is Bhutan's most important development partner.

- India is looking to increase its financial assistance to Bhutan under its next Five-Year Plan starting from 2019.
- India contributed Rs.4,500 crore for Bhutan's 11th Five-Year Plan (2013-2018) which represented 68% of the total external assistance received by Bhutan.
- Bhutan's Prime Minister elect Lotay Tshering that ties with India were non-negotiable.
- In 2017 India and China became embroiled in a military standoff over Doklam plateau claimed by China and Bhutan, and which is located on a strategic corner where the three nations meet.
- India, which has a military presence in Bhutan, prevented China from building a road there.

VI.6. SRI LANKA

I. Current Situation in Sri Lanka:

1. Political Crisis in Sri Lanka as President Maithripala Sirisena Sacked Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe:

- On October 26, 2018, in a swift move, Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena withdrew his faction out of Sri Lanka's ruling coalition and within hours appointed former President Mahinda Rajapaksa as Prime Minister.
- Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's United National Party (UNP) maintained that Mr. Rajapaksa's appointment was "illegal and unconstitutional."
- On October 27, 2018, President Sirisena suspended the Parliament until November 16, 2018.
- On October 29, 2018, President Sirisena swore in 12 new Cabinet Ministers and two junior Ministers.
- President Sirisena said: "I categorically state that the appointments were made totally in accordance with the Constitution and on the advice of legal experts."
- Mr. Sirisena justified his decision citing sharp "political" and "cultural" differences with Mr. Wickremesinghe, with whom he formed Sri Lanka's first national unity government in January 2015.
- On November 9, 2018, Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena dissolved the Parliament and called for general elections on January 5, 2019. The move came hours after his political front admitted the lack of majority for Mr. Rajapaksa to be declared legitimate Prime Minister.
- On November 13, 2018, the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka stayed the Sri Lankan President's dissolution of the Parliament and restrained the Election Commission from preparing for snap elections.
- On November 14, 2018, majority of the MPs voted for a no-confidence motion against disputed Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa.
- On November 23, 2018, 122 MPs challenged Mr. Rajapaksa at the court of appeal, asking on whose authority he occupied the office of the Prime Minister, after being voted out in the legislature.
- On December 3, 2018, Sri Lanka's Court of Appeal restrained controversially appointed Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and his cabinet of ministers from functioning in their respective offices.
- On December 12, 2018, Ranil Wickremesinghe won the vote of confidence in the Parliament with majority of the Parliamentarian including 14 from the Opposition Tamil National Alliance (TNA) voting for him.

- On December 13, 2018, the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka said that the Sri Lankan President's move to dissolve the Parliament and call for snap polls for illegal. The Court ruled that the President's November 9, 2018, proclamation – sacking Parliament was null and void and had no effect in law.
- On December 14, 2018, Mr. Rajapaksa decided to vacate the office of Prime Minister – which he held controversially held for seven weeks – paving the way for the return of ousted Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe.
- On December 16, 2018, Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena reinstated Ranil Wickremesinghe as the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka.
- The move by the Sri Lankan President to reinstate Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe signalled an end to the political crisis in Sri Lanka.
- However, Mr. Sirisena said that there was no change in his “personal position” that he would not work with Mr. Wickremesinghe even if all 225 members of the Parliament backed him.
- On December 20, 2018, Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena named a 30-member Cabinet to end the seven-week political crisis.

2. India Welcomed the End of Political Uncertainty in Sri Lanka:

- On December 16, 2018, India welcomed the end of the political uncertainty in Sri Lanka with the Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe being reinstated by the President Maithripala Sirisena.
- “This is a reflection of the maturity demonstrated by all political forces, and also of the resilience of Sri Lankan democracy and its institutions,” India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson said.
- “India remains committed to taking forward its people-oriented development projects.... We are confident that India-Sri Lanka relations will continue to move on the upward trajectory,” the MEA spokesperson said.
- On February 24, 2018, 155 houses, built as part of India's ongoing housing project in Sri Lanka, were handed over to estate workers in Hatton, located in the Central Province of Sri Lanka.
- The handing over of the houses is part of India's pledge to help construct 63,000 houses in Sri Lanka – including 46,000 houses built in the war-hit north and east – with a grant of \$350 million, the largest Indian grant assistance project in any country abroad.

3. Implications of the Political Crisis in Sri Lanka:

- Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said his return was a collective victory. “Today marks victory not for myself or for the UNP. It is a victory for Sri Lanka's democratic institutions and the sovereignty of our citizens. I thank everyone who stood firm in defending the Constitution and ensuring the triumph of democracy.”
- Mr. Wickremesinghe pointed out that the constitutional provision (19th amendment to the Constitution) prohibits the dissolution of Parliament prior to the completion of four and half years of its term.
- On January 10, 2018, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said Sri Lanka was struggling to pay back its increasing foreign debt and blamed the recent political crisis for dealing a “death blow” to the economy.
- Sri Lanka is facing a \$5.9 billion in foreign debt repayment in 2019 which is a record.
- Sri Lanka lost \$1 billion in foreign reserves during the political crisis in 2018.
- Sri Lanka hopes to raise \$1 billion from the international debt market, \$500 million from China and Japan and \$400 million from the Reserve Bank of India.

II. Sri Lanka's Growing Relations with China:

1. Over 650 Acres of Land Reclaimed for China-backed Port City in Colombo (January 16, 2019):

- On January 16, 2019, Sri Lankan authorities said that over 50 acres of land off Colombo's seafront were reclaimed for building a China-backed \$1.4 billion port city.
- "Colombo Port City Project is an important project of the 'One Belt One Road' (OBOR) initiative in Sri Lanka, which is one of the key countries along the maritime silk route. It is also an important project to implement the consensus of China and Sri Lanka," Chinese Ambassador to Sri Lanka Cheng Xueyuan said.
- The Government of Sri Lanka has pledged its support to China's OBOR initiative, with the hope of promoting Sri Lanka as a trading hub in the Indian Ocean Region.

2. \$1 Billion Loan from China to Sri Lanka for a Road Project Linking Colombo to Kandy:

- On December 09, 2017, Sri Lanka formally handed over the strategic southern port of Hambantota to China on a 99-year lease as a debt swap.
- Sri Lanka would soon sign a \$1 billion concessional loan agreement with China to fund a highway project linking Colombo to Kandy.
- \$1billion will be used for the first stage of the central highway.
- Sri Lankan owed \$8 billion debt to China

VI.7. MALDIVES

I. Current Situation in the Maldives:

1. Opposition Candidate Ibrahim Mohamed Solih Won the Presidential Election in Maldives (September 23, 2018):

- Presidential election was held in Maldives on September 23, 2018. The 2,62,135 voters had to decide between incumbent President Abdullah Yameen and joint Opposition candidate Ibrahim Mohamed Solih.
- The authorities in Maldives allowed only select international observers for the Presidential election. The Maldivian Elections Commission spokesperson described the Presidential election as "the most perfect election", in the Maldives.
- The joint Opposition candidate Ibrahim Mohamed Solih won the Presidential election with 58.4% of the votes while Mr. Yameen won 41.6% of the votes.
- Mr. Solih thanked the people of the Maldives for their "unwavering spirit" and "strength in our struggle for justice and democracy".
- The Presidential election was held after the Maldives, home to four lakh people, witnessed a political turmoil after President Yameen declared an Emergency in February 2018.
- Former President Mohamed Nasheed said: "India remains our natural partner". He indicated that China's projects in the Maldives may be reviewed by his party-backed coalition that won the Presidential election.

2. Implications of the Victory of the Joint Opposition Candidate for India:

- India welcomed the Presidential election result in the Maldives and "heartily" congratulated the winning candidate, Ibrahim Mohamed Solih.

- India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi called the President-elect, and expressed support for better ties.
- "Prime Minister also conveyed his good wishes for the strengthening of democracy, peace and prosperity in the Maldives under the leadership of Mr. Solih. The two leaders agreed to work closely together to further strengthen the close, friendly and good neighbourly relations between the two countries," the External Affairs Ministry said in a press release.
- "The election marks not only the triumph of democratic forces in the Maldives but also reflects the firm commitment to the values of democracy and the rule of law. In keeping with our 'Neighbourhood First Policy', India looks forward to working closely with the Maldives in further deepening our partnership," the MEA statement said.
- Election of the Joint Opposition candidate Ibrahim Mohamed Solih is likely to correct the tilt of the Maldives towards China under Mr. Yameen's rule. The new President is likely to be more accommodative towards India's security interests.
- The victory of Mr. Solih has put India back in the strategic game in the Maldives
- The new government in the Maldives would make resolving all recent issues with India a priority, and the problems of Indian job-holders awaiting work visas would be a "key issue"
- New government of the Maldives needs to give the Courts of the country autonomy and authority which was taken away by the previous government. It also needs to release all political prisoners and call back exiled leaders.
- The new government of the Maldives also needs to reverse the growth of radical Islam in the country
- China, which has invested in the Maldives by extending a loan of \$2 billion under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) also reached out to the new leadership and offered to lift the ties between the two countries to a 'new level'.

3. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi Attended the Swearing-in Ceremony of the New Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih (November 17, 2018):

- On November 17, 2018, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the swearing-in ceremony of Maldives new President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih.
- Immediately after the swearing-in ceremony the new President of Maldives held a meeting with India's Prime Minister. This was a special gesture toward India.
- During the meeting, the two leaders agreed on the importance of maintaining peace and security in the Indian Ocean and being "mindful of each other's concerns and aspirations for the stability of the region".
- The joint statement pointed out that easing the visa regime mutually in both countries would be the quickest way to expand opportunities for Indian companies to invest in the Maldives, and for citizens of Maldives to travel to India for a variety of purposes.
- India was invited to as an economic partner which could help the Maldives to meet most of its pressing economic needs, including for increased housing and infrastructure development and for water and sewage systems on the outlying islands.
- Mr. Modi extended an invitation to Mr. Solih to make a state visit to India at his earliest convenience. Mr. Solih accepted Mr. Modi's invitation.
- Prime Minister Modi's visit to Maldives for the new President's swearing-in signalled India's solidarity with the new government and was seen as a bid to reclaim space lost to China under the previous government of Abdulla Yameen.

UPDATE – PART II**I. Parliamentary Elections in Maldives (April 6, 2019):**

- Parliamentary elections were held in Maldives on April 6, 2019. These were the third Parliamentary elections in the Indian Ocean archipelago.
- 2.6 lakh voters registered to vote in the elections in which 400 candidates were contesting for 87 seats in Maldives Parliament called Majlis.
- President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih's Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), which is led by former President Mohamed Nasheed, is the chief constituent of the ruling alliance.
- There was 80% voter turnout in the Parliamentary elections in Maldives. The Maldivians voted in Maldives and also in polling stations abroad, in Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia and the UK.
- The Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) won 65 of the 87 seats to secure a significant majority in the Parliament or Majlis.
- Mohamed Nasheed, former President and leader of the MDP was among the major winners in the Parliamentary election. Mr. Nasheed lived in exile in the UK and Sri Lanka and returned to the Maldives his colleague Ibrahim Mohamed Solih became the President in 2018.
- A statement from the President of Maldives office said that India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi called Mr. Solih to congratulate him on his party's performance in the Parliamentary election.
- Mr. Modi said that the outcome of the election was indicative of "the high level of trust and support" that Maldivian citizens had vested in their government and its policy priorities.
- "He [Mr. Modi] further conveyed his full confidence that the Maldives government can deliver on their promises towards the Maldivian people in the upcoming five years, and that the Indian government will always stand ready to be of assistance to the Maldives," the statement from the Maldivian President's office said.
- India's External Affairs Ministry said, "The Prime Minister reiterated India's deep commitment in keeping with its 'Neighbourhood First' policy, to work closely with the Maldives in further deepening the partnership and assist the Maldives as per the latter's requirement in its socio-economic development."

II. Implications of the MDP's victory for India:

- India has been closely watching the developments in the Maldives, as it tries to renew its ties with the island nation after the relations had turned increasingly hostile during the previous government of Abdulla Yameen.
- Mr. Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, the new President of Maldives, sought to break with his predecessor Abdulla Yameen's policy which had propelled Maldives in China's economic embrace, seen by some as "debt-trap diplomacy".
- Mr. Solih signalled a major shift in his government's priorities by inviting India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the chief guest at the Presidential inauguration.
- The landslide victory gave the MDP a significant majority in the Majlis or Parliament which will help in pushing through its agenda with lesser stumbling blocks
- In the context of India's interests in the Indian Ocean Region, good bilateral relations between India and the Maldives are significant after five years of strategic drift that benefitted China
- The influx of Chinese infrastructure investment in the Maldives during the Yameen administration could have caused the Maldives national debt to increase to nearly a quarter of its GDP

- The MDP government under President Solih is reviewing the Chinese projects.
- During the visit of Mr. Solih to India in December 2018, India extended a \$1.4 billion financial assistance package for the Maldives and several other agreements were signed.
- The new government of Maldives has the urgent task of rebuilding and deepening the Maldives democratic credentials. India will extend its support in all such endeavours, according to analysts.
- The level of cooperation between India and the Maldives has never been better as both countries are continuously in contact, according to the Maldivian Foreign Minister Abdullah Shahid.

VI.8.MYANMAR-ROHINGYA PROBLEM

I. Highlights of the UN Report on Crimes Against the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar (August 27, 2018):

1. Three-Member Panel Setup by the UN-backed Human Rights Council:

- On August 27, 2018, a report by a team of UN investigators said that Myanmar's military carried out mass killings and gang rapes of Muslim Rohingya with "genocidal intent" and the Commander-in-Chief and five generals should be prosecuted for the gravest crimes under international law.
- The three-member "Fact-Finding Mission" and their team, set up by the UN-backed Human Rights Council in March 2017, interviewed Rohingya victims in Bangladesh and other countries, and analysed documents, videos, photographs and satellite images.
- The report said that decades of state-sponsored stigmatisation against Rohingya had resulted in "institutionalised oppression from birth to death".

2. Crimes by the Myanmar Military:

A. Genocide:

The Myanmar military was guilty of:

- Killing
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm
- Creating conditions intended to bring about the mass evacuation of the Rohingya
- Imposing measures intending to prevent births

B. Crimes Against Humanity

C. War Crimes

3. Failure of the Myanmar Government:

- Civilian authorities failed to influence the situation in Rakhine State where crimes were being perpetrated
- Aung San Suu Kyi did not use her de facto position as Head of the Government, or her moral authority, to stem or prevent the unfolding events
- The civilian authorities spread false narratives; denied the Army's wrongdoing; blocked independent investigations; and oversaw destruction of evidence

4. Recommendations:

- The UN Security Council should ensure accountability for crimes committed in Myanmar, by referring the situation to the International Criminal Court or instituting an ad hoc tribunal

- The UN Security Council should impose sanctions and travel bans on those responsible
- Refugees should be allowed to return to Rakhine only after being given sufficient protections, including citizenship

5. Conclusions:

- The Human Right violations in Rakhine State of Myanmar amount to crimes against humanity
- Myanmar has a heavy responsibility to remedy the situation

II. Myanmar Rejected the Findings of the UN Fact-Finding Mission (August 29, 2018):

- On August 29, 2018, Myanmar rejected the findings of the UN Fact-Finding Mission alleging genocide by its military against the Rohingya.
- The US and other countries have joined growing calls for the Myanmar military to face justice.
- “We didn’t allow the FFM (the UN Fact-Finding Mission) to enter into Myanmar, that’s why we don’t agree and accept any resolutions made by the Human Rights Council,”
- Myanmar had formed its own Independent Commission of Enquiry to respond to “false allegations made by the UN agencies and other international communities”.
- Myanmar’s ambassador to the UN Hau Do Suan questioned the UN report’s findings, emphasising that Myanmar “did not accept the mandate of the mission because we have our concern about the mission’s impartiality”.

III. Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh Refused to Return to Myanmar (November 15, 2018):

- On November 15, 2018, the first day of the planned repatriation programme, Rohingya refugees at camps in Bangladesh’s Cox Bazar protested and refused to return to Myanmar.
- Under a deal between Bangladesh and Myanmar, Bangladesh authorities wanted to move about 2,000 Rohingya refugees to a camp in Myanmar on November 15, 2018.
- The UN and rights groups reiterated that no one should be forced to return as “the situation in Myanmar is not safe.”
- UN-mandated investigators accused the Myanmar Army of “genocidal intent”. However, Myanmar denied the allegations.
- Bangladesh’s Cox Bazar is home for nine lakh Rohingya refugees who were displaced by violence in the Rakhine State of Myanmar

IV. The Rohingya Refugees in India:

1. Home Ministry Estimate:

- The Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijju informed the Parliament during the Monsoon Session that as many as 14,000 Rohingyas, registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) were living in India.
- Nearly 40,000 Rohingyas were staying illegally in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi & NCR, Hyderabad, Haryana and Jammu, according to Mr. Rijju.

2. Union Home Ministry Circular (August 9, 2017):

- On August 9, 2017, the Union Home Ministry issued a circular asking State Governments to initiate the procedure to deport “illegal immigrants”, including the Rohingyas.

- The Union Home Ministry told the States that illegal migrants were more likely to be recruited by terror outfits even as the increase in such activities in the last few decades was a matter of serious concern.
- According to the Home Ministry communique, the illegal migrants, apart from infringing on the rights of the Indian citizen, were also a major security challenge.
- The recent trend of infiltration of Rohingyas from Myanmar into India, also infringed on the rights of the Indian people, according to the Union Home Ministry circular.

3. Two Rohingya Muslim Immigrants Filed Petition in the Supreme Court Against the Government's Proposed Move to Deport 40,000 Rohingyas (September 1, 2017):

- On September 1, 2017, the Supreme Court agreed to hear an urgent plea made by two Rohingya Muslim immigrants against the Government's proposed move to deport 40,000 Rohingyas to their native Myanmar, where discrimination and possibly summary executions await them.
- The petition said that the Centre's move to deport them violated the Constitutional guarantee that Indian State should "protect the life and liberty of every human being, whether citizen or not."

4. Centre's Stand:

- The Centre told the Supreme Court on September 18, 2017, that the Rohingyas were a serious threat to national security with links to terror outfits, such as Islamic State, and those in Pakistan and other countries.
- The Centre emphasised that unless the government took action now, illegal immigrants like the Rohingyas would eat into welfare meant for Indian citizens.
- The Centre said that the decision whether or not to deport the Rohingyas fell within its exclusive domain. The Court should refrain from hearing them.
- "Any indulgence shown by the highest Court would encourage the influx of illegal migrants into our country and thereby deprive the citizens of India of their fundamental and basic human rights," the Union Home Ministry said in its affidavit.

5. Supreme Court Asked the Centre to Strike a Balance on Rohingya Issue (October 13, 2017):

- On October 13, 2017, the Supreme Court observed that a balance should be struck between humanitarian concern for the Rohingya community and the India's national security and economic interests.
- "Take action wherever you find wrong, but do not deport now," Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra initially told Additional Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta.
- The Centre prevailed on the Court to not pass any formal order, citing "international ramifications."

6. Deportation of Rohingya from India:

- On October 4, 2018, seven Rohingya Muslim men, arrested in 2012 for illegally entering Assam, were officially handed over to Myanmar authorities at Manipur's border town Moreh.
- The Centre, told the Supreme Court of India that the action to repatriate the seven Rohingya Muslims was taken in due course of law and in the interest of the country.
- India rejected the United Nations statement that its repatriation of seven Rohingya men violated the UN principle of "refoulement" or "forcibly deporting people to a place they could be persecuted," stressing that the Rohingya men, who handed over to Myanmar officials at the border, had gone voluntarily.

- On January 3, 2019, five Rohingya, who entered Assam illegally in 201, were deported to Myanmar from Moreh.
- "The deportation process was taken up after the five said they would like to go back home," according to an Assam police officer.

7. Bangladesh Wants India, China and the ASEAN to Monitor the Safety of Rohingya in Myanmar:

- Bangladesh Foreign Minister A.K. Abdul Momen during his visit to India in early February 2019 sought continued support from India in resolving the humanitarian disaster that has brought more than a million refugees to Chittagong in Bangladesh.
- "While thanking Prime Minister Narendra Modi for India's humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya, Bangladesh Foreign Minister sought India's support for early repatriation of the Rohingya to the Rakhine state of Myanmar," according to a statement by the Foreign Ministry of Bangladesh.
- Bangladesh wants India, China and the ASEAN to monitor the promise of safety of the Rohingya community by Myanmar.

VI.9. TIBET

I. India's Policy on Tibet :

1. Centre Eased the Regulations for Tibetan Refugees who wish to Travel and Study Abroad:

- In February 2018, the Centre eased the regulations for Tibetan refugees who wish to travel and study abroad. Travel regulations were also simplified for relatives of Tibetans living in foreign countries to help them make visits.
- According to the Union Home Ministry, there are around 1.10 million Tibetan refugees in India who live either in 45 settlements spread in different parts of the country or in places outside.
- In 2017, the Delhi High Court had ruled that Tibetans born in India between 1950 and 1987 were eligible for Indian passports. Following this the Regional Passport Office in Himachal Pradesh received a large number of applications from Tibetans for Indian passport.
- In 2017, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) notified rules that Tibetans seeking an Indian passport would need to surrender the "Registration Certificates" issued to them, leave the settlements and forfeit the privileges and benefits from the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) – the Tibetan Government-in-exile.

2. No Change in India's Stand on Dalai Lama:

- On March 2, 2018, the External Affairs Ministry said that India has not changed its position on Dalai Lama, in response to a news report that the Centre had instructed senior officials to stay away from the celebrations to mark the 60th anniversary of the exile of the Tibetan spiritual leader in India.
- "He is a revered religious leader and is deeply respected by the people of India. There is no change in that position. His Holiness is accorded all freedom to carry out his religious activities in India," MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said.

3. Dalai Lama – Tibet Can Remain a Part of China with Guarantees of Culture and Autonomy (April 23, 2018):

- Tibet could remain a part of China, if China guaranteed the region's culture and autonomy, the Dalai Lama said in lecture to commemorate the 60th anniversary of his exile to India.

- **Tibet could benefit economically by staying in China and the Chinese citizens could gain from Tibetan Buddhism**, according to the Dalai Lama.
- **“Historically and culturally, Tibet has been independent. The region’s geography shows where Tibet begins. So long as the constitution of China recognises our culture and Tibetan autonomous region’s special history, they can remain [part of China],”** the Dalai Lama said.
- The Dalai Lama also pointed to the importance of Tibetan identity and stressed that Tibet had been an independent unit in the past, and therefore had a special place in the world. The times had changed and economic cooperation was the more rational option.
- The Dalai Lama’s comments were significant as he avoided mentioning Tibet’s independence and stressed more on cooperation and unity to usher in development and peace.
- The Dalai Lama’s statements set the background for the informal summit between India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Chinese President Xi Jinping on April 27-28, 2018.

II. The US Ambassador to China Visited Tibet (May 2019):

- The US Ambassador to China Terry Branstad visited Qinghai province and the neighbouring Tibet Autonomous Region in May 2019. This was the first visit by an American envoy in four years.
- **“This visit is a chance for the Ambassador to engage with local leaders to raise long-standing concerns about restrictions on religious freedom and the preservation of Tibetan culture and language,”** the US Embassy spokesperson said.
- The US Ambassador to China called on China to open a **“substantive dialogue”** with the Dalai Lama.
- **“He encouraged the Chinese government to engage in substantive dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives, without preconditions, to seek a settlement that resolves differences,”** the US Embassy spokesperson said.
- The Dalai Lama, who fled to India in 1959, has been trying to reach a compromise with the government of China over the fate of his people. Initially, he called for Tibet’s independence, however, currently he is campaigning for greater autonomy.
- Dalai Lama’s negotiations with China have been stalled since 2010.
- The US Ambassador to China also raised concerns regarding the government of China’s **interference in Tibetan Buddhists’ freedom to organise and practice their religion**, according to the US Embassy spokesperson.
- **“The Ambassador raised our long-standing concerns about lack of consistent access to the Tibetan Autonomous Region,”** the spokesperson said.

III. China Rejected US Call for Dialogue with the Dalai Lama:

- On May 28, 2019, China rejected the US Ambassador’s call to **“engage in substantive dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives without preconditions, to seek a settlement that resolves differences”**.
- **“The Chinese government’s policy on dialogue and contact with the Dalai Lama and foreigners access to Tibet [were made clear to the Ambassador]. Finally, it was also stressed that China firmly opposes any foreign interference in Tibet affairs and in China’s domestic affairs,”** Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said.

IV. Conclusion:**1. Recognising the Current Realities in Working on a Mutually Acceptable Solution for Tibet:**

- Tibet is recognised as part of the People's Republic of China by the international community. The Dalai Lama and the so-called 'Tibetan government-in-exile' have not been accorded any legal recognition by the international community.
- The Dalai Lama has currently adopted the 'middle way' approach to recognise the current reality that Tibet is part of China and not raise the issue of independence of Tibet in working on a mutually acceptable solution with the Chinese Government.

2. Demands of the Dalai Lama: The Dalai Lama had insisted on two key demands for the resolution of the Tibet Problem as follows:

- The Dalai Lama wants maximum autonomy for Tibet in line with 'one country, two systems' principle
- Demand for Greater Tibet or One Administrative Entity for All Ethnic Tibetans

3. India can Help in Finding a Reasonable, Just and Sustainable Solution to the Tibet Problem:

- India can use its leverage with Dalai Lama and his followers by persuading them to continue to engage the Chinese Government in dialogue to find a reasonable, just, and sustainable solution for Tibet within the framework of China's Constitution.
- India has been hosting the Dalai Lama and his followers since 1959. However, India needs to balance its approach without getting tangled in a war of diplomacy against China over Tibet.

VI.10. PAKISTAN**SUMMARY****I. New Civilian Government in Pakistan:****1. Imran Khan Sworn in as the 22nd Prime Minister of Pakistan (August 18, 2018):**

- In his first address to the nation after being sworn in as the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Khan highlighted two key challenges confronting Pakistan – massive debt and deficiencies in the health care sector.
- The new Prime Minister blamed the previous government for the current debt level, which had increased to Rs.28 trillion, pointing out that the country had not been as indebted in its entire history as it was in the last 10 years.
- “On one hand we are so indebted, and on the other hand our Human Development Index (HDI) ranking is very poor,” Mr. Khan said.
- The new Prime Minister pointed out the difference between the lifestyles of the rich and the poor, and hinted that he would adopt an austere style of living.

2. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for a Positive Engagement with Pakistan:

- India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for constructive engagement with Pakistan.
- In a letter to Pakistan's new Prime Minister Imran Khan, Mr. Modi called for building good neighbourly ties for security and prosperity in the South Asian region.
- Analysts point out that Prime Minister Modi's call for constructive engagement came in the backdrop of India's recent insistence that it would hold talks only if Pakistan acts against terror suspects and outfits.

- The Indian Prime Minister also reminded his Pakistani counterpart to rid the region of violence, recalling their recent telephone conversation about a shared vision to bring peace, security and prosperity in the Indian subcontinent, in order to make it free of terror and violence, and to focus on development.

3. Pakistan Offered Continued Dialogue:

- Pakistan's new Prime Minister Imran Khan said that his country and India "must dialogue" to resolve their conflicts, including that of Jammu and Kashmir.
- "The best way to alleviate poverty and uplift the people of the subcontinent is to resolve our differences through dialogue and start trading," Mr. Khan tweeted.

4. Challenges Facing the New Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan:

- Analysts point out that currently Pakistan stands isolated due to tensions with Afghanistan, deteriorating relations with the US and poor ties with India.
- Bringing back Pakistan into the international fold is a challenging task facing the new Prime Minister Imran Khan.
- "We have a very big foreign policy challenge right now. If there is one country that needs peace and stability right now, it is Pakistan,"
- Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that he wants a "balanced relationship" with the US, instead of "fighting America's war" in exchange of aid.
- Mr. Khan has advocated a negotiated settlement with Islamist insurgents, which led to the criticism that he is soft on militants and earned him the nickname "Taliban Khan".
- Prime Minister Imran Khan has vowed to strengthen ties with China. However, the CPEC deals are opaque and there are concerns about Pakistan's ability to repay the Chinese loans. The ruling PTI has vowed more transparency into the CPEC deals.
- Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's biggest foreign policy challenge would be India. The two nuclear-armed neighbours fought three wars since the end of British rule in 1947.
- Strengthening relations with India are a risk for civilian leaders in Pakistan as the foreign and defence policies are dominated by the powerful military
- The extent to which the new Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan can influence Pakistan's foreign policy will depend on what is acceptable to the military.
- Mr. Khan could first adhere to the International Financial Action Task Force's demands on ending terror financing, which would earn the country's economy a breather.
- The Pakistan Prime Minister can also set relations with India on the right path by addressing India's concerns on the support terrorists in Pakistan

5. Arif Alvi the 13th President of Pakistan

6. India Called Off Foreign Ministers Talks with Pakistan:

- On September 21, 2018, India blamed 'Pakistan based entities' for the September 21, 2018 killing of three Special Police Officers (SPOs) in Shopian in Kashmir and called off the planned meeting between the Foreign Ministers of the two countries in New York.
- Talks in the current circumstances would be meaningless and also cited stamps issued by Pakistan in July 2018 in memory of Kashmiri militant Burhan Wani as reasons for cancellation.

II. Terrorism:

1. Pakistan Assured the US that It would Deal Firmly with all Terrorists (March 11, 2019):

2. The US Increased Pressure on Pakistan to take Irreversible Steps to Root Out Terrorism:

- After the UN designation of Masood Azhar as a “global terrorist” on May 1, 2019, the US Administration increased pressure on Pakistan to root out terror groups and to forgo its policy of using terrorism as a policy tool in the region.
- “The United States commends the United Nations Security Council 1267 Sanctions Committee for the designation of Masood Azhar, the leader of Jaish-e-Mohammed, a UN-designated terrorist group that was responsible for the February 14 terrorist attack in Kashmir that killed over 40 Indian paramilitary forces,”
- “Designating Azhar demonstrates international commitment to rooting out terrorism in Pakistan and bringing security and stability to south Asia,”
- The US Administration would reserve its judgement on the matter till it sees steps that are consistent and irreversible.
- The US is increasing pressure on Pakistan not only by cutting off aid, but also indicating that Pakistan will have to take irreversible steps on terrorism to get US support in multilateral institutions like the IMF

3. Military Courts Closed Down in Pakistan (April 1, 2019):

- Pakistan’s special military courts, which were set up in 2015 to try civilians on terrorism charges, closed down after the tribunal’s mandate expired on April 1, 2019.
- The courts ceased to exist as the government failed to get the support of the Opposition to extend their tenure. The government wanted to give another two-year extension
- Terrorism cases would now be handled by regular courts which are notorious for their bureaucracy and slow justice.

4. No Sign of Pakistan Acting Against Terror Groups:

- Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan’s statement promising an end of support to terror groups does not reflect a change of policy and is motivated by the fear of getting blacklisted by the global terror financing watchdog the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)
- “There is little change in Pakistan’s attitude towards militancy, particularly the one directed against Afghanistan and India,”

5. Terrorist Attacks in Pakistan:

- On April 12, 2019, at least 20 people were killed and 48 injured when a blast hit the Hazarganji market in Quetta, Pakistan.
- The Hazara community in Quetta has been the target of terrorist attacks for more than a decade.
- On May 12, 2019, five people, including a soldier, were killed after gunmen stormed a luxury hotel in Pakistan’s southwestern city of Gwadar.
- The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for the attack.
- The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is part of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which seeks to connect the western Chinese province of Xinjiang with Gwadar, with the development of the Gwadar port being the flagship project.
- The BLA has targeted Chinese workers in Pakistan a number of times.

III. Economy:

- 1. Pakistan to get \$6 Billion IMF Loan over the Next Three Years**
- 2. Pakistan to Sell Unused Government Properties to Pay off Debt**
- 3. Pakistan's Military Agreed to Cut Its Defence Budget for One Year**

IV. Relations with India: Pakistan Prime Minister Congratulated India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the Electoral Victory of BJP:

V. Conclusion:

- The Pakistan military has justified its intervention in civil matters on the ground that civilian politicians are incompetent and corrupt and hence the military needs to intervene periodically to set things right
- If Pakistan is serious about peace and development in the region then Prime Minister Imran Khan has to take irreversible steps to dismantle the infrastructure of terror on its territory.

UPDATE – PART III

I. Pakistan Military Tightened Its Grip on the North-western Tribal Belt (May 2019):

- In June 2019, Pakistan's military cracked down on protesters in the north-western tribal belt asserting themselves as the true masters of justice in the region.
- Military commanders said an alternative anti-terrorism court system will be used to prosecute leaders of an ethnic Pashtun protest movement that witnesses said has stayed peaceful.
- In 2018, Pakistan voted to merge those borderlands, once called the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), into the country's political and legal mainstream.
- The move gave the region's 5 million residents, with a Pashtun majority, the same constitutional rights as other Pakistanis, including access to the national civilian justice system.
- Earlier the region was run under a harsh frontier code set up by the British, who put each tribal region under the near-complete power of a single Governor. Residents were denied basic rights like access to lawyers or normal trials, and collective punishment for the crimes of an individual was common.

II. Pakistan's Economy:

1. Pakistan's Army Chief given More Say in Economic Matters:

- In a move to further expand the military's influence, the Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa was made a member of the newly formed National Development Council (NDC) headed by Prime Minister Imran Khan, Pakistan media reported on June 18, 2019.
- The Pakistan military would now play a greater role in economic matters of Pakistan.
- The 13-member NDC will make policies and set strategies for development and provide guidelines for regional cooperation, according to a notification.
- The NDC will provide measures for local coordination and provincial Chief Ministers will also be invited to the council's meeting.
- The Pakistan Army chief blamed "fiscal mismanagement" for the country's economic woes. It was unusual for the Army chief to comment on how the economy is run by a civilian government although the military has extensive interests and controls foreign and security policies.

- **“We’re going through a difficult economic situation due to fiscal mismanagement,” Gen. Bajwa said. “We understand that government has gone for difficult but quintessential decisions for long-term benefits and what we’re doing is playing our part”, he added.**
- **Prime Minister Imran Khan has blamed economic problems on the previous administration.**

2. Pakistan Secured \$3 Billion Aid from Qatar:

- **On June 24, 2019, Pakistan secured cash infusion of \$3 billion from Qatar that would help it address a liquidity crunch in the immediate term.**
- **During his visit to Pakistan, the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani announced Qatar would inject, through investments and deposits a further \$3 billion into Pakistan, bringing the total Qatari investment in Pakistan to \$9 billion.**
- **However, the investments by Qatar in Pakistan could become a point of concern for Saudi Arabia and UAE, who have imposed an embargo on Qatar for its alleged ties with international terror entities like ISIS and Muslim Brotherhood. Qatar is also the only Gulf Arab country to have friendly ties with Iran as well as Turkey.**

3. IMF Approved \$6 Billion Loan for Pakistan:

- **On July 7, 2019, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a \$6 billion, three-year loan for Pakistan to try to right the country’s economy.**
- **IMF released \$1 billion to Pakistan immediately and said in a statement the programme aims to “support the authorities’ economic reform programme” and to help “generate sustainable and balanced growth.”**
- **The IMF will review Pakistan’s performance quarterly over 39 months, phasing release of the additional aid over time.**
- **The Pakistan government led by Prime Minister Imran Khan agreed on the loan and announced plans to slash civil expenditures and freeze military spending while promising to substantially raise revenues to stem the fiscal deficit, and pledging to collect 5.5 trillion rupees (\$36 billion) in taxes.**
- **“Pakistan is facing a challenging economic environment, with lacklustre growth, elevated inflation, high indebtedness and a weak external position,” the result of a “legacy” of uneven policies, according to IMF mission chief Ernesto Ramirez Rigo.**

III. The US Designated the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) a Terror Organisation:

- **On July 2, 2019, the US designated the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) as a terror organisation.**
- **“The BLA is an armed separatist group that targets security forces and civilians, mainly in ethnic Baloch areas of Pakistan,” the US State Department said in a statement.**
- **“The outfit has carried out several terrorist attacks in the past year, including a suicide attack in August, 2018 that targeted Chinese engineers in Balochistan, a November, 2018 attack on the Chinese consulate in Karachi, and a May, 2019 attack against a luxury hotel in Gwadar,” the statement added.**
- **The BLA is the armed wing of the Baloch movement and has carried out several violent attacks in Pakistan.**
- **The BLA has about 6,000 cadres spread across Balochistan Province and the bordering areas of Afghanistan.**
- **Since 2006, Pakistan has banned the BLA and in October 2018, the leader of BLA Aslam Baloch was killed in a suicide bomb attack in Kandahar in Afghanistan.**

- The Baloch Liberation Front (BLF), founded by Jumma Khan in 1964, is the other recognised armed militant organisation fighting for freedom of Balochistan.
- All the Baloch rebel leaders live outside Pakistan or are in exile.
- The BLA rebels claim that Pakistan has been exploiting the resources of Balochistan Province without giving the due share to the locals and the indigenous Baloch tribes.
- Currently, the BLA has emerged as a movement with network of supporters in both urban and rural areas of Balochistan. It has created its own standing away from the traditional hold of tribal sardars (chieftains).
- The BLA rebels claim that they aspire for both freedom from Pakistan and internal reform of the society in Balochistan.
- Analysts point out that with the US ban on BLA, Pakistan would make it difficult for the BLA commanders to travel in the region and make fund-raising more difficult.
- Pakistan welcomed the US move and hoped that the action would ensure that the BLA's space to operate is minimised.
- US move to ban the BLA is to gain Pakistan's assistance in the peace process in Afghanistan amid withdrawal of the US troops ahead of the Presidential election in the US.

VI.11. US-PAK RELATIONS

I. Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's Visit to the US (July 22, 2019):

1. Agenda of the Visit:

- Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan visited the US and met the US President Donald Trump on July 22, 2019. This was the first visit to the US by the Pakistani Prime Minister.
- Pakistan expressed hope that Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to the US would help repair its acrimonious relationship with the US which is seeking its help in ending the war in Afghanistan.
- The main focus of talks between the US President and the Pakistan Prime Minister would be the conflict in Afghanistan
- "Pakistan has been facilitating the US-Taliban talks in good faith, underscoring that it remains a shared responsibility," Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said.
- "It will therefore be appropriate to work for broader engagement from Afghanistan to bilateral issues, economic and trade cooperation, to peace and stability in South Asia,"
- Mr. Trump's invitation to Mr. Khan reflected the "importance of the relationship for both sides,"

2. Meeting between the US President and the Pakistan Prime Minister:

- On July 22, 2019, the US President Donald Trump met the Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan at the White House in Washington.
- Mr. Trump was optimistic that Mr. Khan could help broker a political settlement to end the nearly 18-year-old war in Afghanistan and also hinted about the possibility of restoring aid to Pakistan.
- "I think Pakistan is going to help us out to extricate ourselves," the US President said.
- The US President also spoke of the possibility of restoring \$1.3 billion in US aid to Pakistan that had been cut in 2018, depending on the results of the meeting.

- **"They were really, I think, subversive. They were going against us," Mr. Trump said, adding that the US relationship with Pakistan had improved.**
- **The Pakistan Prime Minister said that a peace deal with the Taliban was closer than it had ever been.**
- **"We hope that in the coming days we will be able to urge the Taliban to speak to the Afghan government and come to a settlement, a political solution," Mr. Khan said.**

3. US President offered to be a Mediator between India and Pakistan on Kashmir:

- **The US President Donald Trump offered to be a "mediator" between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir issue as he met the Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan at the White House.**
- **"If I can help, I would love to be a mediator. If I can do anything to help, let me know," Mr. Trump said.**
- **The US President said that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi broached the subject during their meeting in Osaka, Japan, in June 2019.**

4. India Denied that India's Prime Minister had requested the US President to Mediate on Kashmir:

- **India denied that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has requested the US President Donald Trump to mediate on Kashmir.**
- **"We have seen [Mr. Trump's] remarks that he is ready to mediate, if requested by India & Pakistan, on the Kashmir issue. No such request has been made by Mr. Modi to the US President," the Minister of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said.**
- **"It has been India's consistent position that all outstanding issues with Pakistan are discussed only bilaterally," Mr. Kumar said.**
- **"Any engagement with Pakistan would require an end to cross-border terrorism," Mr. Kumar said.**
- **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said in the Rajya Sabha that he "would like to categorically state that no such request has been made by the Prime Minister to the US President".**
- **"I would further underline that any engagement with Pakistan would require an end to cross-border terrorism. Let me conclude by emphasising that the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration provide the basis for resolving all issues between India and Pakistan bilaterally," Mr. Jaishankar said.**

5. Pakistan Prime Minister Admitted that 30,000 to 40,000 militants are Still Operating in Pakistan:

- **"Until we came to power, the governments did not have the will to [to implement the National Action Plan against terrorism], because if you talk of militant groups, they still have about 30,000-40,000 people who are armed and who have been trained in some sort of a theatre, who fought either in Afghanistan or maybe in Kashmir," Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan said while speaking at a think-tank in Washington.**
- **"[Mr. Khan's statement] has opened up the question of effectiveness in Pakistan's much publicised compliance of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Action Plan, and would allow countries like India to raise the issue at FATF," according to a government source.**

6. Conclusion:

- **US wants to end the US military involvement in Afghanistan and looks at Pakistan's cooperation as crucial to any deal to end the war and ensure the country does not become a base for militant groups like the Islamic State (IS).**

- The US wants Pakistan to pressure Afghanistan's Taliban into a permanent ceasefire and participation in talks with the Afghan government.
- The Pentagon said Pakistan's Army chief, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, would meet with the top US military officer, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford on July 22, 2019.
- General Bajwa would play a major role in behind-the-scenes discussions, with the military trying to persuade the US to restore aid and cooperation, according to analysts.
- Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan said he would meet with the Taliban after returning to Pakistan, as part of efforts to end the conflict in Afghanistan.
- Mr. Khan said he had already spoken with the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani.

7. India Expressed Grave Concern over US Military Assistance to Pakistan:

- On August 1, 2019, expressed "grave concern" over the recent US military assistance to Pakistan, and stated that it had conveyed its concerns to the US.
- "We have taken up the matter with the US Ambassador in Delhi, as well as the US government in Washington through our Ambassador. We have expressed grave over US military assistance to Pakistan. The US side has told us that the proposed sale does not indicate any change in the US policy of maintaining a freeze in military assistance to Pakistan," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said.
- "The State Department has made a determination approving a possible Foreign Military Sale to Pakistan for Technical Security Team (TST) in continued support of the F-6 programme for an estimated cost of \$125 million," the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency said in a statement after delivering the required certification notifying Congress of the possible sale on July 26, 2019.

VI.12. AFGHANISTAN

SUMMARY

I. Current Situation in Afghanistan:

1. UN – Record Afghan Civilians Killed in 2018:

- On February 24, 2019, the UN annual report on Afghanistan said that a record number of Afghan civilians were killed in 2018 due to stepped up aerial attacks by the US-led forces and more suicide bombings.
- In 2018 civilian deaths in Afghanistan increased by 11% compared to 2017 with 3,804 civilians killed including 927 children, according to a report from the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).
- Conflict in Afghanistan has intensified despite the peace talks gaining momentum.

2. US to Withdraw Troops from Afghanistan:

- On December 21, 2018, a US official said that the US President Donald Trump decided to withdraw a significant number of troops from Afghanistan.
- According to reports about half of the 14,000 US troops in Afghanistan could be leaving.
- Taliban is currently controlling large territory and is causing "unsustainable" Afghan troop casualties.
- The US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis resigned on December 20, 2018 following differences with President Donald Trump over US withdrawal from Afghanistan and Syria.

- The US decision to withdraw nearly half of its troops from Afghanistan led to shocked reactions from Afghans and international stakeholder.
- The US decision followed a three-day meeting of the US special envoy to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad with the Taliban in Abu Dhabi.
- The US Commander General Scott Miller who is also the top NATO Commander in Afghanistan said: "I have no order, so nothing has changed. But if I do get orders, I think it is important for you to know that we are still with the security forces. Even if I have to get a little bit smaller, we will be okay."
- The US troops make up the bulk of the Resolute Support mission to train and advise local forces fighting the Taliban and the Islamic State (IS). Others are part of the US-led counterterrorism mission.

3. Implications of the US Troop Withdrawal for India and the Region:

- "The conditions in Afghanistan – at the present moment – make American troop withdrawals a high-risk strategy. If we continue on our present course we are setting in motion the loss of all our gains and paving the way toward a second 9/11,"
- India has invested billions of dollars in Afghanistan to help the war-ravaged country build its infrastructure and institutions.
- India has not committed any troops in Afghanistan and India's efforts are premised on the security provided by the US troops. There are concerns that a US withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan could embolden Pakistan-based terror groups to expand their operations from Afghanistan
- Withdrawal of US troops from different conflict-ridden countries has created the space for regional powers – Iran and its allies in Syria; Saudi Arabia in Yemen; Russia, Pakistan and Iran in Afghanistan; and China in Pakistan.
- India's best option in Afghanistan is its own region strategy and not becoming part of any other country's strategy.
- Visit of Afghanistan's National Security Advisor Hamdullah Mohib to India in January 2019 forms a basis of India's ability to help Afghanistan, according to its needs.
- India enjoys immense popularity and goodwill in Afghanistan due to its development projects in that country. India's development assistance to Afghanistan exceeds \$3 billion making it the largest donor in the region.
- "India supports the people and the Government of Afghanistan in their efforts to build a united, sovereign, democratic, peaceful, stable, prosperous and inclusive nation. India supports all efforts for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan which are inclusive and Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled,"
- The US troop withdrawal could also be a concern for Russia as lack of stability in Afghanistan could lead to spread of radicalism and drug menace
- China will also be apprehensive about the US troop withdrawal from Afghanistan in view of the situation in its Xinjiang province
- Bonn Agreement of 2001 made a request to the UN and the International community to 'guarantee' non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.
- A regional agreement on non-interference and non-intervention in Afghanistan will be in the interests of all regional states

4. Peace Talks between the US and the Taliban:

- The US special envoy to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad held delegation-level talks with Pakistani authorities in Islamabad. “Both sides agreed that ultimately the intra-Afghan dialogue would be vital to agree upon the contours of a future Afghan polity where Afghanistan becomes a stable and prosperous country at peace with its neighbours,”
- The peace process has suffered a setback due to the Taliban’s refusal to directly talks to the government of Afghanistan.
- Peace talks between the US officials and the Taliban were held in Qatar in late January 2019. The Taliban appointed one of its co-founders Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar as the new head of its political bureau.
- The US and Taliban officials agreed to a framework of peace in which the Taliban insurgents guarantee to prevent Afghanistan from being used by terrorists, and that could lead to a full withdrawal of US troops in return for a ceasefire and Taliban talks with the Afghan government
- “We have a draft framework that has to be fleshed out before it becomes an agreement,”
- “The Taliban [has] committed, to our satisfaction, to do what is necessary that would prevent Afghanistan from ever becoming a platform for international terrorist groups or individuals,”
- Preliminary draft framework was a breakthrough after years of failed attempts to end the two-decade war.
- Taliban announced a 14-member team to meet the US negotiators in Qatar, including five former Guantanamo Bay inmates and high-profile militant who is in prison in Afghanistan.
- The US officials and the Taliban held “solid” talks in late February 2019 in Doha, Qatar. The meetings were productive
- “We continue to take slow, steady steps toward understanding and eventual peace,”
- The Taliban spokesman confirmed that the insurgents were “committed to the current peace process along with peace”.
- The US has been pushing for a ceasefire in Afghanistan and the opening of negotiations between the Taliban and the government of Afghanistan.
- The Taliban have refused to meet the officials of the government of Afghanistan.

5. The Taliban Held a Meeting with Afghan Opposition Leaders in Russia (Moscow, February 5-6, 2019):

- On February 5-6, 2019, the Taliban met Afghan Opposition leaders in Moscow, Russia, sidestepping the Afghan government.
- The Afghan politicians who attended the meeting with Taliban in Moscow included former President Hamid Karzai.
- “The Moscow meeting is nothing more than a fantasy. No one can decide without the consent of the Afghan people,” the President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani said.

6. Implications of the US talks with Taliban:

- Addressing the main reasons behind the conflict should be the key aspects of any sustainable peace resolution. It is pointed out that the causes of the conflict in Afghanistan are religious, ethnic and external in nature. Therefore, Afghanistan cannot be a Pashtun-dominated entity but a pluralistic-state.

- Any agreement involving the US, the Taliban and Pakistan will not be accepted by other stakeholders in Afghanistan and the region. Any peaceful settlement should have inclusivity, sustainability and Afghan ownership as the basic tenets
- India should join other like-minded stakeholders to ensure that Afghanistan becomes a pluralistic state rather than returning to the 1990s.
- “The Government of Afghanistan should be consulted before critical decisions are taken that could alter the power equation inside Afghanistan. Taliban captives are in custody of the Afghan Government so it is fair to hear what the Government has to say regarding this first,”
- India needs to watch out of the proxy masters of the Taliban in the military establishment of Pakistan
- India supports efforts which can achieve an “inclusive” political settlement, however, “it is important that the Presidential elections in Afghanistan take place as per schedule,”
- The Presidential elections in Afghanistan are scheduled for July 20, 2019, three months behind original schedule.
- The Indian Government has also emphasised that “for enduring peace and stability in Afghanistan, the terrorist safe havens and sanctuaries need to be eliminated,”
- India is concerned that in its haste to withdraw from Afghanistan, the US could make a deal with Pakistan to the effect that the Taliban and other terror sanctuaries in Pakistan remain even after their withdrawal.
- The Taliban are currently negotiating from a position of strength as they threaten to control at least 70% of Afghanistan's territory
- The Government of Afghanistan is concerned that it could be excluded in a future deal. The Afghan President Ashraf Ghani offered the Taliban a path to mainstream politics, but the Taliban rejected the offer.

UPDATE – PART III

I. Taliban and Afghan Negotiators Agreed to a Road Map for Peace (Doha, Qatar, July 9, 2019):

- On July 9, 2019, the Taliban and Afghan representatives, including some government officials, agreed to a basic road map for negotiating the country's political future, an important step for peace efforts to end the nearly 18 years of war.
- After two days of negotiations in Doha, the capital of Qatar, a joint declaration was issued where the two sides stressed on the need to work for reducing “civilian casualties to zero” and assuring women their fundamental rights in “political, social, economic, educational, cultural affairs”.
- The joint declaration is not binding but a starting point for negotiations that could lead to a fixed terms
- The joint declaration would help in pushing forward a peace process between the US diplomats led by Zalmay Khalilzad and the Taliban which has made progress but is struggling to overcome the refusal by the Taliban to meet Afghan government officials.
- The Taliban has stuck to its stand that direct negotiations with the Afghan government would start only after the US announces a timeline for the withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan.
- The US negotiators were in the seventh round of talks with Taliban in July 2019 over the withdrawal of troops in return for a commitment from the Taliban that Afghanistan territory would not be used again to launch terrorist attacks against the US and its allies.

II. Quadrilateral Talks on Afghanistan (Beijing, China, July 12, 2019):

- On July 12, 2019, quadrilateral talks on Afghanistan were held between the US, Russia, China and Pakistan in Beijing, China.
- “The four sides agreed to maintain the momentum of consultation, will invite other important stakeholders to join on the basis of the trilateral, consensus agreed on April 25, 2019 in Moscow,” according to the joint statement.
- The joint statement also pointed out that a broader group that includes “other stakeholder” will meet only after an internal dialogue among Afghans has begun.

III. Afghanistan's Vice-Presidential Candidate Amrullah Saleh Injured in a Blast in Kabul (July 28, 2019):

- On July 28, 2019, Afghanistan's Vice-Presidential candidate Amrullah Saleh was injured while two people were killed and 25 others injured in a powerful explosion in central Kabul.
- Mr. Saleh is a former Afghan spy chief turned politician who is uncompromising opponent of the Taliban and other hardline Islamist groups.

VI.13. US-IRAN CONFRONTATION**SUMMARY****I. First Phase of US Sanctions against Iran came into Effect – US Open to Reaching a New Deal (August 6, 2018):**

- The first phase of US sanctions against Iran came into effect on August 6, 2018, targeting Iran's access to US banknotes and key industries including cars and carpets.
- The August 6, 2018 US sanctions on Iran were unlikely to cause immediate economic turmoil in Iran
- The EU diplomatic Chief Federica Mogherini said that the EU, as well as Britain, France and Germany, deeply regretted the move by the US. “We are determined to protect European economic operators engaged in legitimate business with Iran.”
- On August 7, 2018 the Russian Foreign Ministry said “we are deeply disappointed by US steps to re-impose its national sanctions against Iran.”
- “This is a clear example of Washington violating UN Resolution 2231 (on the Iran deal) and international law,” the Russian Foreign Ministry statement said.
- Russia said the nuclear agreement had “shown its effectiveness”.
- Russia called on the international community “not to allow such significant achievements in multilateral diplomacy to be sacrificed in the name of American aspirations to settle political scores with Iran”.

II. Iran Rejected Talks with the US:

- Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said that the US called for new nuclear negotiations and at the same time the US re-imposed crippling sanctions which made no sense.
- The renewed US sanctions on Iran had an adverse impact on the currency of Iran which lost half its value since the announcement by the US President.

III. Iran asked the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to Suspend US Nuclear-Linked Sanctions Against Iran (The Hague, August 27, 2018):

- On August 27, 2018, Iran asked the UN's top court, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to suspend US nuclear-linked sanctions against it.
- Iran filed a suit at the ICJ over US President Donald Trump's decision to re-impose the sanctions that had been lifted in a 2015 deal with Iran.
- Iran pointed out that the US move breached a 1955 treaty.
- Iran also told the ICJ that the US measures were already devastating Iran's economy and threatening the welfare of its citizens.

IV. The US said the ICJ has No Jurisdiction on Iran Sanctions (The Hague, August 28, 2018):

- On August 28, 2018, the US told the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague that it "lacks prima facie jurisdiction to hear Iran's claims".
- The US argued that it had the right to protect its national security and other interests.
- The treaty "cannot therefore provide a basis for this court's jurisdiction" in the case

V. Second Phase of US Economic Sanctions Against Iran Came into Effect (November 5, 2018):

- On November 5, 2018, the second phase of US economic sanctions targeting Iran's vital oil and financial sectors came into effect.
- The second phase of sanctions enacted by the US Administration, since the US exited the Nuclear Deal with Iran, targeted energy and financial sectors in Iran.
- Countries that buy oil from Iran after November 5, 2018 could be penalised through fines or exclusion from the US financial system.
- Oil exports from Iran accounted for more than tenth of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2017.
- The US economic sanctions were designed to exert financial pressure by cutting Iran out of the global market.
- The US sanctions aim to deprive "the regime of the revenues that it uses to spread death and destruction around the world,"
- The list of demands created by the US Administration for sanctions to be lifted include completely halting Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programme and ending military engagement in Syria and Yemen.
- Other countries of the world have criticised the US strategy for undermining the non-proliferation efforts.
- The US Administration granted temporary waivers to eight countries including India, China, Japan and South Korea that have "demonstrated significant reduction in crude oil and cooperation on many other fronts and have made important moves toward getting to zero crude oil importation,"

VI. Iran's Reaction:

- "I announce that we will proudly bypass your illegal, unjust sanctions because it's against international regulations," the President of Iran Hassan Rouhani said.
- "We are in a situation of economic war, confronting a bullying power. I don't think that in the history of America, someone has entered the White House who is so against law and international conventions," Mr. Rouhani said.

- Iran rejected US offer for negotiations with the Iranian President emphasising that “first, you respect the negotiations we already concluded, so that there are grounds for the next negotiations.”

VII. IAEA – Iran is Continuing to Implement the Main Nuclear Restrictions Set by the 2015 Nuclear Deal (November 12, 2018)

VIII. The EU and Iran Committed to Uphold the Nuclear Deal (November 26, 2018)

IX. Conclusion:

1. The US and Iran Stick to their Stated Positions as the Second Phase of US Sanctions on Iran were Re-imposed:

- Since withdrawing from the landmark 2015 international Nuclear Deal with Iran, the US has re-imposed sanctions on Iran, including an oil embargo. The US wants to reduce Iran's oil exports to zero, but has granted temporary waivers to eight countries including India.
- As the second phase of US sanctions on Iran were re-imposed on November 5, 2018, both the US and Iran stuck to their stated positions on the Nuclear Deal.
- The US President Donald Trump said that he wanted a new nuclear deal that curbed Iran's missile programme and interventions in the region.
- The conditions set by the US “seem designated to produce a complete capitulation, if not a regime change, and require maximum economic pain in order to yield such a dramatic result.”
- Iran rejected the US conditions for a new deal and renewed its threat to cut off international oil exports from the Gulf by closing the Persian Gulf.

UPDATE – PART II

SUMMARY

I. The US Designated Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a Terrorist Organisation (April 8, 2019):

- The US President Donald Trump announced that the US was designating Iran's elite military force, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), a terrorist organisation.
- “Unprecedented” move “recognises the reality that Iran is not only a state sponsor of terrorism, but that the IRGC actively participates in, finances, and promotes terrorism as a tool of statecraft.”
- Iran formed the IRGC after the 1979 revolution with an aim to defend the clerical regime.
- The terrorist designation took effect on April 16, 2019.
- It allows the US Administration to seek criminal penalties against elements of the IRGC and foreign officials deemed to be aiding it. It will also allow the US to ban travel to the US for individuals associated with the IRGC.
- The designation of the IRGC as a terrorist organisation was the first time that the US has branded an official foreign government military entity a terror group.
- India could also seek a similar designation Pakistan's ISI which has long been involved in terrorist activities in India. The ISI has already been implicated legally in the US in a court case that resulted in the conviction of Kashmiri activist Ghulam Nabi Fai.

II. Iran Declared the US a “State Sponsor of Terrorism” and the US Forces in the Region “Terrorist Groups”**III. The US Ended Waiver for India and Other Countries on Iran Oil (May 2, 2019):**

- “Today we are announcing the United States will not issue any additional Significant Reduction Exceptions [SREs] to existing importers of Iranian oil. The Trump Administration has taken Iran’s oil exports to historic lows, and we are dramatically accelerating our pressure campaign in a calibrated way that meets our national security objectives while maintaining well-supplied global oil markets,”
- “We will continue to apply maximum pressure on the Iranian regime until its leaders change their destructive behaviour, respect the rights of the Iranian people, and return to the negotiating table,”
- India, China, Japan, South Korea and Turkey would be adversely impacted by the non-renewal of the US waivers. The other three countries – Italy, Greece and Taiwan – have already reduced their imports.

IV. Iran’s Response:

- Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said that the end of oil sanctions waivers by the US was a “hostile measure” that “won’t be left without a response”.
- “US efforts to boycott the sale of Iran’s oil won’t get them anywhere. We will export our oil as much as we need and we intend,”
- Iran should move towards the sale of oil derivatives such as refined oil and petrochemical products instead of crude

V. India to Decide on Iran Crude Imports after the Lok Sabha Elections:

- Iran has been one of the top suppliers of crude oil to India. In 2018-19, India imported 10% of its crude oil requirements from Iran.

VI. Iran Decided to Reduce Its Commitments Under the 2015 Nuclear Deal (May 8, 2019):

- Iran announced that it was reducing commitments under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan to Action, which sought to curtail its nuclear capabilities.
- Iran immediately stopped shipping out excess enriched uranium and heavy water.
- Iranian President Hassan Rouhani gave 60 days to other signatories of the 2015 Nuclear Deal to find solutions to shield Iran’s banking and oil sectors from US sanctions.
- Iran said it was responding to the sweeping unilateral sanctions that the US reimposed on Iran since it quit the agreement, which are having an adverse impact on Iran’s economy.

VII. Europe Rejected the Ultimatum given by Iran but Vowed to Save the Nuclear Deal**VIII. The US Sent Aircraft Carrier and Bomber Task Force to the Gulf:**

- On May 6, 2019, the US sent an aircraft carrier strike group with several nuclear capable B-52 bombers to the region.
- Acting Defence Secretary Patrick Shanahan presented an updated military plan that envisioned sending 1,20,000 troops to West Asia should Iran attack US forces or accelerate work on nuclear weapons
- On May 11, 2019, the US deployed an amphibious assault ship and a Patriot missile battery to increase pressure on Iran.

- Deployment aimed to send a “clear and unmistakeable” message to Iran about any attack against the US or its partners in the region.

IX. Iran Ruled out Talks until the US Changes Behaviour:

- The US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had said that the US was ready to talk to Iran without preconditions.
- The Iranian President insisted that Iran would not be “bullied” into talks with the US, stressing that “total respect” was needed for negotiations to take place.

X. Conclusion:

- Escalation of tensions due to the re-imposition of US sanctions on Iran have grave implications for the region.
- The US oil sanctions on Iran and the building up of US presence in region have escalated tensions in the region and could seriously disrupt the oil supplies from the Gulf through the narrow Straits of Hormuz.
- The US also blamed Iran for an attack on four ships off the UAE coast.
- Iran's decision to reduce its commitments under the 2015 Nuclear Deal with major powers and its threat of more action if signatories to the Deal do not shield it from US sanctions has endangered the landmark Nuclear Deal
- A better approach by Iran would be to end the brinkmanship and increase cooperation with other signatories to the Nuclear Deal.
- Europe needs to stand up firmly to the US unilateral action and pressure, and should help Iran to overcome the US sanctions
- A collapse of the Nuclear Deal would have an adverse impact on Iran's nuclear crisis and would also set a bad precedent in international diplomacy
- A stable Iran, integrated into the global community, is essential for securing a balance of power in the region and peace in the Middle East.

UPDATE – PART III

I. Attack on Oil Tankers in the Gulf of Oman:

- In June 2019, two oil tankers were attacked in the Gulf of Oman, which connects the Arabian Sea with the Strait of Hormuz, raising tensions between the US and Iran.
- A third of crude oil exports transported via oil tankers pass through the Strait of Hormuz making it a very important passage for oil exports.
- The US deployed “1,000 additional troops for defensive purposes to address air, naval, and ground-based threats in the Middle East”.
- Russia and China called for restraint after escalating tensions in West Asia.

II. Iran Shot down US Military Drone (June 20, 2019):

- On June 20, 2019, Iran's Revolutionary Guard said it shot down a US ‘spy drone’ near its southern coast.
- The US called the event an “unprovoked attack” in international air space. The US President Donald Trump said Iran made “a very big mistake” by shooting down a US military drone.

- The downing of the drone escalated the tensions between the two countries after a series of attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf which the US blamed on Iran.

III. US Cyber Attacks on Iran's Missile Control System:

- On June 2, 2019, US media reports suggested that the US launched cyber attacks against Iran's missile control systems and a spy network.
- The cyberattack crippled computers used to control rocket and missile launches, according to the Washington Post.
- Iran said the US cyberattacks on its military had failed.

IV. New US Sanctions on Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei:

- On June 24, 2019, the US President Donald Trump imposed new sanctions on Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and other senior Iranian officials to put further pressure on Iran's economy.
- The aim of the sanctions was to deny Iran's leadership access to financial resources, blocking them from using the US financial system or having access to any assets in the US.
- "Imposing useless sanctions on Iran's Supreme Leader and the commander of Iran's diplomacy is the permanent closure of the path of diplomacy," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said.

V. Iran Breached Enriched Uranium Stockpile Limit:

- On July 1, 2019, Iran announced that it had broken the limit set on its stockpile of low-enriched uranium by the 2015 Nuclear Deal with world powers.
- The International Atomic Energy said its Director-General had informed officials that it verified on July 1, 2019, that Iran had broken through the limit.
- Under the 2015 Nuclear Deal, Iran had agreed to have less than 300 kg of uranium enriched to a maximum of 3.6%. Iran had previously enriched uranium to 20% which was a short technical step away from weapon-grade levels.
- On July 8, 2019, Iran threatened to restart deactivated centrifuges and increase uranium enrichment to 20% purity.
- The threats by Iran put pressure on the European countries, which insist that Iran must continue to comply with the agreement even though the US is no longer doing it.
- China alleged that "unilateral bullying" by the US was the "root cause" of Iran's decision to expand uranium enrichment.
- The Chinese Foreign Ministry asked the "international community" to remain committed to multilateralism and seek political and diplomatic settlement of the issue under international law.

VI. Seizure of Oil Tankers by Britain and Iran:

- On July 10, 2019, Iran warned Britain of "consequences" after an Iranian oil tanker was detained by Britain off the coast of Gibraltar.
- The police and customs officials of Gibraltar, a tiny British overseas territory on the southern tip of Spain, said the cargo was believed to be destined for Syria, which is subject to European sanctions.
- Iran denied the charge saying that the destination "was somewhere else."

- On July 19, 2019, Iran said it captured a British-flagged oil tanker, Stena Impero, in the Gulf for “non-compliance with international maritime laws and regulations”.
- Britain said that it was planning a European-led force to escort tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, the world’s busiest oil shipping lane, in response to Iran’s seizure of its vessel Stena Impero.
- Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani said, “the presence of foreign forces will not help the region’s security and will be the main source of tensions”.

VII. Emergency Meeting with Parties to the 2015 Nuclear Deal:

On July 28, 2019, Iran’s nuclear negotiator Abbas Araqchi said that **an emergency meeting with parties to Iran’s 2015 Nuclear Deal was constructive but there were unresolved issues and Iran would continue to reduce its nuclear commitments if Europeans fail to salvage the Deal.**

VI.14. NORTH KOREA

I. Current Situation:

1. North Korea Holds Military Parade Stressed Without ICBMS (September 9, 2018):

2. Third Meeting between the South Korean President Moon Jae-in and the North Korean Leader Kim Jong-un (Pyongyang, September 18-20, 2018):

- The South Korean President Moon Jae-in and the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un held their third summit in North Korea from September 18-20, 2018.
- Mr. Kim said that his “historic” summit with US President Donald Trump in Singapore stabilised regional security, and that he expected further progress. He thanked the South Korean President for bringing about the Singapore meeting in June 2018.
- North Korea said that it would permanently abolish its key missile facilities in the presence of foreign experts. The gesture by Mr. Kim was aimed at reviving faltering talks with the US, according to analysts.
- The South Korean President Moon Jae-in said that both the leaders had agreed to turn the Korean Peninsula into a “land of peace without nuclear weapons and nuclear threats”.
- North Korea was also willing to close its main nuclear complex if the US took unspecified “reciprocal action”.
- The North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said he would visit South Korea in the near future. This would be the first-ever visit to South Korea by a North Korean leader.
- The leaders of North and South Korea announced a series of steps to deepen bilateral exchanges in the economy, culture and sport.
- North Korea would allow experts from “concerned countries” to watch the closure of its missile engine testing site and launch pad in the north-western town of Dongchang-ri, according to the Joint Statement signed by Mr. Moon and Mr. Kim.
- The two countries also agreed to begin construction to reconnect railways and roads linking the Koreas within this year.
- The two Koreas also agreed to pursue a bid to co-host the 2032 Summer Olympic Games and actively work together in other international competitions including the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

- The two leaders of North and South Korea also visited the spiritual birthplace of the Korean nation on September 20, 2018 for a show of unity.

3. Significance of the Third Meeting between the Leaders of South and North Korea:

- Third summit between the South Korean President Moon Jae-in and the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was significant as it gave momentum to North Korea's negotiations with the US.
- The North Korean leader agreed to close its Tongchang-ri missile testing site in the presence of international observers. The move was welcomed by the US saying that it was ready for immediate talks aimed at denuclearising North Korea.
- North Korea was also willing to close its main nuclear facility if the US took unspecified "reciprocal action". The US President Donald Trump called the pledges "very exciting".
- The US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo praised the "important commitments". He invited his North Korean counterpart to talk on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, and representatives of both sides would meet "at the earliest opportunity" in Vienna – the Headquarters of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).
- The US was ready to "engage immediately in negotiations" to achieve North Korea's denuclearisation by January 2021, according to Mr. Pompeo.
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in's main goals for the summit with the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un were to revive the talks between the US and North Korea over denuclearisation and to strengthen the North-South relations.
- The third summit between the leaders of South and North Korea strengthened the momentum for peace in the peninsula in light of the agreements signed and statements issued by the two leaders

4. US Missile Defence Review – North Korea Still a Threat (January 17, 2019):

- On January 17, 2019, the US President Donald Trump unveiled the US Missile Defence Review that called North Korea an ongoing and "extraordinary threat".
- The Missile Defence Review, a broad examination of efforts to shield the US from enemy missiles, also detailed concerns about the increasing capabilities of Iran, Russia and China.
- North Korea's missiles were called a "significant concern," by acting US Defence Secretary Patrick Shanahan.
- "While a possible new avenue to peace now exists with North Korea, it continues to pose an extraordinary threat and the United States must remain vigilant," according to the US Missile Defence Review report.

5. Second Summit between the US President Donald Trump and North Korean Leader Kim Jong-un (Hanoi, Vietnam, February 27-28, 2019):

A. Progress since the First Summit in Singapore on June 12, 2018:

- North Korea pointed out that it has taken appropriate steps by not testing ballistic missiles and demolishing its nuclear test site in May 2018.
- North Korea has also said that it has completed the development of its arsenal and the facilities were no longer needed.
- The US has repeated its demand that North Korea give up its nuclear arsenal in a final, fully verifiable way.
- But for complete denuclearisation, North Korea an end to sanctions and US threats including the US military presence in South Korea and the wider region.

B. Talks Collapse as Both Leaders Failed to Reach a Deal:

- On February 28, 2019, the US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un abruptly ended their second summit in Hanoi, Vietnam after the talks collapsed with the two leaders failing to agree on any steps towards nuclear disarmament or measures to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula.
- The US President Trump said that the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un had offered to dismantle his country's most important nuclear facility if the US lifted the harsh sanctions imposed on North Korea – but would not commit to do the same for other elements of its weapons programme. That was a deal breaker, according to Mr. Trump.

C. Implications of the Failure to Reach an Agreement on Denuclearisation:

- Abrupt end of talks in the second summit between the US President Donald Trump and the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is a setback in the attempts to find a solution to the Korean nuclear crisis.
- The second summit ended on the second day without even signing of a joint communique. Both sides also gave conflicting versions of why the talks collapsed.
- US President said that the North Korean leader had pledged to maintain a halt on nuclear and ballistic missile tests that is now in its 16th month, and that the negotiations would continue.
- The US has been insisting that the sanctions against North Korea will be lifted after it completely dismantles its nuclear programme in a verifiable manner.
- The abrupt end to the negotiations has left the rapprochement between the US and North Korea at a deadlock, with North Korea still retaining both its nuclear weapons and facilities which are suspected to be producing additional fissile material for warheads.
- Problem was partly due to the failure of both the US and North Korea to follow commitments made in the Singapore summit.

UPDATE – PART III**I. Chinese President Xi Jinping's Visit to North Korea (June 20-21, 2019):**

- Chinese President Xi Jinping visited North Korea on June 20-21, 2019. This was the first visit by a Chinese President to North Korea in 14 years.
- Relations between Cold War-era allies China and North Korea had deteriorated over North Korea's nuclear programme and China's backing of UN sanctions.
- However, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un tried to revive the old relationship by visiting China four times since last year.
- The Chinese President's visit came ahead of his meeting with the US President Donald Trump on the sidelines of the G20 Summit. Analysts feel that China is looking for some leverage in its negotiations with the US on trade issues and North Korea could be one.
- Mr. Xi held talks Mr. Kim as both leaders faced challenges of their own with the US President Donald Trump.
- The North Korean leader told the Chinese President that he was "willing to be patient", but wanted "the parties concerned" to meet him half-way, according to the Chinese media.
- Mr. Kim said that North Korea had taken "many positive measures to avoid a tense situation" over the past year, "but has not received positive responses from the relevant parties".

- The Chinese President told the North Korean leader that he “positively evaluated” North Korea’s efforts and was “willing to strengthen coordination and cooperation with the DPRK and all relevant parties”.
- The North Korean leader told the Chinese President that his visit was an opportunity to demonstrate “the immutability and invincibility of the DPRK-China friendship before the world”.
- At a time when “serious and complicated changes are happening in international and regional situations”, the two leaders agreed to “promote close strategic communication” and develop their “common interests”, according to KCNA news agency.
- Chinese President intended to use his trip as a way of signalling to the US President his influence with the North Korean leader, a week before the G20 Summit.

II. Meeting between the US President Donald Trump and North Korean Leader Kim Jong-un (June 30, 2019):

- US President Donald Trump met North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) between the two Koreas on June 30, 2019.
- Mr. Trump became the first US President to set foot in North Korea. The meeting was initiated by a spur-of-the-moment tweet by Mr. Trump.
- Meeting for the third time both leaders agreed to resume stalled nuclear talks.
- The US President escorted by the North Korean leader, briefly crossed a military demarcation line to the North side of the Joint Security Area (JSA), patrolled by soldiers from both Koreas.
- They returned to the southern side and joined South Korea’s President Moon Jae-in for a brief talk, marking an unprecedented three-way meeting. Mr. Trump and Mr. Kim then held a closed door meeting for an hour.
- The US President said he invited the North Korean leader to the White House “anytime he wants to do it”.
- The North Korean leader said their “handshake of peace” in a location that was “the symbol of the division of north and south” showed that “we are willing to put the past behind us.”

III. Significance of the Meeting between Mr. Trump and Mr. Kim:

- The significance of the meeting in the no-man’s land – where the two sides and their allies fought each other to a standstill in 1950-53 Korean War – was “obvious”, according to David Kim, analysts, Stimson Centre Asia.
- The US President and the North Korean leader have maintained friendly relations despite failing to agree on a way forward to an agreement that would ease sanctions in return for steps toward eliminating North Korea’s nuclear threat.
- South Korean President Moon Jae-in said that if Kim were to “sincerely, completely” dismantle Yongbyon, the international community would be able to discuss easing sanctions. “It’ll be the starting point for an irreversible denuclearisation,” he said.
- US President’s visit to the DMZ, points to his keenness to pursue the diplomatic option to achieve his goal – denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula.
- The option of war could be costly as North Korea is a nuclear power with long-range ballistic missile which can target the US

- North Korea also has ready-to-fire artillery along the DMZ which could target the South Korean capital Seoul which is 50 km from the border. US troops deployed in East Asia could also be the target of the North Korean attack
- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is keen on engaging with the US and opening up his country's economy, which is burdened by sanctions
- The nuclear programme of North Korea is also rooted in deterrence, not in expansionism. Therefore, an agreement is possible if North Korea's security concerns are addressed and sanctions are removed, according to analysts.
- The diplomatic approach of the US President Donald Trump appears to be a practical approach in resolving the Korean nuclear crisis
- For any agreement to happen, North Korea has to assured by the US the agreement will not be turned against it by the next US administration
- Nuclear weapons are an insurance against a potential regime change war, and it would accede to denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula only if its security concerns are ensured and sanctions fully withdrawn

VI.15. ISRAEL-PALESTINE PROBLEM

I. Israel's Parliament Passed the 'Nation State' Law (July 19, 2018):

- On July 19, 2018, Israel's Parliament, Knesset, passed the 'Nation State' law amid strong protests by Opposition lawmakers.
- The legislation will become one of the powerful Basic Laws of Israel with Constitutional status.
- According to the law "Israel is the historic homeland of the Jewish people and they have an exclusive right to national self-determination in it".
- The law strips Arabic of its national language status and makes Hebrew the country's national language; states that Jerusalem, "whole and united", is Israel's capital; and vows to "promote and encourage" the establishment and consolidation of Jewish settlements.

III. Implications of the new Jewish Nation-State Law:

- "It is our state, the Jewish state, but in recent years some have tried to question that as well as the principles of our existence and our rights," the Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu said.
- Mr. Netanyahu called the approval of the Jewish Nation-State law a "decisive moment" in the history of Israel.
- Supporters of the Nation-State law said that it is aimed to boost Israel's Jewish identity and will not discriminate against minorities.
- A number of Opposition politicians denounced the vote and the Arab Parliament members called the legislation "racist".
- Arab citizens accounting for 17.5% of Israel's more than eight million population have long complained of discrimination.
- Saeb Erekat, secretary-general of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, called the legislation a "dangerous and racist law" that "officially legalises apartheid and legally defines Israel as an apartheid system".
- The sponsor of the law Avi Dichter from the Likud Party said that it aims to defend Israel's "status as a Jewish and democratic state".

- Critics pointed out that references to “Jewish and democratic” in earlier versions of the law had been removed and that the law lacked references to equality as specified in the country’s 1948 declaration of Independence.
- According to Shuki Friedman of the Israel Democracy Institute, **much of the law was symbolic, but it would force the courts to consider the country’s Jewish nature and lead to a more “narrow interpretation of Arabs’ rights”**.
- Analysts point out that **the emphasis on Jerusalem, “whole and united”, being the capital and the promise to promote settlements would be a threat to any peace process with the Palestinians**.
- Jerusalem is seen as a disputed territory, with the Palestinians keen on its eastern part being the capital of their future state. Israel’s claim over the whole city is the main point of dispute between the two sides.

IV. The US to Stop Funding the UN Agency that Provides Assistance to Palestinians:

- On August 31, 2018, the US decided to stop all funding it provides to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) which provides aid to five million Palestinian refugees across the West Asian region.
- The US, which until last year was the biggest contributor to the UNRWA announced that it would no longer make any contributions to the “irredeemably flawed operation”.
- “The administration has carefully reviewed the issue and determined that the United States will not make additional contributions of UNRWA,” the US State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said.
- The UNRWA’s “endlessly and exponentially expanding community of entitled beneficiaries is simply unsustainable and has been in crisis mode for many years,” according to the State Department spokesperson.
- The Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said that **the US administration was invalidating future peace talks by “pre-empting, prejudging issues reserved for permanent status” negotiations. Palestinian and Israeli “elements that want to achieve peace peacefully, based on a two-state solution, are being destroyed”**.
- Palestinian presidential spokesperson Nabil Abu Rudeina said **the US decision “promotes terrorism” and was a violation of UN resolutions**.
- The UNRWA, established in 1949, was already facing a financial crisis after the US President Donald Trump announced a \$300 million funding freeze in January 2018.
- UNRWA spokesman Chris Gunness said **the UN agency would try to make up a \$217 million shortfall**.
- Jordan has a peace treaty with Israel, announced plans to organise a fundraising conference on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.
- The US State Department spokesperson said that **the US would “intensify dialogue with the United Nations, host governments and international stakeholders about new models and new approaches” for assisting needy Palestinians**.

V. UN Probe – Israel may have Committed Crimes against Humanity in Gaza in 2018 (February 28, 2019):

- On February 28, 2019, a UN probe said that there was evidence Israel committed crimes against humanity in responding to the protests in Gaza in 2018. Snipers had targeted people clearly, identifiable as children, health workers and journalists.

- The UN Independent Commission of Inquiry on protests in the Occupied Palestine Territory investigated violations committed during demonstrations in the Gaza Strip between March 30 and December 31, 2018.
- “Israeli soldiers committed violations of international human rights and humanitarian law,” according to a statement by the committee chair Santiago Canton.
- The Commission set up by the UN Human Rights Council in May 2018, pointed out that “more than 6,000 unarmed demonstrators were shot by military snipers” during weeks of protests.
- “The Commission found reasonable grounds to believe that Israeli snipers shot at journalist, health workers, children and persons with disabilities, knowing they were clearly recognisable as such,” the report said.
- Israeli Foreign Minister said that Israel “rejects the report outright.”
- “No institution can negate Israel’s right to self-defence and its duty to defend its residents and borders from violent attacks,” according to a statement by the Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz.

VI. Conclusion:

1. UN – Two-State Solution Remained the ‘Only Way’ for Israel-Palestine Peace:

- The two-State solution remained the only way to meet the aspirations of the Palestinians and Israelis.
- Some may hold the illusion that the Israel-Palestine conflict could be managed indefinitely. That the absence of a clear strategy to advance peace was a strategy in itself.
- Urged Israeli and Palestinian leaders to “carefully contemplate the future”, which he cautioned could be “built on perpetual conflict, rising extremism and occupation”.

2. India's Supports the Peaceful Resolution of the West Asian Conflict:

- India supports the peaceful resolution of the West Asian conflict and believes that it is political in nature and cannot be resolved by force.
- Since 1947, India has been involved in the Palestinian problem when it was a member of the UN Special Committee that had drawn up two plans for the future of Palestine.
- In 1974, India recognised the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the sole representative of the Palestinian people.
- In 1988, India became the first non-Arab nation to recognise the State of Palestine.
- The Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas visited India in February 2010 and held discussions with the then Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on the fresh efforts at initiating a peace process.
- The current NDA Government has also stressed that there was no change in India’s long-standing position on support to the Palestinian cause.

UPDATE – PART II

I. Golan Heights:

1. Background:

- The Golan Heights is a 1,200 sq. km plateau beside the Sea of Galilee.
- **Population:** Around 40,000 with Israeli Jewish settlers making up half of it and Syrians from the Druze sect making the other half.

- **Strategic Importance:**
- It is considered to be of strategic military importance as it offers expansive views over Syria and Israel.
- The volcanic plateau is fertile and is important for the region's water supply.
- Three tributaries cross the highlands and the river system provides about 40% of Israel's water.
- A 400 sq. km 'Area of Separation' separates Israel from Syria.
- **1967** – In the six-day war, Israel occupied the Golan Heights, West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip
- **1973** – In the 1973 West Asia war Israel occupied a further 510 sq. km but returned the territory in 1974
- **1974** – 'Separation of Forces' agreement created a 'Line A', behind which Israeli forces would remain, and a 'Line B', behind which Syrian forces would remain
- **1981** – Israel passed a law to formally annex the occupied area. Israel's annexation of Golan Heights is not recognised internationally.

2. US Recognised Israel's Sovereignty over the Golan Heights (March 25, 2019):

- "After 52 years, it is time for the United States to fully recognise Israel's Sovereignty over the Golan Heights," the US President Donald Trump tweeted. He called the territory "of critical strategic and security importance to the State of Israel."
- The US President's statement marked a major shift in US policy over the status of Golan Heights that was captured by Israel from Syria in 1967 and annexed in 1981. The annexation is not recognised internationally.
- The US State Department has also dropped previous definitions of the Palestine territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strips as being "occupied" by Israel.
- On March 25, 2019, US President Donald Trump declared that the Golan Heights belongs to Israel. Mr. Trump signed the Golan proclamation at the White House.
- Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu, who was on a visit to the US, said, "Your decision to recognise Israel's sovereignty on the Golan Heights is so historic."
- "Your recognition is a two-fold act of historic justice. Israel won the Golan Heights in a just war of self-defence, and the Jewish people's roots in the Golan go back thousands of years," Mr. Netanyahu said.

3. Reaction of Other Countries:

- Arab leaders condemned the US recognition of Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights and pointed out that West Asia's stability depended on creating a Palestinian State.
- Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz said his country "absolutely rejects" any measures affecting Syria's sovereignty over the Golan Heights.
- The Syrian government vowed to take back the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.
- Iran, which also has forces in Syria, condemned the US move as illegal and unacceptable.
- Russia said that the US move risked serious destabilising the region.
- Turkey said that the US move had brought the Middle East to the edge of a new crisis and the legitimisation of the occupation of the Golan Heights could not be allowed.

- The European Union (EU) said it did not recognise Israeli sovereignty over Golan Heights.

4. Conclusion:

- Israel requires the Golan Heights for security. Israel pointed out that the civil war in Syria demonstrated the need to keep the Golan Height plateau as a buffer zone.
- Israel is also concerned that Iran is seeking to establish itself permanently on the Syrian side of the border in order to attack Israel
- US recognition of Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights is a challenge to the rule-based international order and is contrary to its position in response to Russia's annexation of Crimea.
- The US move also makes the possibility of any future peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestine problem difficult and complicated.
- India has a strong and growing relationship with Israel, and has also maintained good relations with Syria. India troops have been part of the UN peacekeeping mission on the Golan Heights.
- The US decision to recognise Israel's sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights indicates a shift in geopolitics in the West Asian region, with long-term implications for India

II. Militants Fired 200 Rockets from Gaza and Israel Responded by Launching Airstrikes on Militant Targets (May 4-5, 2019)

III. Parliamentary Elections in Israel (April 9, 2019):

- On April 9, 2019, Parliamentary elections were held in Israel with six million voters exercising their franchise to elect members for Knesset, Israel's Parliament, from 11 parties/coalitions.
- The 69-year-old Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has been the Prime Minister for a total of more than 13 years, was seeking a fifth term to become Israel's longest serving Prime Minister.
- Knesset, Israel's Parliament has a total of 120 seats.
- A 3.25% of the vote is required to enter the Knesset. No party has ever won an outright majority in Israel.
- Mr. Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party won 35 seats and his main rival, ex-military chief Benny Gantz's centrist Blue and White alliance won 35 seats.
- On May 30, 2019, Israeli lawmakers voted to dissolve the Parliament, paving the way for a new election after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu failed to form a coalition government before the midnight deadline.
- The Parliamentary elections are set to be held on September 17, 2019.
- The need to go for Parliamentary elections again is seen as a political setback for Mr. Netanyahu, who has three corruption cases against him.
- The delay in elections to Israel's Knesset would further delay US President's peace plan to resolve the Israeli-Palestine conflict

VI.16. YEMEN**I. Current Situation:****1. Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen after Three Years of Conflict:**

- In March 2018, the UN said that 8.4 million people were “a step away from famine”.
- The United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) said around half a million children had dropped out of school since 2015.
- About 2,419 children had been recruited by armed groups.
- About 11.3 million people were in need of acute help.
- About 16.4 million people were in need of safe water.
- About 22.2 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance.

2. Saudi Arabia-led Coalition Seized Airport of Yemen’s Main Port City Hodeidah (June 20, 2018):

- On June 20, 2018, Saudi Arabia-led coalition forces seized the airport of Yemen’s main port city Hodeidah from the Iran-backed Houthis.
- The escalation of violence wounded civilians, forcing many to flee their homes and hampering humanitarian agencies.
- The Houthis are accused by Saudi Arabia of using Hodeidah’s port to smuggle Iran-made weapons, including missiles that have been fired on Saudi cities. Iran and the Houthis deny it.

3. UN-Brokered Peace Talks between the Government and Houthi Rebels (December 2018):

- On December 13, 2018, the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres announced a series of breakthroughs in the UN-brokered peace talks in Sweden between the Government of Yemen and the Houthi rebels.
- Mr. Guterres announced that the Government of Yemen and the Houthi rebels had agreed on a ceasefire in the port of Hodeida, the main entry point for food and aid, held by the Houthis since 2014.
- UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths said the pullout from the port of Hodeida should take place “within days”.
- Both sides agreed that a redeployment of both forces would follow, limited to agreed-upon posts outside of Hodeida, within a maximum of 21 days from the ceasefire.
- Both sides also agreed to the creation of a joint committee, supervised by the UN, to oversee redeployment and demining. The committee chair would report weekly to the UN Security Council.
- The Houthis began “the first phase of redeployment from Hodeidah port,” a rebel official said on December 29, 2018.
- Pro-government forces were also supposed to withdraw from parts of the city they recaptured in an offensive launched with the backing of a Saudi-led coalition on June 13, 2018.

4. Conclusion:

- The Conflict in Yemen has triggered the world’s worst humanitarian crisis, with 14 million people at the brink of starvation, according to the UN.

- International pressure has been mounting to stop the fighting between the Iran-backed Houthis and the Government forces of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi backed by Saudi Arabia and its allies.
- If the UN-brokered ceasefire agreement on the Hodeida port is implemented, it would mark a major turning point after four years of devastating conflict in Yemen.
- The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said that a number of issues still remained unresolved.
- On December 13, 2018, the US Senate voted overwhelmingly to end US support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen.
- Analysts point out that Saudi Arabia was put under increased international pressure to stop fighting in Yemen after the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi inside Saudi consulate in Istanbul, triggered a global outcry.
- The US has also cut down its support to the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen by ending the refuelling of coalition aircraft.
- The UN-brokered ceasefire was agreed by both sides only in Hodeida. To bring the conflict to an end both sides have to agree to extend the truce to other areas of the conflict by making some political concessions.

VI.17. TAIWAN

I. Current Situation:

1. Implications of the Huge Gains for the Opposition Kuomintang (KMT) or Chinese Nationalist Party in the Local Elections in Taiwan (November 24, 2018):

- On November 24, 2018, local elections were held in Taiwan in which the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) suffered heavy defeat due to public distrust which is seen as setback ahead of the 2020 general elections.
- The local election results in Taiwan were seen as a vote of no confidence for President Tsai Ing-wen politically (Taiwan's relations with China), economically (tourism, agriculture) and socially (labour laws, wages, pollution)
- The big gains for the Opposition Kuomintang (KMT) or the Chinese Nationalist Party could help in gradually improving Taiwan's relations with mainland China
- Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen stepped down as the chief of the ruling DPP, owning moral responsibility for the setback. Her re-election is now in doubt
- The pro-independence stance of the ruling DPP is not in line with China's repeated assertion of its sovereignty over Taiwan. China has also warned that it is prepared to use force to defend its sovereignty over Taiwan.
- However, the government of Taiwan is also trying to avoid the long-standing dispute over sovereignty to have an adverse impact on its strong trade relations with China.
- The US has tried to leverage Taiwan to pressure China in the ongoing trade war
- The US 2018 Taiwan Travel Act is aimed to promote greater engagement between the US and Taiwan.
- The new headquarters of American Institute in Taiwan in Taipei also points to the shift in the US stand.

- The President of Taiwan Tsai Ing-wen's visit to the US and her interactions with various Congressmen has not gone well with China
- The government of Taiwan has alleged that China illegally funded the Opposition campaigns in the local elections.
- China is also alleged to be pressuring countries to stop according diplomatic recognition to Taiwan.
- In a referendum held along with the local polls the people of Taiwan rejected a proposal to rename the country's Olympic team as Taiwan, instead of the current Chinese Taipei.
- The verdict of the referendum indicated majority preference for maintaining the status quo rather than independence.

2. China is Opposed to India and other Countries Selling Submarine Technology to Taiwan (January 14, 2019):

- On January 14, 2019, China said that it is opposed to efforts by India and other countries to sell submarine technology to Taiwan. It stressed that countries that supply technology to Taiwan run the risk of harming their diplomatic relations with China.
- India, the US and Japan are among the countries that have come forward to provide maritime technology to Taiwan.
- "The Indian team has experience with the diesel submarines in service in the Indian Navy," the Taiwan News, said.
- The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said that the concerned countries should go by the one-China policy and refuse to form military linkages with Taiwan.
- China is opposed to any country having diplomatic relations with Taiwan as it is regarded as China's breakaway territory.
- "China is firmly opposed to any country to have any military links with Taiwan. China is consistent and clear cut. The US and other countries fully recognise the sensitivity and the danger of this issue," the Chinese spokesperson said.

3. Taiwan's President – No Formal Peace Deal with China Till It Rules Out the Use of Force (February 20, 2019):

- On February 20, 2019, the Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen said that no formal peace deal could be signed with China until it rules out using force against Taiwan.
- Ms. Tsai was responding to the comments by Wu Den-yih, the head of the Opposition KMT, that his party would pursue a peace treaty with China, if it comes to power in 2020.
- The Taiwanese President said: "There would be no so-called negotiation on equal footing and no real peace as China refuses to give up the use of force against Taiwan and forcefully pushes the 'one country, two systems' framework."
- "China's military intensions and it refusal to give up the use of force against Taiwan is a real source of regional instability and a threat to regional peace," according to Ms. Tsai.
- The 'one country, two systems' proposal by China is to absorb Taiwan into the mainland but allow it to keep some of its freedoms.
- Chinese President Xi Jinping reiterated in January 2019, that China would not renounce the option of using military force to bring Taiwan into the fold.

UPDATE – PART III

I. US-Chinese Tensions Increase over Taiwan:

- On June 6, 2019, Taiwan confirmed that it was hoping to buy state-of-the-art tanks and portable missiles from the US in a proposed deal.
- On July 8, 2019, the US Defence Department notified the Congress of its proposed arms sales to Taiwan.
- The US arms sales to Taiwan include 108 M1A2T Abrams tanks, Hercules armoured vehicles and heavy equipment transporters. Clearance from the Congress was also sought for the sale of Stinger anti-aircraft missiles in a deal worth \$2.2 billion.
- China said it had “serious concerns” about the sale. “We have emphasised to the US to fully understand the extremely sensitive and damaging nature of their decision to sell arms to Taiwan, and abide by the One China principle,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said.
- China has threatened to sanction US companies selling weapons to Taiwan.
- The Chinese State-run tabloid, Global Times, said that China can take specific steps to hurt four US military hardware firms – General Dynamics, the maker of the M1A2T tanks, Raytheon, the manufacturers of the Stringent missile, and tank equipment contractors, BAE and Oshkosh.
- China as the third largest buyer of Gulfstream executive jets built by General Dynamics can hurt the company by restricting imports.
- China is also a major purchaser of aircraft rescue and fire fighting vehicles produced by Oshkosh.
- “Rare earths, the industry which is largely controlled by China, are imperative in making advanced weapons and equipment. For instance, the M1A2 tank of General Dynamics uses samarium-cobalt in its navigation system,” the Global Times said.
- China would stop issuing individual travel permits for Taiwan to people in 47 mainland cities from August 1, 2019, according to the Chinese Cultural and Tourism Ministry.
- People from mainland need permission to travel to Taiwan which China regards as a renegade province.
- In the last week of July 2019, China’s military held exercises in waters near Taiwan, following a warning that it was ready for war if there is any move towards independence by Taiwan.

VI.18. THAILAND

I. General Elections in Thailand (March 24, 2019):

- Thailand’s first general elections since the military coup in 2014 were held on March 24, 2019.
- The main contest was between the pro-military party Palang Pracharat, which sought to keep Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-Cha in power and the Pheu Thai, a party linked to the exiled former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, whose loyalists won every election since 2001.
- Under the new Constitution promulgated in 2017, the elections were held for directly electing 350 members of the 500-member House of Representatives or Lower House.
- The remaining 150 House of Representative seats are allocated according to complex formula involving the total number of votes for each party.
- The Senate or Upper House is appointed entirely by the ruling military.

- The Lower and Upper Houses together select the next Prime Minister.
- According to the provision, the ruling Palang Pracharat Party and allies would have to win only 126 seats, while the Pheu Thai and its “democratic front” partners would need 376.
- On the eve of the election the new King Maha Vajiralongkorn made an unexpected statement, recalling the comment made by his late father in 1969 on the need to put “good people” in power and to prevent “bad people from..... creating chaos”.
- The message by the new King was a departure from the approach of his late father who usually kept a distance between monarchy and politics.

II. Pro-Military Palang Pracharat Party won the Popular Vote:

- On March 28, 2019, Thailand's Election Commission announced that the pro-military Palang Pracharat party won the popular vote with 8.4 million votes while the main Opposition Pheu Thai party won 7.9 million votes.
- Thailand's Opposition “democratic front” of seven parties said it had won the majority in the Lower House and had the right to try to form a government after five years of military rule.
- The Pheu Thai emerged as the largest party with 137 seats in the Parliament.
- The pro-military Palang Pracharat party won 116 seats and received the most votes.
- The Pheu Thai and other parties which formed the seven-party “democratic front” were unable to form the government.

III. Parliament Voted in Favour of Gen. Prayuth Chan-o-Cha as the Prime Minister:

- The Parliament was convened on May 24, 2019 and on June 5, 2019, the members of the Lower House and the Upper House voted in favour of Gen. Prayuth Chan-o-Cha as the Prime Minister.

IV. The Role of Thai Military:

- After the coup in 2014, the Thai military promulgated a new Constitution in 2017, prohibiting political meetings and campaigning by political parties.
- The 2017 Constitution was drafted to prevent the Pheu Thai Party from forming a government. The proportional representation system is designed to prevent it from gaining the required majority seats in the Parliament, even if it wins the majority of the constituencies.
- The seven-party “democratic front” was created by Pheu Thai so that all parties could get a few seats under the proportional representation system
- The politics in Thailand has been dominated by the royal family and the military. Elected civilian governments have been routinely ousted by the military, making Thailand a country with the highest number of coups.
- The Thai military does not want give up power and hence has prevented a strong democracy from taking root
- The urge of the people of Thailand for a strong and vibrant democracy cannot be suppressed. The outcome of the recent election under a flawed Constitution does not truly reflect the people's mandate but has started the democratic process in some measure

VI.19. HONG KONG**I. Background:**

- Hong Kong was a former colony of the Britain and its sovereignty was transferred to China in 1997.
- Hong Kong is officially the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and is one of the most densely populated places in the world.
- As a Special Administrative Region, Hong Kong has separate governing and economic systems from those of mainland China.
- Under the 1997 handover agreement with Britain, China agreed to a 50-year deal under which the territory would be able to retain liberties like freedom of speech and independent judiciary.

II. Protests against New Extradition Bill:

- On June 9, 2019, a political crisis engulfed Hong Kong after hundreds of thousands of people took to streets to protest a proposed extradition law that would allow suspects to be sent to mainland China to face trial.
- The protests put pressure on the administration of Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam.
- The government said that such a law was needed to plug existing loopholes and prevent Hong Kong from becoming a haven for fugitives.
- Those accused of offences punishable by seven years or more in prison could be extradited. The power to take such an action would be with Hong Kong's Chief Executive.
- The protesters were concerned over the erosion of the 'One country Two Systems' policy under which the sovereignty of Hong Kong was handed over by Britain to China in 1997.
- China's opaque and politicised courts, where conviction rate is around 99% was also a cause of major concern.
- People of Hong Kong fear that the law would be used to target China's political opponents.

III. Protests Continue despite the Indefinite Suspension of Extradition Bill:

- The Chief Executive of Hong Kong Carrie Lam indefinitely suspended the proposed Extradition Bill and apologised to the people of Hong.
- A government spokesman said that poor government work over the Bill had led to "substantial controversies and disputes in society, causing disappointment and grief."
- Ms. Lam "apologised to the people of Hong Kong for this and pledged to adopt a more sincere and humble attitude to accept criticisms and make improvements in serving the public," according to the statement.
- Despite the apology, protesters called for the resignation of the Chief Executive Carrie Lam.
- China backed the Chief Executive Carrie Lam pointing out that the divisive extradition law she delayed was effectively withdrawn.
- On July 1, 2019, protesters stormed the Hong Kong legislature on the anniversary of the city's 1997 return to China.
- "Actions by some radical demonstrators have affected the bottom line of the 'one country, two systems' principle, and that is absolutely intolerable," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said.

- China opposes all acts of violence and “firmly” supports the use of “all necessary measures to safeguard Central government agencies in Hong Kong”, according to the spokesperson.

IV. Conclusion:

- Continuing massive protests in Hong Kong even after the controversial Extradition Bill has been indefinitely suspended point out that the people of Hong Kong value freedom speech, expression and thought which are not available in mainland China.
- The protests in Hong Kong go against the notion propagated by the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) that the people of China are one with common Asian values. On the contrary the protests point out that there are divergences even within Chinese societies
- Even in Taiwan the pro-Taiwan independence platform has strengthened resulting in the rejection of key economic pacts with mainland China
- The trends in Hong Kong and Taiwan prove that Asian values are diverse, plural and democratic

VI.20. SUDAN

I. Current Political Crisis in Sudan:

1. Anti-Government Protests in Sudan:

- On December 19, 2018, anti-government protests broke out in several cities of Sudan against the tripling of bread price.
- On December 20, 2018, the protests spread to the capital Khartoum calling for a regime change.
- After the secession of South Sudan in 2011, Sudan's economy took a downturn as it lost around three-quarters of its oil revenues and most of its revenues from the resource.
- A US embargo imposed on Sudan in 1997 over its alleged backing of radical Islamist groups and the Darfur conflict also had an adverse impact on Sudan's economy.
- In 2018, inflation increased sharply to 73% in a Sudan where more than 40% of the population live in poverty.
- The upsurge in inflation brought down the living standards of the middle class in Sudan, who are at the forefront of the anti-government protests.
- The protests which began against soaring prices of bread, turned into a nation-wide agitation against President Omar al-Bashir's rule.
- On April 6, 2019, thousands of protesters marched on the gates of Mr. Bashir's home in the headquarters of the Army.

2. Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir Overthrown by Armed Forces (April 11, 2019):

- On April 11, 2019, Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir, who ruled for 30 years, was overthrown and arrested by the armed forces.
- Mr. Bashir had captured power through a bloodless coup in 1989. After assuming power he suspended political parties, curtailed the media, introduced an Islamic legal code and eventually became the absolute ruler of the country.
- The deposed President Mr. Bashir has been indicted by the International Criminal Court in the Hague and is facing an arrest warrant over allegations of genocide in Sudan's Darfur region during an insurgency that began in 2003 and led to the death of 3,00,000 people.

- Mr. Bashir was overthrown after mass protests due to rising food costs, high unemployment and increasing repression during his 30-year rule.
- The Defence Minister of Sudan Awad Mohamed Ahmed Ibn Auf announced a two-year period of military rule to be followed by Presidential elections.
- Mr. Auf said that a military council would now run the country. He announced a state of emergency, a nationwide ceasefire and the suspension of the Constitution.
- Defence Minister Awad Ibn Auf was sworn in as the head of the military council as soon as Mr. Bashir was ousted.
- On April 13, 2019, the Defence Minister and the Intelligence chief quit as protesters kept up pressure on the military council.
- The new head of the military council Lt. Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan Abdelrahman said in a televised address that he was cancelling a night curfew ordered by his predecessor and ordered the release of all prisoners jailed under emergency laws ordered by ousted President Omar al-Bashir.

3. Protesters Called for a Civilian Government:

- The Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA) which is leading the protests demanded that the new military council be scrapped and called for a civilian government at a sit-in outside the Army headquarters in Khartoum, on April 15, 2019.
- "We want the military council to be dissolved and be replaced by a civilian council having representatives of the Army," according to a SPA leader.
- A 10-member delegation representing the protesters delivered a list of demand during the talks with the military council.
- The main demands of the protesters:
- Immediate transfer of power to a transitional civilian government for a four-year term followed by elections.
- The dissolution of Bashir's National Congress Party, with its top leaders brought to justice – including the ousted President.
- The re-installment of the country's 2005 Constitution.
- The liberation of all civilians detained in connection with the protest movement.
- An end to the state of emergency imposed by Mr. Bashir on February 22, 2019.

4. Protesters Reject Military's Plan after Security Forces Stormed a Protest Camp in Khartoum:

- On June 4, 2019, the Sudanese opposition rejected a plan by the military rulers to hold elections within nine months, a day after security forces stormed a protest camp in Khartoum resulting in the death of at least 100 people.
- The Transitional Military Council cancelled all agreements it had reached with the Opposition immediately after the raid. However, on June 5, 2019, the head of the military council Lt. Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan said "we in the military council extend our hand for negotiations without shackles except the interests of the homeland".
- The Sudanese alliance of protesters and Opposition groups rejected the offer, stressing that the military could not be trusted
- The main protest organiser, Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), called for an international committee to investigate the deaths due to the raid on the protest camp.

5. African Union (AU) Suspended Sudan and Demanded Civil Rule (June 6, 2019):

- On June 6, 2019, the African Union (AU) suspended demanding a “civilian-led transitional authority” to resolve an entrenched and bloody crisis.
- “The AU Peace and Security Council has with immediate effect suspended the participation of the Republic of Sudan in all AU activities until the effective establishment of a Civilian-led Transitional Authority, as the only way to allow Sudan to exit from the current crisis,” the AU tweeted.
- The AU chairperson Patrick Kapuwa, pointed out that **the Sudan’s military leadership that took control after the ouster of President Omar al-Bashir had failed to hand over power to civilians.**

UPDATE – PART-III

Sudan’s Protesters Reach a Power-Sharing Agreement with Ruling Military (July 5, 2019):

- On July 5, 2019, leaders of Sudan’s pro-democracy movement welcomed a power-sharing agreement with the ruling military council as a victory for their “revolution”.
- Both parties agreed to form a joint sovereign council to lead the country during a transitional period of three years and three months.
- The council would include five civilians representing the protest movement and five military members. An eleventh seat would go to a civilian chosen by both parties.
- A military member will preside over the council for the first 21 months, followed by a civilian member after that, according to the statement.
- The agreement also secured the main demand of the protest leaders that they select the members of a technocratic Cabinet to be formed independently from the generals.
- “Today, our revolution has won and our victory shines,” the Sudanese Professionals’ Association (SPA) which spearheaded the protests said in a statement posted on the Facebook page.
- The agreement could break the political impasse that gripped Sudan since the military deposed President Omar al Bashir in April 2019.
- The African Union (AU) and Ethiopia were involved in efforts to bring the military and the protesters back to the negotiating table.
- On July 17, 2019, the Sudanese protesters and the military signed an agreement that aims to install a civilian administration, a key demand of protesters.
- It was a “historic moment” for Sudan, according to Deputy Chief of the military council General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo.
- The agreement has “opened a new and promising era of partnership between the armed forces, RSF (Rapid Support Forces) and leaders of the glorious Sudanese revolution,” General Dagalo said.

VI.21. ALGERIA

I. Background:

- Algeria is a North African country which became independent from French colonial rule in 1962.
- Since independence, the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria has been ruled by an informal coalition of the National Liberation Front and army generals (called le Pouvoir, or ‘the Power’).

- In the late 1980s, a long period of socio-political crisis started in Algeria resulting in the emergence of the Islamists led by the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).
- The FIS was denied victory in the 1991-92 elections resulting in insurgency and causing the death of nearly 200,000 people.
- In 1999, the military or le Pouvoir brought in Abdelaziz Bouteflika as the President of Algeria to foster national reconciliation.
- Mr. Bouteflika brought the civil war to an end within three years and his government built a strong welfare state funded by revenues from oil and gas exports.
- Although Mr. Bouteflika is credited with ending the civil war in Algeria and stabilising the economy, his administration is also known for its ruthless style and denial of several basic freedoms.
- In 2014, Mr. Bouteflika won a fourth term as President of Algeria although he had withdrawn from the public following a stroke in 2013.
- Following the 2014 commodities meltdown, there was growing resentment due to mounting economic woes.
- The public resentment increased due to five years of economic problems and growing scepticism about the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's health.

II. Current Situation:

1. Protests in Algeria Against the President Bouteflika Seeking a Fifth Term:

- Since February 22, 2019, protests broke out in Algeria against the 82-year-old President Abdelaziz Bouteflika seeking a fifth term. Thousands of Algerians, especially the youth, launched protests across Algeria.
- The protests were triggered due to worsening socio-economic conditions brought out by lower oil and gas revenues which rendered the government's welfare programmes less sustainable
- Mr. Bouteflika dropped his bid for a fifth term as President in the face of mass protests but also postponed the elections. This led to increased protests as it was seen as a ploy to stay in power.

2. Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika Resigned (April 2, 2019):

- On April 2, 2019, the state television announced that the Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika had submitted his resignation to the Constitutional Council.
- The resignation of Mr. Bouteflika came after the Algerian military demanded impeachment proceedings.
- The Algerian armed forces Chief Ahmed Gaid Salah said the army's "sole ambition" was to "protect the people from a handful of (other) people who have taken over the wealth of the Algerian people".
- The Constitutional Council of Algeria said that it had accepted the President's resignation and informed the Parliament that his post was officially vacant.
- According to Algeria's Constitution, once the President officially resigns, the Speaker of the Upper House of the Parliament, currently Abdelkader Bensalah, acts as interim leader for up to 90 days during which a Presidential election must be organised.
- The protesters in Algeria's capital Algiers welcomed the resignation of the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, but emphasised that they were determined to continue demonstrating, rejecting any transition that leaves power in the hands of the "system".

- The protesters are demanding sweeping change to Algeria's political system.
- The protests in Algeria are seen as a late arrival of Arab Spring which saw an upsurge in Tunisia and other Arab countries in 2010 yearning for democracy, according to analysts.

3. Implications for India:

- Former Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika was a friend of India and had visited the country in 2001.
- Bilateral economic relations between India and Algeria are expanding. Algeria is seen as an important market for India's automobiles, farm machinery, mobiles, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and foodstuff.
- Algeria is also a source for India's strategic commodities, particularly hydrocarbons and phosphates.
- A large number of Indian contractors are active in Algeria
- Politically, Algeria has been one of the few members of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to consistently support India's case against terrorism.
- India could play a crucial role in ensuring Algeria's socio-political transition is smooth by helping the country with institution building as well as infrastructure.

VI.22. UKRAINE

I. Current Situation in Ukraine:

1. Rebel-Held East Ukraine Regions Voted for New Leaders (November 11, 2018):

- On November 11, 2018, the people in rebel-held east Ukraine voted for new leaders after Russia defied Western calls not to sabotage peace talks.
- In the Donetsk and Lugansk "People's Republics" in east Ukraine voted for new leaders after a top rebel was killed in café bombing in August 2018.
- The US and EU has asked Russia not to hold what they called "illegal" polls, stressing that they would further hamper efforts to end the conflict which has resulted in the death of more than 10,000 people since 2014.
- Ukraine urged the West to impose fresh sanctions against Russia for violating the 2015 Peace Agreement. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko called on the people of east Ukraine to snub the vote "at gunpoint".
- Russia and the local authorities rejected the appeals, emphasising that the people deserved a chance at a normal life and pointing out that the voter turnout was high.

2. Russia Seized Three Ukrainian Ships Near Crimea (November 26, 2018):

- On November 26, 2018, Russia seized three Ukrainian naval ships and 24 Ukrainian sailors raising concerns of military escalation and prompting an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council.
- Russia used weapons against the Ukrainian ships which it claimed illegally entered its waters before boarding and searching them, Russia's FSB security service confirmed.
- The crisis started when two Ukrainian small warships and a tugboat were heading through the Kerch Strait, a narrow waterway that give access to the Sea of Azov that is used by both Ukraine and Russia.

- The relations between Ukraine and Russia were still frosty after the annexation of Crimea by Russia and its backing for a pro-Russian insurgency in east Ukraine.
- The seizure of the Ukrainian ships by Russia could push the countries to a wider conflict and could renew Western calls for more sanctions on Russia
- Russia's Foreign Ministry accused Ukraine of sending the ships to deliberately provoke Russia.

3. Ukraine Declared Martial Law (November 27, 2018):

- On November 27, 2018, Ukraine declared martial law in response to Russia's seizure of three of its ships.
- The Parliament of Ukraine voted in favour of President Petro Poroshenko's request for introduction of martial law in border areas for 30 days.
- Courts in Crimea sentenced the 24 sailors to two months detention, despite international calls for their release.
- On November 30, 2018, Ukraine barred Russian men aged 16-60 from entry.

4. The US President Donald Trump Cancelled his Planned Meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin on November 29, 2018, citing the naval stand-off in which the Russian forces seized three Ukrainian ships.

5. Conclusion:

- Russia's seizure of three Ukrainian ships and 24 sailors in the disputed Sea of Azov refocused attention on the Russia-Ukraine conflict.
- Ukraine pointed out that the patrol of the Kerch Strait was authorised under a bilateral agreement with Russia. A new bridge built by Russia over the Kerch Strait that connects Russia's mainland with Crimea raised concerns over Russia's increasing control and influence in the region
- The ceasefire deal reached in Minsk in 2015 prohibited air strikes and heavy artillery firing. However, the conflict has continued in the form of low-intensity combat
- The UN Security Council and NATO called on both Russia and Ukraine to de-escalate tensions.
- Continuing Ukraine-Russia conflict can only be resolved through talks.
- NATO also needs greater engagement with Russia to address the latter's concern about the former's expansion into Eastern Europe and the erstwhile USSR

UPDATE – PART II

Volodymyr Zelensky (New President of Ukraine):

- On April 22, 2019, comedian Volodymyr Zelensky was elected as the new President of Ukraine.
- Mr. Zelensky defeated incumbent President Petro Poroshenko. The defeat was triggered by public anger over war and social injustice, according to analysts.
- The 41-year-old Mr. Zelensky, the star of the TV series "Servant of the People", vowed to pursue the pro-European course set out by his predecessor. However, Mr. Zelensky also wants to improve relations with Russia.
- Analysts point out that the new President of Ukraine faces many challenges the first being the Parliamentary elections this year, in which he would have to work with the established institutions and parties he had railed against during his election campaign.

- The conflict with Russia in rebel-held territories in eastern Ukraine is also a serious challenge for Mr. Zelensky.
- The new President of Ukraine also needs to deliver on the crusade against corruption.
- The progress in these areas is crucial for Ukraine's European Union membership.
- On May 20, 2019, Volodymyr Zelensky took oath as the new President of Ukraine.
- The new President announced that his first priority was ending the five-year conflict with Russian-backed separatists in the industrial eastern Ukraine.
- Mr. Zelensky announced he would dissolve the Parliament in order to call early elections, originally, scheduled for October 2019.

VI.23. VENEZUELA

I. Political Crisis in Venezuela:

1. Juan Guaido, President of the National Assembly, Declared Himself Interim President of Venezuela:

- On January 23, 2019, Juan Guaido, the President of the Opposition-controlled National Assembly interim President of Venezuela, challenging the authority of President Nicolas Maduro who started his new six-year term in January 2019.
- Mr. Guaido became the President of the National Assembly on January 5, 2019, and called for the armed forces to recognise Mr. Maduro as a “usurper” after his controversial re-election in May 2018.
- The rapid ascent of Mr. Guaido showed that he could fill the leadership vacuum in Venezuela's divided Opposition, which failed in several attempts to oust Mr. Maduro.
- Mr. Guaido needs the backing of the armed forces to achieve his objective of having fresh elections in Venezuela. He proposed amnesty for members of the armed forces, but stressed that members of the Maduro government who committed human rights violations should be punished.
- On January 28, 2019, the Opposition leader Juan Guaido called for two new protests, in an effort to push the military to turn against President Nicolas Maduro.
- On February 24, 2019, Mr. Guaido called on the international community to consider “all measures to free” Venezuela after Opposition efforts to bring humanitarian aid into the country led to border clashes killing at least two people.
- On February 25, 2019, Mr. Guaido met with members of the Lima Group – 13 Latin American countries and Canada that are seeking to resolve the political crisis in Venezuela.
- The meeting was held in Bogota, the capital of Colombia, and was attended by the US Vice-President Mike Pence.

2. Response of President Nicolas Maduro:

- Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro accused the US of ordering coup against his government and called for a “total revision” of ties with the US.
- Mr. Maduro broke off diplomatic ties with the US government, giving its diplomats 72 hours to leave.

- **The US State Department said it did not recognise Mr. Maduro as President any more so his order meant nothing.**
- **The Venezuelan President rejected an international ultimatum to call elections within eight days and said the Opposition leader Juan Guaido had violated the Constitution by declaring himself the interim President.**
- **Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has retained the loyalty of the armed forces although the country's top military envoy to the US defected to the Opposition leader Mr. Guaido.**
- **In February 2019, the armed forces of Venezuela blocked a bridge on the border with Colombia to stop a humanitarian aid shipment.**
- **The Opposition-dominated National Assembly of Venezuela warned the armed forces not to cross a "red line" by blocking aid. Mr. Guaido claimed that up to 3,00,000 people face death if the aid is not delivered.**
- **The President Nicolas Maduro said humanitarian aid would be the forerunner of a US-led invasion.**

3. Countries Supporting the Opposition Leader Juan Guaido:

- **The US, Canada and major South American countries recognised the Opposition leader Juan Guaido as the interim President of Venezuela.**
- **On January 25, 2019, France, Germany and Spain asked Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro to hold fresh elections within eight days or they would recognise the Opposition leader Juan Guaido as the President.**
- **On January 28, 2019, the US imposed sweeping sanctions on Venezuelan state-owned oil firm PDVSA, aimed at curbing Venezuela's oil exports to the US and to put pressure on the President Nicolas Maduro to step down.**
- **On February 4, 2019, 11 European Union Nations – Austria, Britain, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden – recognised the Opposition leader Juan Guaido as Venezuela's interim President.**
- **Australia and Israel also recognised Mr. Guaido as the interim President of Venezuela.**

4. Countries Supporting the Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro:

- **Russia, China, Cuba, Bolivia, Mexico, Iran, Syria and Turkey have extended support to the Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.**
- **In January 2019, Russia denounced the Opposition leader Juan Guaido's bid as "usurpation" of power and condemned what it called foreign "interference" in Venezuela.**
- **"This is a direct path to lawlessness and bloodshed," the Russian Foreign Ministry statement said.**
- **In late January 2019, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister warned the US against any military intervention in Venezuela.**
- **China opposed "interference" in Venezuelan affairs and called for a "political resolution".**
- **China's Foreign Ministry also called on the US to stay out of the Venezuelan crisis.**
- **The Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan also voiced his support for the Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro in phone call on January 24, 2019.**

5. Venezuela's Economic Crisis:

- Venezuela is completely reliant on oil as 95% of its export revenues come through oil.
- The fall in oil prices exposed the weakness of the Venezuelan economy resulting in the rise of public debt and hyperinflation, according to analysts.
- During the rule of President Nicolas Maduro, the country's currency, Bolivar, lost 99.9% against the US dollar.
- Venezuela's inflation is estimated to reach 10 million% in 2019.
- The GDP of the country has declined by 45% in the last five years.
- Almost 90% of the population of Venezuela is living in poverty.
- Venezuela has been facing severe shortage of food and medicines for months.
- The per capita income has also been falling since 2014.
- Amid the current political crisis, about three million Venezuelan's have fled the country.

6. Venezuela Sought to Double Oil Exports to India:

- In February 2019, Venezuela sent its Oil Minister, Manuel Quevedo to India to convince refiners to double their oil purchases.
- "We are selling more than 3,00,000" bpd to Indian buyers, Mr. Quevedo said in New Delhi on February 11, 2019. "We want to double that amount."
- Venezuela was keen on doubling exports to India as US sanctions have stopped deliveries to the US and Europe.
- In response to the US sanctions, Venezuela was focusing on buyers paying in cash, especially in India, its second-largest buyer after the US.
- The Venezuelan Oil Minister said that his country was open to barter arrangements with India using oil as payment.
- Finding buyers of oil in Asia would be difficult for Venezuela as the US uses its financial clout to put pressure on countries.

7. Conclusion:

- UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres appealed for dialogue to avoid the political crisis spiralling out of control in Venezuela. What we hope is that dialogue can be possible, and that we avoid an escalation."
- Opposition leader Juan Guaido will find it difficult to topple the Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro as long as the armed forces are loyal to the President.
- Mr. Maduro's government is also supported by the poor who have been the backbone of the Chavismo government
- Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro faces the challenge from a strong Opposition which has domestic as well as international support.
- The severe economic crisis that has gripped Venezuela is not showing any signs of easing.
- The current political crisis in Venezuela is unlikely to end unless the Government and the Opposition try to find a common ground on sharing power and rebuilding the economy

VII. INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**1. UNITED NATIONS (UN)****I. G-4 Foreign Ministers Meeting Hosted by India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj (New York, September 25, 2018):**

- On September 25, 2018, India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj hosted the G-4 Foreign Ministers meeting in New York which was attended by Brazil Foreign Minister Aloysio Nunes Ferreira, German Foreign Minister Heiko Mass and Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono.
- "The G-4 Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to multilateralism. G-4 Ministers stressed that adapting the UN to the contemporary needs of the 21st century necessarily required reforming the Security Council," according to a statement issued after the meeting.
- The G-4 Ministers noted that despite an overwhelming majority of UN member states supporting Security Council reform, the negotiations launched in 2009 have not produced substantive progress over the 10 years.
- "The G-4 Ministers emphasised the need to revitalise process of the Security Council reform, and they tasked their respective officials to consider the way forward to advance the reform," according to the statement.
- The G-4 Ministers agreed that the "current composition of the UNSC does not reflect the changed global realities and they stressed that Security Council reform is essential to address today's complex challenges."
- The G-4 Ministers "reiterated their commitment to work to strengthen the functioning of the UN and the global multilateral order as well as their support for each other's candidatures," the statement said.

II. Highlights of India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj's Address at the UN General Assembly (New York, September 29, 2018):

- Pakistan's duplicity is a key obstacle in the global fight against terrorism and India is an immediate and continuing target of terrorism originating from there.
- "The most startling evidence of this duplicity was the fact that Osama Bin Laden, the architect and ideologue of 9/11, was given safe haven in Pakistan...that claimed to be America's friend and ally."
- "The killers of 9/11 met their fate; but the mastermind of 26/11 Hafiz Saeed still roams the streets of Pakistan with impunity."
- India is always willing to talk to Pakistan, but continuing terrorist attacks have made peace process impossible.
- Though the international community has become increasingly aware of Pakistan's role in promoting terrorism, the absence of an international agreement on the definition of terrorism allows Pakistan to characterise terrorists as "freedom fighters".
- "In 1996, India proposed a draft document on CCIT (Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism) at the United Nations. Till today, that draft has remained a draft, because we cannot agree on a common language."
- "On the one hand, we want to fight terrorism; on the other, we cannot define it. This is why terrorists with a price on their head are celebrated, financed and armed as liberation heroes by a country that remains a member of the United Nations. Cruelty and barbarism are advertised as heroism."
- "Pakistan glorifies killers; if refuses to see the blood of innocents."

- Terrorism and climate change are the two existential threats to humanity.
- Called for increasingly efficient multilateralism to tackle global challenges.
- If the UN did not undertake immediate reform, it could meet the fate of the League of Nations that could not forge a global agenda and prevent the Second World War.
- "The League went into meltdown because it was unwilling to accept the need for reform. We must not make that mistake."
- "The United Nations must accept that it needs fundamental reform. Reform must begin today; tomorrow could be too late. If the UN is ineffective, the whole concept of multilateralism will collapse."

VII.2. QUAD – INDIA, THE US, JAPAN, AUSTRALIA

I. Third Meeting of the Quad (Singapore, November 15, 2018):

- On November 15, 2018, India, the US, Japan and Australia held their third round of Quadrilateral (Quad) meet in Singapore on the sidelines of the East Asia and ASEAN Summits.
- The participants agreed to expand Quad's ambit by partnering "with other countries and forums in the region to promote a free, open, rules-based and inclusive order in the Indo-Pacific".
- "The participants reaffirmed the ASEAN centrality as the cornerstone of a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific," according to a statement issued by India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
- "The discussions focussed on cooperation in areas such as connectivity, sustainable development, counterterrorism, non-proliferation and maritime and cyber security, with a view to promoting peace, stability and prosperity in.....Indo-Pacific," according to the MEA statement.
- "They committed to strengthening connectivity and quality infrastructure based on sovereignty, equality and territorial integrity of all nations, as well as transparency, economic viability and financial responsibility," the MEA statement said in an indirect critique of China's BRI model, which has led countries to a debt trap.

II. Significance of Quad for India:

- In 2007, the Quad came into focus when the bilateral Indo-US Malabar naval exercise was enlarged to include Japan and Australia. China issued a demarche to India questioning the intent behind the war games, which forced India to abandon the expansion at that time.
- Indo-Pacific region refers to the Indian and Pacific Oceans including the disputed South China Sea where China's claims are questioned by Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines and Brunei.
- With the Indo-Pacific region becoming a critical hub, the formation of a new Quadrilateral by India, the US, Japan and Australia acquires geostrategic significance. The Quad gave substance to the Indo-Pacific concept over Asia-Pacific.
- The first meeting of Quad acquired significance as it took place at a time when China is becoming increasingly assertive raising concerns over the freedom of trade and navigation through the East and South China Seas.
- The endorsement by Quad of a free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific region that is not monopolised by a single country was very significant in this context.
- Quad gives India a powerful platform to advance its interests in East Asia, coordinate strategies with global powers and add more strength to its Act East Policy.

- Currently, India is a powerful country with interests spread over the Asian continent. Thus, India is a key player in the Indo-Pacific architecture
- Quad offers India a platform to take advantage of the current geopolitical scenario which offers crucial strategic opportunities
- A White House official said that “...we talk about ‘Indo-Pacific’ in part because that phrase captures the importance of India’s rise”. He also stressed that the strategy is “certainly not” to contain China.
- India’s then Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar pointed to India’s expanding commitments internationally, and emphasised that in view of the global uncertainties, India would have an “open-minded approach” to international politics.
- “It is important to recognise that we are in a period of major transition, where many of the assumptions that guided our thinking in the past are no longer valid. This calls for a more open-minded approach in international politics, where there are less fixed points and more flexible combinations,” according to Mr. Jaishankar.
- “Our earlier mindset of broadening our options in a structured work must give way to the understanding that rigidity of positions and alliances no longer hold and we ourselves are one of the poles,” according to the then Foreign Secretary.
- Mr. Jaishankar’s comments about the alliances indicated that India would continue to adopt a cautious approach with regard to new alliances and groupings in the emerging geopolitical scenario.
- Mr. Jaishankar played down the significance of the first meeting of the Quad, pointing out that the alliance was one of the many such groupings that India recently participated in.
- The position was borne out of the Indian analysis of recent history, where the end of Cold War was followed by the rise of the Asian powers such as China and India and the more recent ‘recalibration’ of the Western powers that were going through a phase of instability and change.
- In the current geopolitical scenario that, the Quad could be significant in countering China’s growing assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region.
- By joining the Quad, India has underlined its strategic autonomy. Being part of Quad would enhance India’s economic and military capability, while confirming its status as a security provider in the Indo-Pacific region.

VII.3. EAST ASIA SUMMIT (EAS)

SUMMARY

I. Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Summit (Singapore, November 14, 2018):

1. Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP):

- The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a Free Trade Agreement proposed to be signed between the ASEAN countries and the six countries – India, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand – with which ASEAN has existing free trade agreements.
- At the seventh EAS Summit in Cambodia in 2012, The East Asian nations launched discussions for the start of negotiations for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a mega trade agreement comprising of 16 countries – the 10 ASEAN countries and six dialogue partners – India, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.
- On November 14, 2017, the first RCEP Summit was held in Manila, Philippines.

- The RCEP is seen as an alternative to the 11-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) including several Asian and American countries but excluding India and China. The US opted out of the TPP after Donald Trump became the President.
- The RCEP would cover about half of the world's population and a third of its GDP.
- The RCEP has concluded seven chapters of the total 16.

2. Implications of the RCEP for India:

- The RCEP would be beneficial for India as it would boost economic growth and enhance domestic competitiveness.
- RCEP has raised certain concerns in India as some of its members are a source of India's trade deficit. China in particular is a concern for the Indian industry as India would have to give more market access to China which would further increase the trade deficit
- The RCEP members were to meet for the 25th round of negotiations in February 2019 in Indonesia.
- The key issues that need to be resolved included number of goods on which import duties should be eliminated and norms to relax services trade.
- The members of the RCEP want India to eliminate or significantly cut customs duties on maximum number of goods that it traded on.

3. Highlights of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Address at the RCEP Summit:

- Called for an early conclusion of a high-quality Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement that should be modern, comprehensive, balanced and mutually beneficial to the people of all countries.
- Called on RCEP members to give mandate to Trade Ministers and negotiators to take the economic grouping forward.
- Noted that significant progress had been made in market access of negotiation for goods and called on similar efforts on services sectors.
- "We need to make similar efforts to make progress in services negotiations as they constitute more than 50 per cent of the GDP of most of the RCEP countries. In future, services are going to be playing a very important role."
- Stressed that any such multilateral agreement which has diverse circumstances and developmental requirements should be modern, comprehensive, balanced and mutually beneficial only then people of all countries will be benefitted by such an agreement.
- Extended his support to the RCEP agreement and urged all leaders to give required mandate for "early conclusion" which meant that India was strongly committed to the RCEP

II. 13th East Asia Summit (EAC) (Singapore, November 15, 2019):

1. East Asia Summit (EAC):

- The East Asia Summit (EAC) is an annual meeting of the leaders of the East Asian region and the adjoining nations.
- Since its first summit in 2005, EAC has evolved as a forum for strategic dialogue and cooperation on political, security and economic issues of common regional concern.
- The EAC has been playing a significant role in the regional architecture, according to analysts.

2. Leaders of 18 Countries Attended the Summit:

- The 13th EAS was attended by leaders of 18 countries including the 10 ASEAN countries (Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia, Brunei and Laos), Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and the US.

3. Highlights of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Address at the Summit:

- India is committed to a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region.
- Called for enhancing multilateral cooperation and economic and cultural ties among member-nations.
- Reiterated India's vision of a peaceful, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region, strengthening maritime cooperation and commitment to a balanced Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement

2. Prime Minister Narendra Modi Held Talks with World Leaders on the sidelines of the EAC Summit:

- India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi held talks with his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe, the Prime Minister of Vietnam Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Bin Mohammad and Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the EAC Summit.
- On November 14, 2018, Mr. Modi held talks with the US Vice-President Mike Pence on a wide range of bilateral and global issues of mutual interests, including defence and trade cooperation, ways to counter terrorism and the need for maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific.

III. Conclusion:**1. EAS the Most Important Leaders Forum in the Indo-Pacific Region:**

- The East Asia Summit (EAS) is considered as the most important Leaders-led forum in the Indo-Pacific region
- The EAS has played a key role in the strategic, geopolitical and economic evolution of East Asia
- As a founding member, India is committed to strengthen the EAS and to make it more effective in dealing with contemporary challenges

2. EAS Committed to East Asia Integration and the Goal of Building the East Asia Community**3. EAS Offers the Best Platform for Evolving an Open and Balanced Security System in the Region:**

- East Asia Summit (EAS) with 18 member countries – 10 ASEAN countries plus eight others – offers the best platform for evolving an open and balanced security system in the region.
- Giving importance to EAS would help counter China's emphasis on promoting ASEAN+3 (China, Japan and South Korea) as the centre of an East Asian order.

VII.4. RIC- RUSSIA, INDIA, CHINA**I. Trilateral Meeting of the RIC Leaders on the Sidelines of the G20 Summit (December 1, 2018, Buenos Aires, Argentina):**

- On December 1, 2018, the leaders of RIC – Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping – held a trilateral meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina on the sidelines of the G20 Summit.
- The trilateral meeting of the leaders was the second among the three countries after a gap of 12 years.

- The three leaders called for reforming multilateral institutions, including the UN and the WTO, as they emphasised on the benefits of a multilateral trading system and an open world economy for global growth and prosperity.
- India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement that the three leaders exchanged views on expanding mutual cooperation in International forums, and to encourage greater interaction among the three countries.
- "They agreed on the importance of reform and strengthening of multilateral institutions which have benefitted the world, including the United Nations, WTO and well-established as well as new global financial institutions," the MEA statement said.

II. 16th RIC Foreign Ministers Summit (Wuzhen, China, February 27, 2019)

1. RIC Summit held in the Backdrop of the Pulwama Terror Attack and India's Air Strike on JeM Terror Camps in Pakistan:

- The 16th RIC Foreign Ministers summit was held in Wuzhen in China on December 27, 2018, in the backdrop of Pulwama terror attack, in which 40 CRPF jawans were killed by a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) suicide bomber.
- The RIC Foreign Ministers summit was held a day after Indian Air Force (IAF) crossed the LoC to strike at JeM terror camps in Pakistan.

2. India's Stand:

- India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj held bilateral meetings her Chinese and Russian counterparts.
- "This terrorist attack is the direct result of the impunity and cover provided to the JeM and its leaders by the Pakistani side," Ms. Swaraj said.
- The Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj told the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi that "the entire UN had spoken with one voice condemning the terror attack."
- Ms. Swaraj told China and Russia that India's air strike on JeM terror camps in Pakistan was pre-emptive.
- India wanted to avoid any "further escalation of the situation" and would "continue to act with responsibility and restraint," India's External Affairs Minister told her Chinese counterpart.
- Ms. Swaraj sought China's support for listing Masood Azhar, founder of the terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammed (Jem).
- India's External Affairs Minister made a strong statement against Pakistan and its refusal to act against terrorist groups on its soil.
- Ms. Swaraj justified India's pre-dawn airstrike in Pakistan's Balakot and also spoke about the "grief and anger" in India after the Pulwama terror attack on February 14, 2019.
- The External Affairs Minister told her Chinese counterpart that "no military installations were targeted" during the air strike, and the target was selected to avoid civilian casualties.
- Ms. Swaraj pointed out that after the Pulwama terror attack, instead of taking seriously the calls by international community to act against JeM and other terror groups based in Pakistan, "Islamabad denied any knowledge of the attack and dismissed outright the claims made by Jaish-e-Mohammed".

3. China's Stand:

- **"We agreed to jointly combat all forms of terrorism through closer policy coordination and practical cooperation. Especially important is to eradicate the breeding grounds of terrorism and extremism,"** Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said.
- **"China, Russia and India have reaffirmed their strong opposition to terrorism in its various forms and manifestations. At the same time, we believe that Pakistan has always been opposed to terrorism,"** Mr. Wang said.
- **"On the recent developments between India and Pakistan. China appreciates the statements from India and Pakistani friends saying that they will exercise restraint and avoid escalation of the situation,"** the Chinese Foreign Minister said.
- **"As a mutual friend to both India and Pakistan, we do hope that they can conduct a dialogue to establish facts through investigation to keep things under control, maintain peace and stability in the region. In this process, China is playing a constructive role and not the opposite,"** Mr. Wang said.

4. Russia's Stand:

- **Russia extended support to India's counter-terror measures as right to self-defence in the wake of the Pulwama terror attacks.**
- **Russia offered to boost the Indian Government's capabilities to fight terrorism.**
- **India and Russia have been engaged in a number of high-level consultations since 2014.**
- **India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj met her Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov.**

5. Highlights of the Joint Communiqué:

- **Reaffirmed strong opposition to terrorism.**
- **India, Russia and China said that extremist groups cannot be supported and used in political and geopolitical goals and those backing terrorist acts must be held accountable and brought to justice.**
- **The three sides strongly condemned terrorism in all its manifestations.**
- **The three countries called on the international community to strengthen UN-led global counter-terrorism cooperation by fully implementing the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.**

6. Significance of the RIC Summit in India's Diplomatic Drive Against Pakistan:

- **China tacitly supported India's air strikes against the JeM terrorist camp in Pakistan.**
- **India's External Affairs Minister pointed out that the Chinese Foreign Minister had "reiterated here, and he said that we would cooperate on eradicating the breeding grounds of terrorism."**
- **In reference to the common approach by the three RIC nations, Ms. Swaraj said that, "This is not only a common strategy for the three of us, but it is resolution for the three of us."**
- **16th RIC Foreign Ministers summit in China was a clear diplomatic victory for India as the RIC Joint Communiqué would help increase pressure on Pakistan.**

V. Relevance of RIC:

- RIC was part of international network diplomacy and dealt with problems of real people
- The RIC trilateral dialogue is aimed at addressing issues of common concern and finding a common ground would help in coordinated action.
- The RIC summit provides an opportunity to evaluate and take forward the engagement that these three countries have at different fora like BRICS, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).
- The RIC trilateral meeting also provides a platform the countries to cooperate and interact which would help in improving their understanding of each other and provide the space to work towards the resolution of bilateral outstanding issues
- RIC countries were neighbours and important powers of the Asia-Pacific Region
- Russia is keen to explore deeper energy links between the three countries.
- Currently, functional cooperation is taking place in the areas of disaster management, agriculture, health and medicine.
- Convergence of geography, foreign policy philosophy, and economic ascent with the group makes the RIC trilateral unique

VII.5. OIC – ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION**I. Introduction:**

- The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is considered to be a group of countries that have a predominantly Muslim population. However, the OIC has been unable to function as cohesive organisation due to divisions among its member States.
- The OIC was ineffective during eight years of war between Iran and Iraq. During the Gulf war also the OIC was divided between the US allies and Iraq. OIC has also become irrelevant to the West Asia peace process as its resolutions are not transformed into any concrete action.
- The OIC has expanded to include nearly a third of the countries represented by the UN. It comprises one-fifth of the landmass as well as the global populations.
- Some of the poorest countries of the world are members of the OIC. The GDP indices for OIC members averaged 4.7 per cent. The per capita income is less than a tenth of that of the developed countries.
- There is an economic imbalance among the OIC members as some are rich and some are very poor. This has caused co-ordination problems. Despite creating 14 bodies for economic and technological co-operation, the pace of economic integration has been non-existent.

II. 46th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (Abu Dhabi, March 1-2, 2019):**1. India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj Invited for the First Time as Guest of Honour:**

- For the first time in the history of OIC, India's External Affairs Minister was invited to the 46th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers as a Guest of Honour. In 1969, OIC's invitation to India's then Industry Minister F.A. Ahmed was withdrawn at Pakistan's insistence.
- India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said that the invitation from the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj to address the Foreign Ministers meet was "a welcome recognition of the presence of 185 million Muslims in India and their contribution to its pluralistic ethos, and of India's contribution to the Islamic world".

- Seen as a “major diplomatic success” and underlined a turnaround between India and the OIC.
- The OIC has a specially designed “Kashmir contact group” that coordinates positions at the UN. Generally, Pakistan leads the group to protest alleged human rights violation in Jammu and Kashmir and invoke UN resolutions.
- India has consistently protested the OIC statements, pointing out that the OIC has “no locus standi” to comment on its internal affairs.
- “The friendly country of India has been named as the guest of honour in view of its great global political stature as well as its time-honoured and deeply rooted cultural and historical legacy, and its Important Islamic component,” the UAE Government said on February 23, 2019.

2. Pakistan's Stand:

- Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi announced his decision to skip the OIC Foreign Ministers Meet in Abu Dhabi while addressing the joint session of Pakistan's parliament on March 1, 2019.
- Mr. Qureshi said that he had written two letters to the OIC protesting against the decision to invite his Indian counterpart Sushma Swaraj as guest of honour.
- The Pakistan Foreign Minister said he called upon the OIC to rescind the invitation or postpone the session in view of the prevailing situation between India and Pakistan.

3. Highlights of External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj's Address at the 46th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers:

- “Terrorism and extremism bear different names and labels. It uses diverse causes. But in each case, it is driven by distortion and religion, and a misguided belief in its power to succeed. The fight against terrorism is not a confrontation against any religion.”
- Countries that shelter and fund terrorists must be asked to dismantle “the infrastructure of terror camps and stop providing funding and shelter to terror organisation based in their countries”.
- “I would like to say that this menace could not be fought only through military, intelligence or diplomatic means.”
- The fight against terrorism does not amount to a clash of cultures and instead described it as a fight between ideas.
- Presented India's pluralism and diversity as a source of strength and pointed out that Muslims are a “microcosm” of India's large diverse culture.
- “At 50, the OIC is making a new beginning. The choices you make, the direction you set, will have a profound impact on humanity. The OIC has a huge responsibility and a great opportunity to lift humanity to a higher level of peace...”
- Named countries like Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh for the support extended for building ties with the OIC.
- Afghanistan, Indonesia, Brunei, Egypt, Iran, Tunisia and the African and Central Asian countries of OIC were also named for maintaining historic and mutli-layered ties with India.

4. OIC's Main Communique – the “Abu Dhabi Declaration” had No Negative References to India; the Resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir and “India-Pakistan Peace Process” were Rejected by India:

- The main Communique – the “Abu Dhabi Declaration” adopted by the 46th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in Abu Dhabi had no negative references to India.

- The other OIC resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir and “India-Pakistan Peace Process” were rejected by India with the External Affairs Ministry saying that its stand on the matter was “well known”.
- “We reaffirm that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India and is a matter strictly internal to India,” the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement after the conclusion of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers.
- The MEA statement appreciated the invitation to India’s External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj as a “historic gesture”.
- The other resolutions of the OIC “don’t reflect or need a consensus” of the entire 57-nation group. “They are essentially national positions of individual countries, and often go unopposed,”
- The Foreign Minister of UAE Sheikh Abdullah said, “I think the OIC has sent a very clear and positive sign to India and looks forward to strengthening such a relationship to a point where we can embrace India one day at the OIC”.

4. Indian External Affairs Minister’s Presence at the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers Meet a Significant Diplomatic Victory:

- Invitation to India’s External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj to attend the 46th session of OIC Council of Foreign Ministers for the first time was a significant diplomatic success for India.
- It came after the Pulwama terrorist attack by the Pakistan-based terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) indicating that the OIC countries were expressing aversion to terrorism even if came from a member nation (Pakistan) to target a non-member (India)
- Pakistan Foreign Minister’s threat to boycott the meeting if India’s External Affairs Minister was invited was overruled by the OIC, this in itself was a diplomatic success by India as Pakistan is a founder member of OIC
- The main communique – the “Abu Dhabi Declaration” does not mention Jammu and Kashmir nor India-Pakistan relations and this represented a significant diplomatic gain for India
- OIC members like Saudi Arabia, UAE and others regard India’s economic potential and extend their cooperation against terrorism of any kind
- OIC invitation to India’s External Affairs Minister opened another forum where India can build consensus to act against countries that provide bases to terrorist organisations
- India’s External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj effectively used the opportunity to convey India’s stance on state-sponsored terrorism and its tradition of multiculturalism
- India’s diplomatic success could be seen from the fundamental shift in the domestic policies of Arab countries like Saudi Arabia and UAE which are now themselves facing problems of Islamic radicalisation and hence are against terrorism and state sponsored terrorism
- With the world’s third largest population of Muslims, India has a right to articulate its views at the OIC. India can use the OIC platform to constructively present its views on multiculturalism in which there is a place for Islam

VII.6. BIMSTEC

SUMMARY

I. Introduction:

1. Economic Grouping Launched in 1997
2. Seven Members: Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan.
3. BIMSTEC Given Special Emphasis by India
4. BIMSTEC - Link between South and South-East Asia

5. BIMSTEC One of the Poorest Regions in the World
6. The Region has a Lot of Energy Potential

II. Fourth Heads of State BIMSTEC Summit (Kathmandu, Nepal, August 30-31, 2018):

1. Agenda:

- Connectivity
- Ways to Counter Terrorism and Radicalisation
- Improving Relations within BIMSTEC
- Creation of a Development Fund to Address Poverty Alleviation

2. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Address at the Summit:

- "I believe that there is a bid opportunity for connectivity – trade connectivity, economic connectivity, transport connectivity, digital connectivity, and people-to-people connectivity."
- The region had become a meeting point for India's 'Neighbourhood First' and 'Act East' policies.
- "India is committed to working with the BIMSTEC member states to enhance regional connectivity."
- "There is no country in the region which has not suffered from terrorism and transnational crimes, such as drug trafficking linked to networks of terrorism."
- BIMSTEC member states situated between the Himalayas and the Bay of Bengal, face frequent natural disasters such as flood, cyclone and earthquake.
- Called for "cooperation and coordination" among them in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts.
- "As no single country can move alone for attaining peace, prosperity and development, we need to collaborate with each other in this interconnected world."
- India would set up a Centre for Bay of Bengal Studies at the Nalanda University for research on art, culture and other subjects in the Bay of Bengal.
- India will host the International Buddhist Conclave in August 2020. Invited all BIMSTEC leaders to attend the event as guests of honour.
- India was committed to enhance its knowledge network in the field of digital connectivity in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. India also plans to extend it to Myanmar and Thailand.
- Hoped the BIMSTEC member states would attend the India Mobile Congress in New Delhi scheduled for October 2018.

3. Highlights of the Kathmandu Declaration:

- "Terrorism and transnational organised crimes continue to pose a great threat to international peace and security including in the BIMSTEC countries."
- "Affirm that the fight against terrorism should target not only terrorists, terror organisations and networks but also identify and hold accountable states and non-state entities that encourage, support of finance terrorism, provide sanctuaries to terrorists and terror groups and falsely extol their virtues."
- "Express our determination to strengthen cooperation and coordination among the law enforcement, intelligence and security agencies; and decide to hold meetings at the level of BIMSTEC Home Ministers and continue with the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs meetings as part of promoting cooperation and coordination on counter terrorism and transnational crimes."
- Emphasised on the importance of multidimensional connectivity, which promotes synergy among connectivity frameworks in the region, as a key enabler to economic integration for shared prosperity.

- Voiced concern over the adverse impact of climate change and decided to explore the possibility of establishing an inter-governmental expert group to develop a plan of action for a collective response as they reaffirmed their commitments to the Paris Agreement of 2016.

4. Significance of the 4th BIMSTEC Summit:

- Fourth BIMSTEC Summit was significant as it managed to achieve that which even the SAARC could not – holding States responsible for encouraging terrorism.
- During the Summit an MoU was signed on establishment of BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection. “The MoU provides for optimisation of using energy resources in the region & promotion of efficient & secure operation of power system,”
- The BIMSTEC leaders pledged to reinvigorate the process of economic and strategic integration.
- The Kathmandu Declaration eloquently captured the collective wisdom, thought and vision of a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable Bay of Bengal region
- The Kathmandu Declaration emphasised the importance of multi-dimensional connectivity as a key enabler to economic integration and prosperity.
- India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi held bilateral meetings with the leaders of the BIMSTEC member states on the sidelines of the fourth BIMSTEC Summit.

III. Conclusion:

1. Bridging India's Look East Policy with Thailand's Look West Principle
2. Marshalling India's Power to Balance China which Spearheads the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS)
3. BIMSTEC, a Multi-Sectoral Cooperation Initiative between the Bay of Bengal Countries, has Huge Potential

VII.7. INDO-PACIFIC

I. US President Donald Trump's Indo-Pacific Strategy (April 3, 2018):

- As the US articulated its “free and open Indo-Pacific strategy, it wanted India to play a more “weighty role”.
- In relation to the US President Donald Trump's Indo-Pacific Strategy, US official Alex Wong said that it was in the US' interest that “India play an increasingly weighty role in the region.”
- “India is a nation that is invested in a free and open order. It is a democracy. It is a nation that can bookend and anchor the free and open order in the Indo-Pacific region, and it's our policy to ensure that India does play that role, does become over time a more influential player in the region,” according to Mr. Wong.
- The US official stressed that this was part of India's historical and current-day reality.
- India's role would be on “all fronts – security, economic and diplomatic,” according to Mr. Wong.
- The US wants Indo-Pacific nations to be “free from coercion,” according to the US official.
- “By open we first and foremost mean open sea lines of communication and open airways.Secondly, we mean more open logistics – infrastructure. We want to assist the region in doing infrastructure in the right way, infrastructure that truly does drive integration and raises the GDPs of the constituent economies, not weigh them down,” according to Mr. Wong.

II. India's Indo-Pacific Policy:

- India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his address at the Shangri-La Dialogue clarified that **"India does not see the Indo-Pacific Region as a strategy or as a club of limited members. Nor as a grouping that seeks to dominate. And by no means do we consider it as directed against any country."**
- Mr. Modi further clarified that **"India's own engagement in the Indo-Pacific Region – from the shores of Africa to that of the Americas – will be inclusive.... That is the foundation of our civilizational ethos – of pluralism, co-existence, open-ness and dialogue. The ideals of democracy that define us as a nation also shape the way we engage the world."**
- India's Prime Minister also stressed that **India had no intent to challenge ASEAN's centrality to the Indo-Pacific region.**
- **"Southeast Asia is at its centre. And, ASEAN has been and will be central to its future. That is the vision that will always guide India, as we seek to cooperate for an architecture for peace and security in this region,"** according to Mr. Modi.
- **India does not consider the Quadrilateral or Quad format of the US-Japan-India-Australia as part of its "Indo-Pacific" region policy,** according to India's Ambassador to Russia Pankaj Saran.
- **India would also like to engage more closely with Russia in the Indo-Pacific region,** according to Mr. Saran.
- **"The Quadrilateral format of US-Japan-India-Australia is one of the many multilateral dialogues in the region, and not directed against any country. It is not part of the Indo-Pacific region concept outlines by Prime Minister Modi in Shangri La,"** according to Mr. Saran.
- **"It is important that the Indo-Pacific Region (IPR) and Quad format are not confused with each other. The Indian view of IPR is positive – this is an open and inclusive arrangement, which is not directed against any country nor intended to contain any country,"** Mr. Saran said.

III. Indo-Pacific Division set up by India's Ministry of External Affairs:

- **In April 2019, India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) set up an Indo-Pacific division which will be headed by Joint Secretary Vikram Doraiswami.**
- **The Indo-Pacific division is aimed at giving a coherent architecture to India's Indo-Pacific policy articulated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Shangri-La Dialogue in 2018,** according to analysts.
- **The MEA divisions are important for policy making and hence the creation of the Indo-Pacific division is seen as a big step by the government.**
- **The Indo-Pacific division will integrate the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), ASEAN region and the QUAD to the Indo-Pacific policy.**
- **Last year, the US renamed its Pacific Command as the Indo-Pacific Command to strengthen its Indo-Pacific policy**
- **The MEA would work with the Defence Ministry which has its own Indo-Pacific policy. In April 2019, Indian ships visited Vietnam on a goodwill visit en route to China. Indian ships were also in Mozambique to provide relief.**
- **As India's core Indo-Pacific policy is rooted in the Indian Ocean, greater energy would be provided to the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).**
- **ASEAN is at the centre of India's Indo-Pacific policy. The ASEAN countries want to keep the region outside great power politics and this is what India wants to address and engage**
- **Indonesia, Singapore and Vietnam are India's key partners in the region.**

- The QUAD would also get involved in the region, according to analysts.

UPDATE – PART III

I. “The ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific” (Bangkok, Thailand, June 23, 2019):

- On June 23, 2019, the ASEAN member States released their collective vision on the Indo-Pacific region in a document entitled “The ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific” at the 34th ASEAN Summit in Bangkok, Thailand.
- “The Summit agreed with Thailand’s initiative to reinforce ASEAN’s leading role in the conduct of relations with external partners in the region.... ASEAN now has a common approach on the issue,” Thailand’s Prime Minister Prayut Chan-Ocha said.
- BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation), IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association) will provide potential for cooperation. These can be realised through “innovative, interdisciplinary and complementary approaches,” the outlook said.
- The central theme of “The ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific” is ASEAN’s centrality.
- The document gave prominence to the UN Law of the Sea and freedom of navigation stressing on the need for an inclusive and “rules-based framework” to “help generate momentum for building strategic trust and win-win cooperation in the region”.
- The outlook document points out that “the rise of material powers, i.e. economic and military, requires avoiding the deepening of mistrust, miscalculation and patterns of behaviour based on a zero-sum game”.

II. Implications of the ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific:

- ASEAN has released its vision of the Indo-Pacific after major regional powers began releasing their outlook for the region.
- In June 2019, the US released the US Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy report which lays stress on preserving a “free and open Indo-Pacific” in the face of a more “assertive China”.
- In 2016, Japan released its Free and Open Indo-Pacific concept and in 2017, Australia released its Foreign Policy White Paper explaining its Indo-Pacific vision focused around security, openness and prosperity.
- In 2018, India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled India’s Indo-Pacific vision at the Shangri-La Dialogue. India has also set up an Indo-Pacific wing in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
- The ASEAN outlook document does not look at the Indo-Pacific as one continuous territorial space but emphasises on development and connectivity, underlining the need for maritime cooperation, infrastructure connectivity and broader economic cooperation
- The document signals that ASEAN looks at avoiding major power competition in the region and instead focus on economic cooperation and dialogue
- The ASEAN document has taken an even-handed approach to China and the US by not allowing itself to align with the US’s vision for the region completely.
- After the release of ASEAN’s view of the Indo-Pacific region it is up to the regional stakeholders to work with ASEAN to provide a balance of power in the region favouring inclusivity, stability and economic prosperity.

III. Implications for India:

- **ASEAN's centrality to the Indo-Pacific region is the main theme of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.**
- **India has always insisted on the centrality of ASEAN in the Indo-Pacific region since it formulated its Indo-Pacific strategy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi officially articulated this strategy in his address at the 2018 Shangri-La Dialogue.**
- **In its discussions with the US and Japan, India has emphasised on the centrality of ASEAN in the evolving Indo-Pacific strategy.**
- **India welcomed the ASEAN's outlook on the Indo-Pacific region and pointed to "important elements of convergence" with its own approach towards the region.**
- **During the visit of the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's visit to India in June 2019, India said that it is "for something" in the Indo-Pacific and "not against somebody". This was seen as a calibrated statement to balance its relations with the US and China in the Indo-Pacific region.**
- **India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said "[and] that something is peace, security, stability, prosperity and rules".**

VII.8. SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION (SCO)**SUMMARY****I. Special Features of the SCO:**

- **Dynamic and Influential International Organisation**
- **Regional Economic Cooperation**
- **Cooperation in Fuel Energy and Transport**
- **New Model of Geopolitical Integration**

II. Significance of the SCO:

- 1. Defence Pact between Russia and China**
- 2. Balancing the Growing US Presence in the Region**
- 3. Safeguarding Common Security**
- 4. Focus on Terrorism**

III. The 19th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, June 14, 2019):**1. Agenda for the Summit and India's Participation:**

- **First multilateral meeting attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his second term.**
- **Mr. Modi held bilateral meetings with the Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Chinese President Xi Jinping.**
- **Issues related to terrorism, Afghanistan, regional security, multilateral dialogue and global scenario would be part of the agenda at the SCO Summit**
- **India was satisfied with the participation of the country in the Regional Anti-Terror Structure (RATS)**
- **India has been participating in tactical drills and counter-terror cooperation with other SCO member countries under RATS whose headquarter is located in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.**
- **India was expected to participate in a military exercise in Russia under the RATS.**

2. Highlights of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Address at the Summit:

- Called for a global conference to combat the menace of terrorism and pointed out that one of the main goals of the SCO is to counter terrorism in Eurasia.
- Asked SCO member states to coordinate action against international terrorism under the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS).
- "Countries sponsoring, aiding and funding terrorism must be held accountable."
- "Our goal is to support the people and the government of Afghanistan for an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled comprehensive peace process. We are happy that a further roadmap has been prepared at the SCO Afghanistan Contact Group."
- A peaceful, united, safe and prosperous Afghanistan was vital for the stability and security in the SCO.
- "We need a rule-based, transparent, anti-discriminatory, open and all-inclusive WTO-centred multilateral trading system focused so that the interests of every country, especially the developed ones, can be taken care of."
- India is committed to ensuring a favourable environment for the economic cooperation between the SCO member-countries.
- Coined an acronym "HEALTH" for cooperation among SCO members – H for healthcare, E for economic cooperation, A for alternative energy, L for literature, T for terrorism-free society and H for humanitarian cooperation.

3. Highlights of the Bishkek Declaration:

- "While stressing that there can be no justification for any acts of terrorism and extremism, the member states considered it important to implement comprehensive measures to more effectively counter terrorism and its ideology to expose and eliminate various factors and conditions that facilitate terrorism and extremism."
- "They noted the unacceptability of interfering in the domestic affairs of states under the pretext of countering terrorism and extremism, as well as the unacceptability of using terrorist, extremist and radical groups for mercenary purposes."
- Called for "prompt solution" for the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan and urged the people and government of Afghanistan to act in favour of peace and dialogue to end the conflict."
- Declared that the Republic of Uzbekistan is expected to host a Ministerial Meeting of the Eighth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA VIII) in Tashkent later in 2019.
- The situation in global politics and economy remains turbulent and tense, and the process of economic globalisation is being hindered by the growing unilateral protectionist policies and other challenges in international trade.
- Emphasised on the importance of deepening cooperation to build a transparent and stable environment for trade.

4. Significance of the 19th SCO Heads of State Summit:

- Terrorism, regional cooperation, the future of Afghanistan and rule-based multilateral trade were the main themes of the 19th SCO Heads of State Summit held at Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan.
- The Summit was significant as SCO has become an important forum for Eurasia
- The SCO member states resolved to strengthen economic cooperation and support the rule-based WTO structure, while deepening people-to-people relations, tourism and cultural bonds within the group.

- India was not party to Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) while the other SCO member states endorsed the Chinese initiative in the Joint Communiqué. India is opposed to the BRI as it violates its sovereignty with the CPEC passing through PoK and also due to the opaque nature of the project financing.
- India signed 14 agreements, including those on cooperation in sports, healthcare and environment.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi held important bilateral meetings with the leaders of Russia, China and Kyrgyzstan.
- The 19th SCO Summit was significant as it provided India a forum for pursuing multi-alignments and also a platform for alignments on issues like energy security, connectivity and trade, according to analysts.

IV. Conclusion:

1. SCO an International Organisation of Considerable Weight
2. SCO Entering into a New Period of Pragmatic Cooperation
3. SCO could Play a Crucial Role in Afghanistan after the Pull-out of the US-Led Forces
4. Regional Anti-terrorism Structure (RATS) the Most Successful Project of the SCO
5. Challenges before the SCO:
 - Evolving into an organisation with international mechanisms on par with the ASEAN or APEC
 - Organisational reforms - enhancing the role and independence of the Secretariat
 - SCO also needs to make full use of the economic potential of its members
 - Unpredictable Central Asia - Challenge of proving its worth as a representative regional organisation

VIII. SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1. INDIA'S SPACE PROGRAMME

I. PSLV C42 Launched Two Earth Observation Satellites from the UK (September 16, 2018, Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh):

- On September 16, 2018, Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV C42) successfully launched two earth observation satellites from the United Kingdom – NovaSAR and S1-4, from the first launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, SHAR, in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.
- The commercial launch was carried out under an arrangement between Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd (SSTL) and ISRO's commercial arm Antrix Corporation Limited. Antrix earned more than ₹220 crore for the launch.
- This was PSLV's 44th flight and the 12th launch of its core-alone version. The core-alone version of the PSLV is the lightest as it does not use the six strap-on motors around the first stage and the launch cost is also reduced due to downsizing of weight.
- The two earth observation satellites of the UK together weighed nearly 889kg which is the optimum payload that a core-alone PSLV can launch, according to the ISRO Chairman K. Sivan.
- The NovaSAR is an S-Band Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) satellite to be used for forest mapping, flood and disaster monitoring, ship detection, maritime monitoring and ice cover monitoring.

- The S1-4 is a high resolution Optical Earth Observation Satellite, used for surveying resources, environment monitoring, urban management and for disaster monitoring.

Significance of the Successful Launch of the UK Satellites by PSLV:

- The successful launch of PSLV C42 was only the third launch of PSLV after its rare failure in August 2017 after problems in the heat shield.
- “This was a spectacular mission. We have placed the satellite in a very, very precise orbit,” R. Hutton, Mission Director said.
- “This unique mission is mainly for ‘ascending day-time node’ launch. This is the first time we have executed a different type of mission altogether,” the ISRO Chairman K. Sivan said.

II. PSLV C-43 Successfully Launched India's First Hyperspectral Imaging Satellite (HysIS) Dubbed 'Sharp Eye' (November 29, 2018, Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh):

- On November 29, 2018, ISRO successfully launched India's first Hyperspectral Imaging Satellite (HysIS) dubbed 'Sharp Eye' for advanced earth observation along with 30 small satellites from various countries in two orbits from Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.
- The satellites were placed in two orbits by restarting PSLV's fourth stage engine twice – once an hour from launch and again 47 minutes later.
- The PSLV C-43, flying in its Core-Alone format first placed the HysIS into a precise orbit of 636 km from Earth. The 30 other smaller satellites from various countries were then placed into a different orbit one by one.
- The 13th flight of the Core-Alone version and the 45th launch of the PSLV carried one satellite each from Australia, Canada, Colombia, Finland, Malaysia, Netherlands and Spain, and 23 satellites from the US, along with HysIS.
- The HysIS is an earth observation satellite mainly to assist in a wide range of applications in agriculture, forestry, geological environments, coastal zone studies, soil survey, inland water studies, environmental monitoring and pollution detection from industries.

Significance of the Successful Launch of India's First Hyperspectral Imaging Satellite (HysIS):

- India's first Hyperspectral Imaging Satellite (HysIS) developed indigenously by ISRO is an advanced earth observation satellite built to work for five years.
- The HysIS will aid in detailed, high-definition study of the Earth's surface.
- ISRO Chairman K. Sivan said that a hyperspectral imaging camera in space can provide well-defined images that can help identify objects on earth far more clearly than regular optical or remote sensing cameras.
- The technology will be an additional advantage in watching over India from space across sectors like defence, agriculture, land use and mineral exploration, according to analysts.
- The new 'eye in the sky' can be useful in marking out a suspect object or person on the ground and separate it from the background with applications in transborder infiltration among others, according to experts.
- “The primary goal of HysIS is to study the Earth's surface in visible, near-infrared and shortwave infrared regions of the electromagnetic spectrum,” according to ISRO.
- The HysIS is a state-of-the-art technology, according to the ISRO Chairman K. Sivan.

- **“The heart of the system required for the HysIS satellite is basically an optical imaging detector chip. This chip has been indigenously designed by Space Application Centre of ISRO and fabricated at out semi-conductor lab at Chandigarh. I am sure that team ISRO can be proud that they are really giving an excellent space asset to India,” Mr. Sivan said.**

III. PSLV C-44 Successfully Launched Military Satellite Microsat-R (January 24, 2019, Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh):

- **On January 24, 2019, PSLV C-44 successfully placed into orbit a military satellite Microsat-R. It was launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, SHAR, from Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh. This was the 46th flight of the PSLV.**
- **The 130-kg Microsat-R is a military imaging satellite. It was placed in a polar orbit 274 km away from the Earth. It was the first time that an Indian satellite was placed in a low orbit by ISRO.**
- **The PSLV C-44 was modified with just two strap-on motors, dubbed the PSLV-DL (dual strap-ons). This proved an alternative to the normal six strap-on motors. This was significant as it would allow the PSLV to carry slightly higher pay-loads than its Core-Alone version.**
- **“In PSLV C-44, the fourth stage (PS4) of the vehicle would be moved to a higher circular orbit so as to establish an orbital platform for carrying out experiments,” according to ISRO's pre-launch brochure.**
- **ISRO found a way to make use of the fourth stage (PS4) with a student satellite, Kamalsat, made by Space Kidz India, weighing 1.26 kg, attached to it.**
- **ISRO Chairman K. Sivan said “the first mission of 2019 is a grand success. Another innovation is making the fourth stage, as an experimental platform to do technology demonstrations and carry out science experiments by students.”**
- **An agency that wants to conduct experiments in space could use the fourth stage of the PSLV till it disintegrates naturally.**
- **The fourth stage of PSLV may be orbiting in space for six months to a year. The aim of ISRO is to use this time-frame to enable agencies to run short time experiments.**
- **The ISRO Chairman asked students in India to develop such satellites and ISRO would take care of the launch.**

IV. GSLV Mark III Successfully Launched GSAT-29 Communication Satellite (November 14, 2018, Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh):

- **On November 14, 2018, GSLV Mark III's second development flight GSLV-MkIII D2, successfully launched the communication satellite GSAT-29 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.**
- **The GSAT-29 communication satellite, weighing 3,423 kg, “is a multiband, multi-beam communication satellite, intended to serve as test bed for new and critical technologies,” according to ISRO.**
- **The GSAT-29 communication satellite was built at an estimated cost of ₹360 crore with a lifespan of 10 years.**
- **The Ku-band and Ka-band payloads of GSAT-29 would cater to communication requirements for people in remote areas of the country, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir, and the North-East.**
- **GSAT-29 was placed in a geosynchronous transfer orbit.**

Significance of the Successful Flight of the GLSV-MkIII:

- The successful launch of GSAT-29 by GSLV-MkIII marked the launch of India's heaviest satellite to be carried on board an indigenous rocket from Indian soil.
- The success of the second development flight of GSLV Mark III will be significant in regularising the launch vehicle's services and ease dependence on foreign service providers
- The GSLV Mark III can carry payloads up to 4 tonnes to the geosynchronous transfer orbit and up to 10 tonnes to a low-earth orbit.
- "The first operation mission of this vehicle (GSLV-MkIII) is going to be none other than the Chandrayaan-II mission. In January next year. This vehicle is going to carry a human to space three years from now. Kudos to this excellent launcher of India," according to ISRO Chairman K. Sivan.
- So far ISRO had only one commercial launcher, the PSLV. The success of GSLV Mark III gives ISRO another vehicle to compete in the Global satellite launch market, according to analysts.
- Apart from providing connectivity to rural areas, the GSAT-29 satellite would also provide ISRO a test-base for future satellite technologies

V. GSLV-F11 Successfully Launched Military Communication Satellite GSAT-7A – 'Angry Bird' (December 19, 2018, Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh):

- On December 19, 2018, GSLV-F11 successfully launched communication satellite GSAT-7A, meant to enhance the communication infrastructure of the Indian Air Force, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.
- The GLSV-F11 is the Mark II version of GSLV with an indigenous cryogenic upper stage. It is 1.5 metre taller than its previous version.
- There were changes made to the second stage and cryogenic stage of GSLV-F11 to increase payload capacity.
- "[In] the vehicle, the second stage propellant loading has been increased from 37.5 tonnes to 40 tonnes, and cryogenic stage propellant loading has been increased from 12 tonnes to 15 tonnes along with enhanced thrust value for the cryogenic stage," according to the ISRO Chairman K. Sivan.
- This was the seventh flight of GSLV Mark II and overall 13th flight of the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV).
- The GSAT-7A, dubbed 'Angry Bird, is the 35th Indian communication satellite. It weighs 2,250 kg and has a lifespan of 8 years.
- GSAT-7A has been built to provide communication capability to users of Ku band over the Indian region.
- The Ku-band would enable superior real time aircraft-to-aircraft communication.
- The GSAT-7A would become functional after a month of testing payloads.

GSAT-7A - Enhancing the Networking and Communication of the Indian Air Force and Indian Army:

- GSAT-7A is the first communication satellite built primarily for the Indian Air Force (IAF) to qualitatively unify its assets and improve combined, common intelligence during operations.
- GSAT-7A would also support aerial activities of the Army and Navy where required.

- **“About 70% of it would be for the Air Force and the rest for the needs of the Army,”**
- **GSAT-7A would use Ku band for communication between command centres and flying assets apart from inflight communication between platforms.**
- **The satellite would connect fighter jets, helicopters, armed UAVs, reconnaissance aircraft and special purpose planes.**
- **GSAT-7A using Ku band would enhance superior real time aircraft-to-aircraft communication; and between planes that are in flight and their commanders on the ground.**
- **The satellite would also increase by many times the coverage now being provided by ground communication systems such as radars and stations of the Army.**
- **Remote areas which are out-of-sight where ground infrastructure and signals are difficult would now get into the critical information loop**
- **“It will be a very important step towards what we call network-centric operations or warfare. It will enable communication and data linking at forward places and air defence centres. Pilots can communicate much better with headquarters while they fly. Headquarters can receive data in real time,”.**
- **“It will be a major booster and force multiplier for the Indian Air Force. When we talk of a network centric warfare, such type of systems will help achieve full network centricity. From that perspective, it's a major value addition to the IAF,” according to Ajay Lele, Senior Fellow of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA).**
- **Air Chief Marshal B.S. Dhanoa said that the launch of the GSAT-7A satellite would enhance the networking and communication capabilities of the Air Force.**
- **“We have several platforms (aircraft) which have capabilities of communication through satellite. The communication to the platform (aircraft) through satellite will be made possible with this launch,” according to the Air Force Chief.**
- **GSAT-7A would enable the Indian Air Force to interlink different ground radar stations, ground airbase and Airborne Early Warning and Control (AWACS) aircraft.**
- **India's first full-fledged military communications satellite, GSAT-7, was launched from Kourou spaceport of French Guiana in South America on August 30, 2013.**

VI. GSAT-11, ‘Big Bird’, India’s Heaviest and Most Advanced Communication Satellite Successfully Launched from the European Spaceport (December 5, 2019, Guiana, South America):

- **On December 5, 2019, India's heaviest and most advanced communication satellite GSAT-11, dubbed ‘Big Bird’ was successfully launched from the European spaceport in Guiana in South America.**
- **GSAT-11 weighing 5,854 kg was launched by European launch vehicle Ariane 5 VA246 along with a South Korean satellite.**
- **GSAT-11 cost ISRO ₹1,200 crore including the foreign launch fee.**
- **GSAT-11 carries 40 transponders in the Ku/Ka bands. Eight transponders for the first time in the Ka frequency band and 38 transponders in the Ku band. The Ka band would enable smart coverage of places with multiple and reusable spot beams.**
- **The GSAT-11 satellite is built to provide throughput data rate of 16 gbps (Giga bits per second).**
- **India already has two HTS satellites in space – GSAT-29 and GSAT-19**
- **The GSAT-11 satellite has a lifespan of 15 years.**

Applications:

- **GSAT-11 is part of ISRO's new high-throughput communication satellite (HTS) fleet that would take India's Internet broadband from space to untouched areas**
- **GSAT-11's mission is to provide high-speed satellite-based Internet services to users in rural and remote areas and to businesses in the country over the next 15 years.**
- **Help in Meeting the Unprecedented Data Demand**
- **To Support Bharat Net Rural e-Governance Connectivity**
- **To Support VSAT Terminals**
- **To Support Digital India Initiative**
- **"GSAT-11 will play a vital role in providing broadband services across the country. It will also provide a platform to demonstrate new generation applications,"**
- **ISRO Chairman K. Sivan said, "It will meet most of the requirements of providing broadband connectivity to rural and inaccessible village panchayats under Bharat Net, which is part of the Digital India initiative."**

VII. Centre Approved the Manned Space Mission – Gaganyaan (December 28, 2018):

- **On December 28, 2018, the Union Cabinet approved the manned space mission, Gaganyaan, which will send three Indian astronauts to space for up to seven days by 2022 at a cost of ₹10,000 crore.**
- **The Gaganyaan project was first announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day speech in 2018.**
- **The Gaganyaan programme will undertake two unmanned flights and one manned flight.**
- **India's first human space flight demonstration is targeted to be completed within 40 months of the sanction date. Prior to this, two unmanned flights in full complement will be carried out to gain confidence, the Government said.**
- **ISRO's launch vehicle GSLV-MkIII, which has the necessary payload capability to launch a three-member crew module in low earth orbit, will be used.**
- **ISRO has tested the crew escape system, an essential technology for human space flight. Elements of the life support system and space suit have also been realised and tested, according to the Government.**
- **The mission would make India the fourth nation to independently send humans to space.**
- **The Government stated that the manned space mission would establish a broader framework for collaboration between ISRO, academia, industry, national agencies and other scientific organisations.**
- **"It is also expected to generate employment and train human resources in advanced technologies," the Government stated.**
- **The Gaganyaan mission also has a large potential for technology spin-offs in areas such as medicine, agriculture, industrial safety, pollution, waste management and water and food resources management, according to the Government statement.**
- **The Gaganyaan mission would demonstrate the spacecraft's capability to catapult the human crew into low-earth orbit for a mission duration ranging from one orbital period to a maximum of seven days.**

- **“The necessary infrastructure for crew training, realisation of flight systems and ground infrastructure will be established to support the Gaganyaan Programme,”** according to the Government statement.
- **New Human Space Flight Centre in Bengaluru will be the Gaganyaan hub,** according to ISRO.

VIII. Conclusion:

1. India Called for Strengthening Global Treaties to Protect Space Assets and Prevent Militarisation of Outer Space:

- On November 21, 2017, India's then Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar called for **strengthening global treaties to protect space-based assets and prevent militarisation of outer space.**
- **India had more than 200 international cooperation agreements with more than 40 countries and international organisations**
- **India's maiden Moon Mission, Chandrayaan-I was a “successful example of international cooperation with international payloads,”**
- **ISRO launched the communication satellite GSAT-9 or the SAARC satellite in May 2017 to provide connectivity and disaster support to countries in South Asia.**
- **“India has also noted with concern the growing diverse threats in this frontier and is sensitive to these challenges,”**

2. India's Membership of the MTCR has Enhanced Access to Rocket and Related Technology

3. ISRO to Lower the Costs of Satellites by Using Advanced Electronics and Miniaturised Avionics

VIII.2. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI):

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) is an area of computer science related to creating intelligent machines.**
- **“Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a machine that mimics the human mind's cognitive functions such as learning and problem solving,”** according to A.L. Chavda, a theoretical physicist.
- **“Artificial Intelligence (AI) can also be defined as a machine that can think and act rationally and is capable of learning and solving problems autonomously,”** according to Mr. Chavda.
- **Currently, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is of three types:**
- **Algorithm-based AI:** Global Search engines like Google use psychological profiling algorithms to predict the users' behaviours and preferences based on their past preferences.
- **Neural-Network-based AI:** Neural networks are computer systems, modelled on the human brain and replicating the way a human brain's network of neurons processes and interprets data. This kind of AI learns autonomously.
- **Deep Learning AI:** Deep learning AI involves multiple layers of neural networks, working independently as well as in combination. Deep learning AI is used in image recognition, real-time face recognition, automatic speech recognition, cancer treatment, self-driving vehicles and genetics among others.

2. Benefits of AI:

- **Can do tasks that are difficulty or risky for humans**
- **Can overcome human error**

- Can save lives and help in discovering new medicines and treatment for disease
- Can remove the quality of life of humans
- Can remove the requirement of human supervision in a number of tasks thereby helping humans focus on more productive work
- Can help in curing diseases and ending hunger and poverty
- AI also has multiple uses in a wide spectrum of fields with immense benefits if it is regulated and used for good

3. Drawbacks of AI:

- **Increasing Unemployment:** If AI is used along with robotics it could automate many tasks which could lead to millions of humans losing their jobs in industries.
- **Increasing Disparity between the Rich and the Working Class:** AI could make the rich wealthier and could have a negative impact on the working classes.
- **Implications for Human Rights and Freedom:** Governments could utilise AI to monitor citizens thereby invading their privacy. This could have implication for human rights and freedom.
- **Helping Media Corporations Control People's Lives:** AI could also help media corporations controls different aspects of people's lives.
- **Military Applications of AI could be Dangerous:** AI has many military applications and is currently being used in autonomous drones to bomb targets without human intervention. However, if such system is used in nuclear weapons it could endanger the human race, according to analysts.

4. Application of AI in Governance:

Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology Ravi Shankar Prasad has highlighted the application of AI in Governance as follows:

- The Artificial Intelligence (AI) being utilised in many strategic, industrial and societal areas – security, finance, manufacturing, e-commerce, voice recognition and transportation.
- Application of AI in governance would provide an opportunity for India to apply Information and Communications Technology (ICT) tools and leapfrog developmental and infrastructural constraints.
- Important to develop AI algorithms that are powerful and scalable and transparent to inspection.
- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-Dac) is working on AI technologies and has developed a strategic plan for application of AI in different sectors.
- Four committees would be promoting AI initiatives and developing a policy framework.
- These committees would propose action plans in the fields of platform and data for AI; leveraging AI for identifying a national mission in key sectors; mapping technological capabilities and policy enablers required across sectors, skilling and re-skilling, and R&D; and cyber security, safety, legal and ethical issues.
- The report of the committees would lay the platform for AI development and deployment in India.

5. Incorporating AI to Enhance the Operational Preparedness of the Armed Forces in India:

- On May 20, 2018, Ajay Kumar, Secretary, Defence Production, said that the **Government had decided to introduce Artificial Intelligence (AI) in all three forces – Army, Air Force and Navy – as it would be a “big area” considering the requirements of future warfare.**
- **A high-powered Task Force headed by Tata Sons chairman N. Chandrasekaran was finalising the specifics of the project, which would be implemented in a “partnership model” between the Armed Forces and the private sector, according to Mr. Kumar.**
- **“This [AI] is where the future is going to be. We need to prepare ourselves for the next-generation warfare which will be more and more technology-driven, more and more automated and robotised,” according to Mr. Kumar.**
- **India had also started to boost the capabilities of its Armed Forces like many other world powers, according to the Secretary, Defence Production.**
- **Unmanned aerial vehicles, naval vessels, tanks and automatic robotic rifles as weapon systems would have an extensive use in future wars, according to Mr. Kumar.**
- **The Government’s decision is seen as part of the broader policy initiative to prepare the Indian Army, Air Force and Navy for next-generation warfare amid increasing investments by China in AI for its military.**
- **Application of AI in border surveillance could ease the pressure on the Armed Forces personnel guarding the borders with China and Pakistan.**
- **All the big powers like the US, Britain, France, the European Union and China are increasingly investing in AI. The US is also carrying out operations to target terrorist hideouts in Afghanistan and north-west Pakistan using drones which operate with the help of AI successfully.**
- **AI would be used in detecting human intrusions on the borders and in constructing new road maps for the Indian Armed Forces.**
- **The DRDO Centre for AI and Robotics has developed a solution for signal intelligence to enhance intelligence collation and analysis capabilities of the Armed Forces.**
- **“The Ministry of Defence is preparing its forces to use Artificial Intelligence. To study the whole gamut of issues on the implications of AI on national security and defence needs, a multi-stakeholder Task Force has been constituted,” according to a senior official of the Ministry of Defence (MoD).**
- **“The Task Force has studied research and innovation in AI and outlined its adoption in the defence sector including future roadmap on how to integrate and embed AI strategy with core defence strategy,”**
- **“Artificial Intelligence based tools will aid the defence forces constructively in areas such as decision support, sensor data analysis, predictive maintenance, situational awareness, accurate data extraction, security etc. These tools would assist defence personnel in better operations, maintenance and logistics support,”**
- **The Government of India is expecting enhanced use of Artificial Intelligence and Internet of Things in the fields of Aero Space, Automation, Defence and Military operations.**
- **Experts in Defence intelligence wing opine that AI and Internet of Things play a crucial role in development and deployment of autonomous weapons, intruders detection, situation analysis, counter measures, face recognition and pattern analyses which would help in military operations.**

- The Chief of the Army Staff General Bipin Rawat stressed on the need to collaborate with industry to understand the functioning of these technologies as military affairs was now based on technological advancements.
- “The rapid advances in technology necessitate that we now incorporate the industrial sector in defence manufacturing,” General Rawat said.
- On the increasing threat of cyber warfare and the need to be prepared, the Army Chief said, “We have to understand that we have disputed land borders on our western sector. We don't see peace on the horizon anywhere in the near future and armed forces need to be prepared. (They) need to be prepared by imbibing new technologies, keeping pace with advancements in warfare. Gone are the days when people fought across sectors with guns and rifles. We are going to see a lot of non-contact warfare happening.”

VIII.3. SPINNAKER – THE WORLD'S LARGEST SUPERCOMPUTER

1. Spiking Neural Network Architecture (SpiNNaker) Machine – the World's Largest Supercomputer Switched on (London, November 11, 2018):

- On November 11, 2018, the Spiking Neural Network Architecture (SpiNNaker) machine, the world's largest supercomputer designed to work in the same way as the human brain was switched on for the first time.
- The SpiNNaker is capable of completing more than 200 million million actions per second, with each of its chips having 100 million transistors.
- Built at the University of Manchester in U.K., SpiNNaker can model more biological neurons in real time than any other machine on the earth. Biological neurons are the basic brain cells present in the human nervous system that communicate by emitting 'spikes' of pure electro chemical energy.
- Neuromorphic computing uses large scale computer systems containing electronic circuits to mimic these brain cell spikes in a machine.
- The SpiNNaker is unique as it mimics the parallel communication architecture of the brain, sending billions of small amounts of information simultaneously to thousands of different destinations.
- “SpiNNaker completely re-thinks the way conventional computers work. We've essentially created a machine that works more like a brain than a traditional computer, which is very exciting,” according to Steve Furber, who conceived the initial idea for such a computer.
- “The ultimate objective for the project has always been a million cores in a single computer for real time brain modelling applications, and we have now achieved its, which is fantastic,” according to Mr. Furber.
- One of the basic uses of the supercomputer is to help neuroscientists better understand how the human brain works. The supercomputer does this by running extremely large scale real-time simulations which are not possible on other machines.
- The power of SpiNNaker was harnessed to control a robot. The robot uses the SpiNNaker system to interpret real-time visual information and navigate towards certain objects while ignoring others.

VIII.4. EMISAT**I. PSLV-C45 Successfully Launched India's First Electro-Magnetic Intelligence Satellite (EMISAT) (April 1, 2019, Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh):**

- On April 1, 2019, ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C45) successfully launched Electro-Magnetic Intelligence Satellite (EMISAT), India's first electronic surveillance satellite from Sriharikota in coastal Andhra Pradesh.
- PSLV-C45 also launched 28 smaller satellites of international customers – US (24), Lithuania (2), Spain (1) and Switzerland (1).
- The 436 kg EMISAT is a built around ISRO's Mini Satellite-2 bus and is intended for electromagnetic spectrum measurement.
- **Payloads Carried of PSLV-C45:** Automatic Identification System from ISRO, Automatic Packet Repeating System from AMST, India, and Advanced Retarding Potential Analyser for Ionospheric studies from the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology.
- For the first time ISRO successfully placed payloads in three different orbits – The main payload EMISAT was placed into a 749 km orbit, the 28 foreign satellites were placed into a 504 km orbit and the fourth stage PSLV-C45 was guided to an altitude of 485 km.
- The fourth stage of PSLV-C45 would serve as an orbital platform for space-based experiments for the next six months. This was the third consecutive PSLV mission in which ISRO re-used its fourth stage as a space testbed. Earlier the stages were wasted as debris.
- A new PSLV variant called QL with four strap-on boosters was used for the launch of EMISAT and 28 foreign satellites.
- In this mission, the fourth stage (PS4) carried three minor payloads or experiments. The PS4 was equipped with power-generating solar panels for the first time, according to ISRO.
- The successful launch of EMISAT and 28 other foreign satellites marked the 47th flight of the PSLV.
- This was also the longest flight of the PSLV.

II. Significance of the Successful Launch of the Military Satellite EMISAT:

- The Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) successful launch of the Electro-Magnetic Satellite (EMISAT), developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) was significant as it would serve as India's roving device for detecting and gathering electronic intelligence from enemy radars across the borders as it circulates the earth every 90 minutes or so
- "Military satellites like the EMISAT have three key characteristics: help monitor the activities of enemy radars and sensors deployed along the border; to know the exact topography of enemy areas; and communication intelligence to find out how many communication devices are active in an area," according to former DRDO scientist Ravi Gupta.
- EMISAT would play a crucial role for the intelligence agencies to keep an eye on hostile countries like Pakistan.
- Security agencies "keep an eye on enemy weapons and assets through drones, aerostats or balloons that can peek deep into the enemy territory and electronic satellites. But they all have limitations. Drones can fly up to some hours and balloons can fly till helium gas lasts and satellites are non-static. Therefore, launching a number of electronic satellites help in constant monitoring of enemy assets and their activities, and help tune in to enemy radars," according to Mr. Gupta.

- **EMISAT** was the first of a series of six or seven satellites which would be built and launched for the strategic purposes, according to an ISRO official.
- Space-based electronic intelligence or **ELINT** from EMISAT would enhance situational awareness of the Armed Forces because it would provide location and information of hostile radars placed at the borders; this would be another dimension to the current land, or aircraft based ELINT, according to defence experts.
- EMISAT would protect India's assets, including fighter jets and spacecraft by intercepting radar signals and detecting the kind of radar and its location. A radar emits radiowaves in specific frequencies that hit targets and bounce back – conveying to the radar the nature of the target, its movement and distances.
- The US is said to have fifth-generation Electronic Intelligence (ELINT) satellites. Russia and China are also not far behind
- Currently around 150 military satellites could be hovering over the Earth.

VIII.5. STRATOLAUNCH – WORLD'S LARGEST AEROPLANE

I. Stratolaunch – World's Largest Aeroplane:

1. Features of Stratolaunch:

- **Length:** 238 feet
- **Wing Span:** 117 metres, the wing span is longer than a football field, or about 1.5 times that of an Airbus 380.
- **Weight:** Half a million pounds
- **Cockpits:** 2
- **Fuselages:** 2
- **Powered by:** 6 Boeing 747 engines
- **Top Speed:** 304 km/hr

2. Successful Test Flight of Stratolaunch (Mojave Air and Space Port, California, April 13, 2019):

- On April 13, 2019, Stratolaunch, the world's largest aeroplane, completed its first test flight in California.
- Stratolaunch carried out its first successful flight over the Mojave desert. It achieved a top speed of 304 km per hour and reached an altitude of 17,000 feet (5,182 metres).
- The mega jet is designed to carry into space, and drop, a rocket that would in turn ignite to deploy satellites.
- Stratolaunch is designed to carry three satellite-laden rockets at a time under the centre of its large wing.
- Stratolaunch, carrying a rocket loaded with a satellite, would take off to 35,000 ft and launch rocket on a trajectory towards space.
- The mega aeroplane would land safely back at Mojave.
- The rocket would deploy satellite before eventually falling back to Earth and burning up.
- Stratolaunch was financed by Paul Allen, a co-founder of Microsoft as a way to get into the market for launching small satellites. But Allen died in October 2018.

3. Significance of the Successful Test-flight of Stratolaunch:

- Stratolaunch would provide a more flexible way to deploy satellites than vertical take-off rockets as this way only a long runway is required for take-off.
- “Today’s flight furthers our mission to provide a flexible alternative to ground launch systems,” according to Jean Floyd, CEO of Stratolaunch.
- Stratolaunch aims to offer military and NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) a more economical way of getting into space
- Stratolaunch is made of carbon fibre, instead of aluminium, to make it light.
- The mega aeroplane requires only a runway for take-off and no costly equipment as required for traditional rocket launches.
- Stratolaunch requires less fuel and can take-off and fly in bad weather too.

VIII.6. BLACK HOLE

1. Black Hole:

- Black hole refers to a point in space where matter is very compressed resulting in a gravity field from which even light cannot escape. With increase in mass the black hole becomes bigger.
- In 1915 physicist Albert Einstein theorised black holes to explain the laws of gravity and their relation to other natural forces.
- In mid-1960s American physicist John Archibald Wheeler coined the term “black hole”.
- Black holes are cosmic gobblers of all matter on its periphery and have gravitational fields so powerful that even light cannot escape them, thus making the contents invisible.
- A black hole marks the end of spacetime and nothing that enters it can escape from the powerful gravitational attraction.
- Generally, black holes are the result of heavy stars collapsing in on themselves, radiation emitted by particles within the disc are heated to billions of degrees as they move around the black hole at the speed of light, before vanishing into them.

2. Astronomers Revealed the First Image of a Black Hole After Assembling Data Gathered by a Network of Radio Telescopes Around the World (April 10, 2019):

- On April 10, 2019, astronomers shared an image from the black hole at Messier 87 or M87, in the constellation Virgo, that is about 53 million light years from the Earth. One light year is 5.9 trillion miles or 9.5 trillion km. The black hole is about 6 billion times the mass of the sun.
- Astronomers created the image by assembling data gathered by eight radio telescopes around the world – from Hawaii to the South Pole.
- The astronomers simultaneously observed daily variations in the bright ring around the M87 black hole for 10 days. Together, they captured the radiation from particles around the black hole.
- The data was gathered by the Event Horizon Telescope in 2017, but it took two years to complete the image because it was a huge undertaking, involving around 200 scientists, supercomputers and hundreds of terabytes of data delivered worldwide by plane black holes, the M87 and one at the centre of our own Milky Way galaxy.

- A technique known as interferometry, which combines radiation from eight telescopes from around the world in a way that it appears as one single telescope capture, was used by the astronomers.

3. Significance of the Image of Black Hole M87:

- Black hole image of M87 would help form international collaborations to pool the capabilities of disparate scientific instruments and perceive phenomenon which cannot be achieved by individuals.
- The image of the black hole also underlines the fact that international scientific collaboration is essential for scientific advancement
- It is also pointed out that the image of the black hole along with the data generated would help scientists understand how the black holes work and how the jets of luminosity that enabled us to see them, actually work and behave.
- The image of the black hole also confirmed the theoretical work that premised on the assumption that black holes are indeed real objects and not the fantasy of mathematical equations.
- The black hole image is also significant in understanding the surface of the regions around black holes

VIII.7. RISAT-2B

I. RISAT-2B Radar Imaging Earth Observation Satellite Successfully Launched by PSLV-C46 (May 22, 2109, Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh):

- On May 22, 2019, a PSLV-C46 rocket of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully placed RISAT-2B, an advanced radar imaging earth observation satellite into orbit 556 km above the earth.
- ISRO Chairman K. Sivan described the successful placement of RISAT-2B as a 'textbook launch' of a very important and complex satellite.
- RISAT-2B is "an advanced earth observation satellite with an advanced technology of 3.6 metre radial rib [unfurlable] antenna," Dr. Sivan said.
- RISAT-2B is the third Indian RISAT in 10 years following the RISAT-2 (built by Israel) in 2009 and RISAT-1 (built by ISRO) in 2012. RISAT-2B will replace RISAT-2.
- Two secondary or "piggyback trial payloads that would revolutionise its future missions" were also included in the launch – Vikram processor from Semiconductor Laboratory (SCL) that will control future launchers, and a low-cost microelectronic inertial navigation system from the ISRO Inertial Systems Unit.

II. Features of RISAT-2B:

- Weight: 615 kg
- Altitude: 557 km
- Inclination: 37 degrees
- Payload: X-band synthetic aperture radar which can give added details like the size of objects on earth, structures and movement.
- Mission Life: 5 years

III. Applications of RISAT-2B:

- The applications of RISAT-2B include military surveillance, agriculture, forestry, and disaster management support.

- RISAT-2B can take pictures during day and night and also under cloudy conditions.
- Information from RISAT-2B would be useful for agencies that need ground images during cloud, rain and in the dark.
- RISAT-2B is the first in a series of radar imaging satellites to be deployed by ISRO in the coming months to enhance its space based observation of earth and Indian region.
- Data from RISAT-2B would be vital for the Armed Forces as the satellite would provide continuous view of the earth even during bad weather which can be used to detect border infiltration.
- RISAT-2B will enhance the capability in crop monitoring during monsoons, forestry mapping for forest fires and deforestation, and flood mapping for disaster management.
- Microwave radiation is used by RISAT-2B which has longer wavelengths unlike visible light and hence will not be susceptible to atmospheric scattering. Microwave radiation can pass through the cloud cover, haze and dust and provide images of the ground.
- RISAT-2B has a high resolution and would be able to detect objects as small as a metre which would be useful for surveillance for civil and strategic purposes.
- The inclined orbit of 37 degrees will allow RISAT-2B more observations over the Indian subcontinent.

VIII.8. CHANDRAYAAN-2

I. Chandrayaan-2 – India's Second Unmanned Mission to the Moon:

1. Aim of the Mission:

- Chandrayaan-2, India's second unmanned mission to the Moon aims to land a rover on the unexplored south-polar region of the moon. It is a fully indigenous mission.
- To demonstrate the capability to soft-land on the Moon and operate a rover.
- To study the presence and distribution of water among other molecules.
- To map the lunar surface to understand various aspects.
- To learn about the composition and structure of lunar elements.
- To learn about early solar system to understand the history of Earth.

2. Chandrayaan-2 Spacecraft:

- **Weight:** 3,850 kg, nearly four times that of Chandrayaan-1
- **Payloads:** 14 including one from NASA

3. Main Components of Chandrayaan-2:

A. Orbiter:

- **Weight:** 2,379 kg
- **Power Generation Capacity:** 1,000W
- The orbiter is capable of communicating with the Indian Deep Space Network at Byalalu, 40 km from Bengaluru and the Lander – Vikram.

- The orbiter will be placed in a 100x100 km lunar polar orbit.
- The orbiter carries 8 payloads.
- The Terrain Mapping Camera 2 on board the orbiter would produce images of the Moon remotely from a 100 km lunar polar orbit.
- A 3D image of the moon's terrain would be produced using the data collected by the orbiter.

B. Lander – Vikram:

- The second major component of Chandrayaan-2 is the solar-powered lander named 'Vikram', after Vikram A. Sarabhai, the founding father of space science research in India.
- **Weight:** 1,471 kg
- **Power Generation Capacity:** 650 W
- The Vikram lander is designed to function for one lunar day which is equivalent to 14 days on earth.
- Chandrayaan-2 would use rocket technology to soft land the Vikram lander, carrying the Pragyan rover in a high plane on the lunar surface, between two craters, Manzinus-C and Simpelius N, at a latitude of about 70° South.
- The soft landing of the Vikram lander is scheduled on September 7, 2019.
- The Vikram lander is carrying three payloads which would measure the electron density and temperature near the lunar surface; the vertical temperature gradient, and seismicity around the landing site.

C. Rover – Pragyan:

- The third major component of Chandrayaan-2 is the solar-powered rover 'Pragyan' meaning 'wisdom'.
- **Weight:** 27 kg
- **Power Generating Capacity:** 50W
- The Pragyan rover is a six-wheeled robotic vehicle which can travel up to 500 m and uses solar energy for its functioning. It can communicate only with the lander Vikram.
- The Pragyan rover is not expected to last beyond one lunar day or 14 earth days.
- The rover carries two payloads or instruments which would collect and test samples from the Moon's surface to identify what elements they contain.

4. Launch Vehicle – GSLV Mark III:

- Chandrayaan-2 was launched by the GSLV Mark III, ISRO's most powerful and massive launcher.
- GSLV Mk-III is a three-stage vehicle capable of launching 4-tonne class of satellites to the Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO).
- The GSLV Mk-III launched Chandrayaan-2 into an Earth Parking Orbit.
- The height of the orbit would be enhanced to help Chandrayaan-2 reach the Lunar Transfer Trajectory.

- Once Chandrayaan-2 enters the Moon's sphere of influence, on-board thrusters would slow down the spacecraft, allowing it to be captured by the Moon.
- Chandrayaan-2 will then take a circular orbit (100km X 100km).
- From the circular orbit, the Vikram lander and the Pragyan rover would separate as a unit from the orbiter, and after a series of braking mechanisms, they would "soft-land" on the moon, on September 7, 2019.

5. Cost of the Project: ₹978 crore

6. Lifespan: The solar-powered lander Vikram and rover Pragyan have an expected lifetime of one lunar day or 14 earth days, while the orbiter will last for a year.

7. GLSV Mk-III Successfully Launched Chandrayaan-2 in Earth's Orbit (July 22, 2019, Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh):

- On July 22, 2019, the GSLV Mark-III successfully launched Chandrayaan-2 in Earth's orbit from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, SHAR, in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.
- The successful placing of Chandrayaan-2 in the Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) was the first step of a 48 day journey which is expected to be completed on September 7, 2019 with the 'soft-landing' of the Lander Vikram and Rover Pragyan on the moon.
- Earlier the launch of Chandrayaan-2 was called off on July 15, 2019, due to a technical snag.
- "The GSLV-Mark III vehicle has successfully injected Chandrayaan-2 in the defined orbit. In fact, the orbit is 6,000 km more than what was intended. The satellite will have more life, more fuel and more time to play with the manoeuvres. It is the beginning of a historic journey of India towards Moon and to land at a place near the South Pole to carry out scientific experiments to explore unexplored [areas]," ISRO Chairman K. Sivan said.

8. Challenges of Moon Landing of Chandrayaan-2:

- Trajectory Accuracy
- Issues Related to Communication
- Trans-Lunar Injection
- Lunar Dust
- The Vikram lander needs to descend gently on the harsh and rugged lunar surface without getting damaged.
- The lander must also avoid landing in a shadowy patch. It needs sunlight for generating power.
- Chandrayaan-2 carries 14 payloads or instruments to observe and gauge the Moon – both from a distance and on its surface.
- One of the payloads is a small NASA reflectometer to mark the spot for future missions and assess the distance from the Earth.

9. Significance of the Chandrayaan-2 Mission:

- Chandrayaan-2 was launched successfully by ISRO on July 22, 2019, to further explore Earth's natural satellite, the Moon, a decade after the successful Chandrayaan-1 mission to the Moon.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the successful launch of Chandrayaan-2 illustrates the prowess of Indian scientists and the determination of 130 crore countrymen to scale new frontiers of science.

- Chandrayaan-2 is the first mission to reach and study the south pole of the moon.
- India would become only the fourth country to soft-land on the lunar surface
- Understanding of how the Moon formed and evolved can help in better understanding the evolution of the solar system and the earth itself.
- During the mission, the vertical temperature gradient and thermal conductivity of the lunar surface, and lunar seismicity would be studied for the first time.
- Chandrayaan-2 mission would also be significant in testing the technologies for advanced space missions.
- July 2019 also marked the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission of July 1969 that saw the first landing of humans on Moon.
- Currently, there is widespread enthusiasm and commercial interest in several countries including the US and China for Moon missions.

VIII.9. NIPAH VIRUS

I. Nipah Virus (NiV):

1. **NiV:** Nipah Virus (NiV) is a paramyxovirus that is transmitted to the humans from animals.

2. Transmission:

- The NiV is mainly transmitted by human consumption of bat-contaminated fruits, and subsequently, human-to-human transmission.
- The natural host of the NiV are fruit bats, which may infect an intermediate host which could be a plant or an animal, consumption of which spreads the disease among humans.
- Both animal-to-human and human-to-human transmission has been documented.
- The intermediate hosts were pigs in Malaysia and Singapore during the outbreaks of Nipah in 1998 and 1999, while in Bangladesh humans were infected due to consumption of date palm sap that had been contaminated by infected fruit bats.

3. **Symptoms:** Fever, headache, dizziness, vomiting, disorientation/hallucination, respiratory distress, cough/cold, altered consciousness – total or partial. The symptoms could progress to coma within 24-48 hours.

4. Treatment:

- There is no vaccine for either humans or animals.
- The primary treatment for humans is intensive supportive care.

5. Preventive Measures:

- Washing, peeling and cooking fruits before they are consumed
- Handwashing to break the primary infection and transmission of the disease
- Quarantining the infected persons as the disease is contagious

6. Outbreaks of Nipah Virus:

- From 1998 to 2015, around 600 cases of Nipah virus human infections have been reported.
- **1998 – Malaysia:** An outbreak of Nipah virus was first reported in Malaysia in 1998. The outbreak occurred through pigs and infected 265 people leading to the death of 105 people. Around 1.1 million pigs were culled.

- **1999 – Singapore:** 11 people were infected
- **2004 – Bangladesh:** Infecting humans through the consumption of date palm sap that had been contaminated by infected fruit bats. Mortality rate was over 70%
- **India:**
 - In 2001, 66 cases were reported in Siliguri, West Bengal of which 45 persons died.
 - In 2007, 50 cases were reported in Nadia, in West Bengal of which 5 persons died.
 - On May 21, 2018, the **National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)** declared a “third major outbreak” of the Nipah virus infection in India, since the outbreak of the zoonotic disease in Kozhikode district of Kerala on May 5, 2018.
 - The Nipah virus infection claimed 17 lives in Kerala.

II. Nipah Case Confirmed in Kerala (June 4, 2019):

- On June 4, 2019, Nipah resurfaced in Kerala with a 23-year-old college student infected.
- Kerala's Health Minister K.K. Shylaja said that **311 people** from various districts with whom the student had interacted in recent times were under observation.
- Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Harsh Vardhan deployed a team of six officers to oversee the “epidemiological investigation protocol, contact tracing for early detection of suspects, testing protocols for suspects and review of isolation facilities.
- A control room had been established and a team from the National Institute of Virology, Pune was sent to the affected area with monoclonal antibodies.
- India could soon have indigenously produced antidote to Nipah virus

VIII.10. 5G TECHNOLOGY

1. 5G or Fifth-Generation Technology:

- The 5G or fifth-generation technology is the technology that will provide faster and more reliable communication with ultralow latency.
- The peak network data speeds are expected to be in the range of 2-20 Gigabits per second (Gbps) with 5G, according to a government panel report.
- The peak data speed of 5G is expected to be 900% faster than 4G's maximum data speed (6-7 Megabits per second (Mbps) in India and 25 Mbps in developed countries).

2. Benefits of 5G Technology:

- 5G is expected to support the emerging technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT) and machine to machine communications.
- A larger range of applications would be supported by 5G which would include driverless vehicles, tele-surgery and real time data analytics.
- The ultralow latency provided by 5G helps in providing support to a wide range of applications. Latency refers to the amount of time data takes to travel between its sources and destination.

- The 5G technology would extend the use of wireless technologies – for the first time – across completely new sectors of the economy from industrial to commercial, educational, health care, agriculture, financial and social sectors, according to a government panel report.
- “5G may offer ‘leapfrog’ opportunities by providing ‘smart infrastructure’ that offers lower cost and faster infrastructure delivery,” according to the report.
- One of the key applications of 5G would be implantation of sensor-embedded network that would allow real time relay of information across various sectors like manufacturing, consumer durables and agriculture, according to analysts.
- 5G could also help in making transport infrastructure more efficient by making it smart

3. Economic Impact of 5G on India:

- By 2035, 5G is expected to create a cumulative economic impact of \$1 trillion in India, according to a government panel report.
- 5G-enabled digitalisation revenue potential in India would be above \$27 billion by 2026, according to Ericsson, the telecom gear maker.
- By 2025, India would have about 70 million 5G connections, according to global telecom industry GSMA (Global System Mobile Association).

4. Launch of 5G Services in India:

- On June 3, 2019, Union Communications Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad announced that the government will hold auctions for spectrum, including for 5G services in current year.
- The government intended to begin 5G trials in the next 100 days or by mid-September 2019.
- In the first term of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Union Government had set a target of 2020 for the commercial launch of 5G services.
- In April 2019, South Korea and the US became the first countries to commercially launch 5G services. China has also given commercial 5G licences to its major carriers.

5. Requirements for Implementing 5G Networks:

- For implementing 5G networks a 5G spectrum in 3300-3600 MHz will be required.
- A fundamental change in the basic architecture of the communication system would also be required for 5G networks.
- The industry might require an additional investment of \$60-70 billion to seamlessly implement 5G networks, according to a report by Deloitte.

VIII.11. BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY

I. Blockchain Technology:

- Blockchain is a distributed ledger technology originally developed as an accounting system for the cryptocurrency Bitcoin.
- A blockchain is a database which is shared across a network of computers. Data can be added to it but the previous data within it cannot be changed.

- **Blockchains are immutable and distributed ledgers and anything recorded on them cannot be changed or deleted, and is instantly uploaded to all users on that blockchain,** according to Suveer Kumar Gupta, CEO of Shivalik Mercantile Cooperative Bank.
- **Blockchain technology is currently being researched by banking and financial services sectors to increase digitised business with many benefits.**

II. Benefits of Blockchain Technology:

- **Blockchain technology is being examined by Central banks including the US Federal Reserve and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to understand the regulatory challenges it may pose.**
- **“Blockchain potentially has far-reaching implications for the financial sector, and this is prompting more and more banks, insurers and other financial institutions to invest in research into potential applications of this technology,”** according to a report by RBI's Working Group on FinTech and Digital Banking.
- **“Market participants in other securities markets are exploring the usage of blockchain or distributed database technology to provide various services such as clearing and settlement, trading,”** according to the RBI report.
- **“Indian securities market may also see such developments in the near future and therefore, there is need to understand the benefits, risks and challenges such developments may pose,”** according to the RBI report.
- **If blockchain technology is adopted by Indian banks, it could help in averting frauds like the Punjab National Bank as the disaggregated and transparent nature of the technology, which updates information across all users simultaneously, would have ensured that various officials would have instantly been alerted to the creation of the Letters of Undertaking (LoUs).**
- **Blockchain technology has the potential to transform business processes and applications across sectors – financial services, agriculture, healthcare and education among others.**
- **Blockchain technology could play a crucial role in enhancing the ease of doing business by augmenting the credibility, accuracy and efficiency of a contract while minimising the risk of frauds.**
- **Application of blockchain technology in property transactions could bring in a complete change through in-built transparency, traceability and efficiency in the system. State Governments are researching the possibility of using blockchain technology to bring efficiency in property transactions,** according to Rana Kapoor, CEO & MD, Yes Bank.
- **The ability of blockchain technology to increase visibility in the functioning of the supply chain offers many possibilities in a number of sectors to prevent leakages and increase efficiency,** according to the Yes Bank CEO.
- **“Cost reduction, risk mitigation, speed, traceability and security are among the multiple benefits” from blockchain technology,** according to Rajashekara V. Maiya, AVP, global head of products strategy, Infosys Finacle.
- **Blockchain technology has the potential to bring about an economic transformation as the Internet transformed commerce, media and other sectors.**

IX. ENVIRONMENT

1. UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)

SUMMARY

I. Highlights of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5° Celsius (October 8, 2018):

- The IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5° Celsius which was approved in Incheon, South Korea, was prepared by 91 authors from 40 countries.
- Meeting the target of restricting the temperature increase to 1.5° Celsius above the pre-industrial levels is possible but would require “deep emissions reductions” and “rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society”.
- “Limiting global warming to 1.5° C compared with 2° C would reduce challenging impacts on ecosystems, human health and well-being.”
- A 2° C temperature increase would exasperate extreme weather, rising sea levels and diminishing Arctic sea ice, coral bleaching, and loss of ecosystems, among other impacts.
- “Global net human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) would need to fall by about 45 percent from the 2010 levels by 2030, reaching ‘net zero’ around 2050.”

II. Conference of the Parties (COP24) of the UNFCCC or Katowice Climate Conference (Katowice, Poland, December 2-15, 2018):

1. Agenda:

- Nearly 200 countries participated in the COP24.
- Finalisation of the Paris Work Programmed and the adoption of the rules for the implementation of the Paris Agreement.
- The results of the Talanoa Dialogue, which would lay the foundations for an upward revision of nationally determined contributions (NDC) by 2020, with a view to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement.
- In conjunction with the Talanoa Dialogue, recognition of the main scientific results of the IPCC Special Report on 1.5° C global warming.
- Continued mobilisation of all stakeholders through the Agenda for Action.
- Progress in Climate Finance.
- The Talanoa Dialogue, also called formally as the “2018 Facilitation Dialogue” is designed to collectively assess progress made in implementing the Paris Agreement’s long-term objective of limiting temperature increases to well below 2° C or even 1.5° C, and to inform the preparation of nationally determined contributions (NDC) to be submitted by 2020.

2. COP24 Adopted a Universal Rule Book for Implementing the 2015 Paris Agreement:

- The COP24 adopted a universal Rule Book for implementing the 2015 Paris Agreement of limiting global temperature rises to well below 2° Celsius.
- The universal Rule Book paves the way for operationalising the post-2020 climate pledges made by countries in Paris.
- Although the US President Donald Trump vowed to abandon the Paris Agreement, the US agreed to the Rule Book. The US cannot formally withdraw from the Paris Agreement until late 2020.
- The Paris Agreement Rule Book lays down how countries will provide information about their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that describe their domestic climate actions.

- The Rule Book also lays down what process developed countries will follow for establishing new targets on finance from 2025 onwards to follow on from the current target of mobilising \$100 billion per year from 2020 onwards to support actions of the developing nations.
- The Paris Agreement Rule Book also tells about how to conduct the Global Stocktake of the effectiveness of climate action in 2023.
- The Rule Book lays down criteria to assess progress on the development and the transfer of technology.

3. Issues that were Left Out:

- Getting the member countries to increase their climate change commitments in order to slow down global warming.
- **Loss and damage” mechanism.** “Loss and damage” measures refer to climate impacts exceeding the adaptive capacity of countries, communities and ecosystems.
- **Modalities of using market and non-market mechanisms for trade in carbon emissions.**
- **Finance** – The main question on whether developed countries would come good on their earlier commitments to make available \$100 billion annually by 2020 remain unresolved.
- **Differentiation** – Analysts point out that the key issue of differentiation looked to be threatened. The developing countries cannot be asked to adhere to the same standards as the developed countries.

4. India's Stand:

- “India wishes to express its strong reservation regarding the treatment of equity in the Global Stocktake (GST) decision. Equity is specifically mentioned in Article 14 of the Paris Agreement..... equity demands that the vulnerabilities, problems and challenges of the poor and the marginalised be prioritised to ensure climate justice...”
- The Global Stocktake (GST) which will happen in 2023, refers to a periodic appraisal by nations on where the world stands vis-à-vis emissions.
- “India considers the outcome of COP24 a positive one which addresses concerns of all parties (countries) and sets us on the path towards successful implementation of the Paris Agreement.”

5. Significance of the COP24:

- “Putting together the Paris Agreement work programme is a big responsibility. It has been a long road. We did our best to leave no one behind.”
- It took the nearly 200 countries three years to agree on procedures, guidelines and institutional mechanisms to implement the Paris Agreement where countries are supposed to take actions against climate change post 2020 with the aim of keeping average global temperature rise with 2° Celsius by the end of the century.
- The agreement on the universal Rule Book to implement the Paris Agreement means that nations can now establish national systems that are needed for implementing the Paris Agreement. The national systems would ensure that nations can act in an atmosphere of trust and assess progress of their actions against climate change.
- The agreed rules provide common modalities and guidelines that would enable nations to track and report their Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, track financial flows and technology transfers from developed to developing countries.
- Rule Book agreement reached by the COP24 at Katowice is a vindication of multilateralism at a time when multilateral institutions are being undermined across the world.
- UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that the world's climate fight was just beginning.

III. Conclusion:**1. Challenges Ahead of the Consensus Reached at the Katowice Climate Conference:**

- The consensus reached by the COP24 or the Katowice Climate Conference on the implementation of the Paris Agreement through a rule book, reflected strong support from all countries for urgent action against climate change.
- The outcome of the Katowice Climate Conference does not reflect the short window available to make deep the greenhouse gas emission cuts – 12 years, till 2030
- There are many challenges in implementing the Paris Agreement endorsed by 195 countries under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- The Special IPCC report warned that to cap the rise in global average temperature over pre-industrial levels at 1.5° C, a 45 per cent reduction in emissions over 2010 levels must be reached by 2030.

2. India's Approach towards Meeting Its Paris Agreement Targets:

- India has pledged at the COP21 in Paris to reduce carbon emissions by 33% to 35% by 2030 from the 2005 levels.
- India has listed out how its green initiatives would contribute towards achieving its pledged targets.
- Currently, India has three flagship programmes – AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation), Swachh Bharat Mission, and Urban and Smart Cities Mission.
- AMRUT which aims at improving the quality of life, particularly of disadvantaged sections, is expected to reduce carbon emissions up to 107.53 million tonnes by 2021
- The Swachh Bharat Mission, which is aimed at enhancing the cleanliness, was expected to cut the carbon emissions by 5.35 million tonnes by 2021
- The Urban and Smart Cities Mission would reduce the carbon emissions by 4.58 million tonnes by 2021
- Planned urbanisation could help tackle climate change through a comprehensive and cogent plan by working closely with city government and administration as they address the issues of economic growth and reconcile with climate change mitigation
- The projected emission cuts – under various initiatives – do not include public transportation and solid waste management. If these were taken into consideration, the drop in emissions would be much higher

IX.2. POLLUTION**I. National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) Launched by the Centre (January 10, 2019):**

- The Union Government launched the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) on January 10, 2019, to reduce particulate matter (PM) pollution by 20-30% in at least 102 cities by 2024.
- The NCAP is envisaged as a scheme to provide the States and the Centre with a framework to tackle air pollution.
- “The NCAP will be a mid-term, five-year action plan, with 2019 as the first year. This is not a pan-India, but a city-specific programme,” according to C.K. Mishra, Secretary, Union Environment Ministry.

- After five years, there would be a review of the progress.
- In the last one year, 102 cities identified as hotspots of pollution, were asked to submit a plan for tackling the problem of pollution.
- The plans in general, include increasing the number of monitoring stations, providing technology support, conducting source apportionment studies, and strengthening enforcement.
- In order to achieve the NCAP targets, the cities will have to calculate the reduction in pollution, keeping 2017's average annual PM levels as the base year.
- Cities have been given a specified number of days to implement specific measures like “ensuring roads are pothole-free to improve traffic flow and thereby reduce dust” (within 60 days) or “ensuring strict action against unauthorised brick kilns” (within 30 days).
- In order to achieve the target the Environment Ministry would work with the State Governments and local authorities, augmenting monitoring and data collection, strengthening institutions and increasing public awareness.

II. Benefits of the NCAP:

- Air pollution is serious threat to health and affects productivity. The World Health Organisation (WHO) over the years has listed many of the Indian cities as the most polluted places in the world. India was also ranked as No.1 in premature mortality and deaths from air pollution by a study in the Lancet journal.
- The NCAP shows the seriousness of the Government to tackle the problem of increasing air pollution by acknowledging that air quality can be improved by collaborative, multi-scaled and cross-sectoral means
- The focus of NCAP on cities is due to the fact that tackling air pollution requires an airshed approach.
- The NCAP is based on time-bound programmes, with systems for review and constant assessments.
- Improvement of institutional capacity is important for improving the air quality and also to prevent future deterioration.
- The focus of NCAP is mainly on the abatement of Particulate Matter (PM) pollution. In the long-term it could include measures to reduce the generation of pollutants at source.
- The NCAP is the first step towards reducing air pollution and improving the quality of air.
- “This is our war against pollution across the length and breadth of the country,” according to A.K. Jain, a senior official of the Union Environment Ministry.
- The NCAP was welcome; the Government must strengthen the compliance.

III. Nitrogen Pollution:

1. Nitrogen Pollution:

- Nitrogen is the dominant gas in the atmosphere (78%). It is inert and does not react.
- However, nitrogen is considered reactive and polluting and causing greenhouse gas (trapping heat) effect, when it is released as part of compounds from agriculture, sewage and biological waste.

- **“So far, we have focussed on carbon dioxide and its impact on global warming. Nitrous oxide (N₂O) is 300 times more potent than carbon dioxide but isn't prevalent in the atmosphere. However, this is poised to grow,”** according to N. Raghuram, chairman, International Nitrogen Initiative (INI)

2. Causes of Nitrogen Pollution:

- Emission of nitrogen from chemical fertilisers
- Burning of fossil fuels also causes nitrogen pollution
- Emission from livestock manure also causes nitrogen pollution

3. Adverse Impact of Nitrogen Pollution:

- Loss of biodiversity
- Pollution of seas and rivers
- Depletion of ozone
- Adverse impact on health, livelihoods and economy

4. Increase in India's Nitrogen Emissions:

- India's nitrogen emissions increased 52% from 1991-2001
- India's nitrogen emissions increased 69% from 2001-2011

5. 18 Indian Institutions Part of the South Asian Nitrogen Hub (SANH) to Study the Impact of Nitrogen Pollution in South Asia:

- There are 18 research institutions in India which are among a group of 50 institutions – called the South Asian Nitrogen Hub (SANH) – in the UK and South Asia that have secured £20 million (₹200 crore) from the government of UK to assess and study the quantum and impact of “nitrogen pollution” in South Asia.
- **“In future, reactive nitrogen pollution will be a matter significant global discussion and, unlike carbon, Indian and South Asia cannot wake up at the last minute, realising that it has no updated, scientific assessment of its inventory,”** according to Dr. Raghuram.
- The SANH would study the impact of the different forms of pollution to form a “coherent picture” of the nitrogen cycle.
- The SANH would especially look at nitrogen in agriculture in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Maldives.

IV. Plastic Waste Management in India:

- India generates about 15,000 tonnes of plastic waste every day, of which about 40% remains uncollected and about 70% of the plastic packaging products become “waste” in a short span of time, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).
- Plastic is a man-made material which is cheap, lightweight and easy to produce with a wide range of applications.
- The global drive is against the “single-use” or disposable plastic – used in bottles, cups, bags and wrapping paper which account for over half the plastic products.
- Plastic does not decompose and an estimated 13 million tonnes of plastic goes into the oceans, adversely impacting marine environment, water systems, biodiversity and human health.
- Environmentalists feel that **reducing disposable plastic products like plastic bags and packaging would be the first step.**
- In 2016, the Environment Ministry notified plastic waste management rules that sought to control the manufacture of the particular kind of plastics. But many States and city corporations were unable to implement the rules, especially the ban of plastic bags less than 50 microns thick.

- The significant aspect of the Plastic Waste Management Rules of 2016 is the 'extended producers responsibility' whereby plastics manufacturers and retail establishments that use plastic are legally bound to introduce a system of collecting back plastic waste.
- On March 23, 2018, the Government of Maharashtra issued a notification banning the manufacture, use, transport, distribution, wholesale and retail sale, storage and import of plastic bags with and without handle. The ban also covers disposable products made from plastic and thermocol (polystyrene).
- On June 23, 2018, the Government of Maharashtra began enforcing the ban on plastic.
- India's resolve to "Beat Plastic Pollution" declared on the World Environment Day (June 5) in 2018, won global acclaim.
- India pledged to eliminate single use plastic by 2022. Till January 2019, 22 States and Union Territories announced a ban on single-use plastics like carry bags, cups, plates, cutlery, straws and thermocol products.
- Globally only 9% of the 9 billion tonnes of produced gets recycled.
- India needs to move towards a system where plastic waste is treated and recycled.
- Government needs to restrict plastic production and encourage recycling through incentives to re-use and better waste disposal.
- The Plastic Waste Management Rules of 2016 should be strictly implemented

IX.3. SWACHH BHARAT ABHIYAN

I. Progress of the Swachh Bharat Mission:

- On August 8, 2017, the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation released the findings of a survey of 1.4 lakh rural households, undertaken by the Quality Council of India (QCI) between May and June 2017.
- The survey covering 4626 villages across all States and Union Territories, claimed that 62.45% of the households had access to a toilet.
- The survey also said that 91.29% of the people who had access to a toilet also used it, indicating a change in sanitation behaviour.
- Almost all rural households in Kerala and Haryana had access to a toilet while Bihar fared the worst, as per the survey on rural sanitation.
- In the Northeastern States of Sikkim, Nagaland and Manipur 95% of the rural households had toilets.
- The number of open defecation free (ODF) villages increased 10 times to more than 2.75 lakh in the last three years, according to Parameswaran Iyer, Secretary Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.
- When the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) was launched 550 million people practised open defecation. That number was now down to 300 million, according to Parameswaran Iyer, Secretary Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.
- The Minister for Drinking Water and Sanitation Narendra Singh Tomar announced that his Ministry would now start ranking all districts in terms of sanitation coverage and solid and liquid waste management to instil competitive spirit at the ground level.

- The Ministry also drew up a plan to celebrate a “Freedom from Open Defecation Week,” in the run up to the 70th Independence Day.
- In Allahabad 24 villages by the banks of Ganga – also called Ganga grams – would be declared as model Ganga villages, according to Mr. Tomar.
- The Drinking Water and Sanitation Minister pointed out that 77 Central Ministries had a sum of ₹12,000 crore for the Swachh Bharat campaign and every Ministry should pitch in.

II. President Ram Nath Kovind – Achieving Swachh Bharat Mission a True Tribute to Mahatma Gandhi:

- On the eve of Gandhi Jayanti, the President Ram Nath Kovind said India was fighting “a decisive battle for cleanliness and hygiene.”
- The President said “cleanliness is not only the responsibility of sanitation personnel and Government Departments. Today, India is fighting a decisive battle for cleanliness and hygiene through the ‘Swachhta Hi Seva’ campaign. Gandhiji believed that ‘Cleanliness is next to Godliness’. He visualised cleanliness as having three dimensions – a clean mind, a clean body and clean surroundings.”
- Mr. Kovind pointed out that Swachh Bharat Mission was a multi-stakeholder mission and achieving it would be a true tribute to the Father of the Nation.
- On October 2, 2017, the President declared open defecation-free (ODF) status for rural Gujarat.

III. Prime Minister Narendra Modi Launched the “Swachhata Hi Seva” Campaign (September 15 – October 2, 2018):

- On September 15, 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the “Swachhata Hi Seva” (Cleanliness is Service”) campaign stressing that the movement aimed at fulfilling Mahatma Gandhi’s dream of a clean India.
- “From today till October 2, let us rededicate ourselves towards fulfilling Bapu’s dream of a clean India,” the Prime Minister said.
- Mr. Modi wrote to around 2,000 citizens from different walks of life, inviting them to be a part of the cleanliness campaign.
- Mr. Modi hailed the contribution of women in the cleanliness movement, pointing out that the contribution of India’s nari shakti (women power) in the Swachh Bharat mission was immense.
- “Youngsters are ambassadors of social change. The way they have furthered the message of cleanliness is commendable. The youth are at the forefront of a positive change in India,” the Prime Minister said.
- The sanitation coverage in India had increased from 40% to over 90% in the four years of the “Swachh Bharat” (Clean India) project, according to Mr. Modi.
- “Had anybody imagined that more than 450 districts would be open-defecation free (ODF) in four years or that 20 States and Union Territories would be open-defecation-free in four years,” Mr. Modi said.
- The Prime Minister pointed out that all sections of society and every part of the country had joined the cleanliness drive. He asked people to rededicate themselves to fulfilling Mahatma Gandhi’s dream of a clean India.

IV. International Sanitation Convention (New Delhi, October 2, 2018):

- From September 29, 2018, delegates from 65 countries gathered in Delhi at the Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention and on October 2, 2018, the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres also joined Prime Minister Narendra Modi to show his support for Swachh Bharat.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that it was Gandhiji's teachings which influenced him to talk about making India open defecation free (ODF) on August 15, 2014.
- Mr. Modi termed the Swachh Bharat Mission as the world's largest and most successful people's movement with toilet coverage in rural areas going up from 38% in 2014 to over 94 four years later.
- "The government made the mission a priority. Once the minds are ready to change, people bring changes and they don't wait for the government," the Prime Minister said.
- People's participation, combined with public funding and partnerships were the key drivers behind the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan's successful campaign, according to Mr. Modi.
- The Prime Minister said that India was taking the lead on UN's Sustainable Development Goal on sanitation and was on course to fulfil its commitments 11 years earlier.
- The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres cited the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan as an example for the global community stressing that "India has shown that with political will and commitment, it is possible to achieve ambitious targets quickly."
- The UN Chief lauded the "remarkable leadership of India" saying "It's not the largest investment, but the largest campaign of people's mobilisation in this area around the world.... Eliminating open defecation should be central to sanitation. I commend India for making it a programme at the highest political level."
- India was urgently attending to the need to end open defecation and other nations should follow its lead, according to Mr. Guterres.

V. Conclusion:

- The deadline for all of India to become 'open-defecation free' is October 2, 2019.
- A report by the World Health Organisation (WHO) said that by the time Swachh Bharat ends in 2019, more than 3,00,000 lives would have been saved, according to the Secretary to the Drinking Water and Sanitation Ministry Parameswaran Iyer.
- As the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan completed four years it has become a 'people's movement', according to Mr. Iyer.
- The number of toilets built is 8.6 crore and 24 States have become open defecation free, according to Mr. Iyer.
- The most significant aspect, according to a recent independent survey, as part of the World Bank supported project, the usage of toilets was 93%, according to Mr. Iyer.
- It showed that the behavioural change programme was at the heart of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, according to the Secretary to the Drinking Water and Sanitation Ministry.
- Haryana, Gujarat and Rajasthan were ranked among the top three cleanest States having a population of more than three million, according to a survey conducted by the government in rural areas.
- Satara in Maharashtra, Rewari in Haryana and Pedapalli in Telangana were ranked as the top three clean districts, according to the Swachh Survekshan report (gramin) 2018.

IX.4. INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE**I. India's Prime Minister Launched International Solar Alliance (Paris, 2015):**

- **India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched an International Solar Alliance (ISA) at the 21st Conference of Parties (CoP 21) at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris, on November 30, 2015.**
- **The revolution in the field would bring power to all citizens, and create unlimited economic opportunity, according to Mr. Modi.**
- **The ISA invited all countries located fully or partly between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn to join.**
- **Headquarters in Gurgaon: The ISA would function from the National Institute of Solar Energy in India, Gurgaon. The ISA is the first international body that will have a secretariat in India.**
- **The ISA launch resolution said that it sought to share collective ambitions to reduce the cost of finance and technology that was needed to deploy solar power widely; generation and storage technologies would be adapted to the individual countries' needs.**
- **The ISA would pursue tasks like cooperation in training, building institutions, regulatory issues, common standards, and investment including joint ventures.**
- **The then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that the UN would work closely with the ISA and commended India's success in adopting the technology, as witnessed in the solar energy projects in Gujarat.**

II. The International Solar Alliance (ISA) Came into Existence (December 6, 2017):

- **On December 6, 2017, the International Solar Alliance (ISA) came into legal, independent existence.**
- **The ISA is the first treaty-based international inter-governmental organisation to be based out of India.**
- **The ISA is an Indian initiative, jointly launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President in 2015.**
- **The ISA aims to mobilise \$1,000 billion in investments by 2030 for "massive deployment" of solar energy (1000 GW) and paving the way for future technologies adapted for fossil-free future and keeping the rise in global temperature below 2°C by the end of the 21st century.**
- **India is also committed to having 175,000 MW of renewable energy in the grid by 2022.**
- **Public Sector Undertakings of the Government of India, Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) and Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) have also made a contribution of \$1 million (₹6.5 crore) each for creating the ISA corpus fund.**
- **"India and France initiated the International Solar Alliance. It already has 121 members [countries] and is perhaps the single most important global achievement since the Paris Agreement of 2015," Prime Minister Narendra Modi told the World Sustainable Development Summit in New Delhi on February 16, 2018.**
- **Currently 61 countries have joined the ISA while 32 countries have ratified the Framework Agreement.**

III. International Solar Alliance Founding Conference (New Delhi, March 11, 2018):

- The Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance (ISA), co-chaired by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron, was held in New Delhi on March 11, 2018.
- The Conference was attended by 23 Heads of States and Governments including the Indian Prime Minister and the French President.
- "India will provide assistance to 15 countries for \$1.4 billion. I am happy to announce that to fill the gap of solar technology, India will start a solar technology mission with international focus, which will cover all government technical and educational institutions," according to India's Prime Minister.
- Mr. Modi presented a 10-point action plan, aimed at making solar power more affordable while raising the share of power generated, including the following:
 - Concessional and less risky financing of solar projects
 - Raising the share of solar electricity in the energy mix
 - Framing rules, standards and regulations to support the initiative
 - An eco-system to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship in the domain
 - To build better storage systems
 - Mass manufacturing of solar products to cut costs
- France was committed to providing an additional €700 million to loans and support by 2022 to emerging economies for solar energy projects, according to the French President.
- The French President identified three issues to be addressed – the Solar energy potential in each country should be identified; mobilisation of finance; and the provision of a favourable framework.
- Mr. Macron said that the member countries of the ISA would ensure distribution of finance and expertise.
- "India will produce 175 GW electricity from renewable sources by 2022 and 100 GW will be from solar energy," according to Mr. Modi.
- "Distribution of 28 crore LED bulbs in three years has saved \$2 billion and 4 GW of electricity. India will also provide 500 training slots for ISA member-countries and start a solar tech mission to lead R&D," according to India's Prime Minister.

IV. First General Assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) (New Delhi, October 2, 2018):

- The International Solar Alliance (ISA) was launched in 2015 and has its headquarters in India. Currently, 70 countries have signed its framework agreement and 44 have ratified it.
- Leaders of 40 countries attended the first General Assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) held in New Delhi on October 2, 2018.
- Prime Minister Modi said the membership of ISA – so far restricted to countries between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn – would be increased to include all member countries of the United Nations.
- "Imagine a world where we would have 'one world, one sun, one grid,' the Prime Minister said. "In such a world, where there is no sun-down, where the sun is bright in some part of the world, where is the question of lack of energy?"

- **"In the last 150-200 years, humanity has used fuels from below the ground for its lighting needs," Mr. Modi said.**
- **"We have seen and even now are seeing how nature is protesting against this. It is continuously giving us the message that the way forward has to be through fuels found above the ground," according to the Prime Minister.**
- **"Today, the ISA has become a ray of hope for the world in just three years," Mr. Modi pointed out. "My belief is that the ISA will top the list of climate change organisations in the 21st Century. What OPEC was doing for the world, in the future the ISA will do. The role of oil wells will be replaced by the sun's rays."**
- **The Prime Minister said that India had set a target of 40% of electricity generation capacity from non-fossil fuels by 2030. So far, 20% of capacity from non-hydro renewables.**
- **The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said "we saw signs of hope in Paris 2015, but current data shows that the commitments by countries are not enough to halt the warming of 2 degrees Celsius or 1.5 degrees Celsius. In other words, the warming is moving faster than we are."**

V. Prime Minister Narendra Modi Conferred the Champions of the Earth Award by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres (New Delhi, October 3, 2018):

- **On October 3, 2019, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred the Champions of the Earth Award by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres at a ceremony in New Delhi.**
- **"In PM Narendra Modi, we have a leader who realises the issue of climate change and understands the benefits of climate action. He knows the problems and also works to solve them," the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said.**
- **India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said: "It is a proud moment for India."**
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the "honour is the result of the commitment that the people of India have towards the environment."**
- **Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron were among others conferred the Champions of the Earth Awards, the United Nations "highest environment honour".**
- **The awards for Mr. Modi and Mr. Macron were announced on the sidelines of UN General Assembly in the 'Policy Leadership' category for their "pioneering work in championing the International Solar Alliance and promoting new areas of cooperation on environmental action, including Mr. Macron's work on the Global Pact for the Environment and Mr. Modi's unprecedented pledge to eliminate single-use plastic in India by 2022."**

VI. On October 3, 2018, the Cochin International Airport also received the UN Award for 'Entrepreneurial Vision, (and) for its leadership in the use of sustainable energy.'

IX.5. CYCLONE FANI

I. Cyclone Fani:

1. Introduction:

- **Cyclonic storm Fani, which struck Puri in Odisha on May 3, 2019, was the first severe, cyclonic storm to have formed in April in India's oceanic neighbourhood since 1976, according to records from the India Meteorological Department (IMD).**
- **"This is a cyclone that's forming due to the warming of the Bay of Bengal basin... with global warming we have to be prepared for such occurrences and take precaution accordingly," the Director-General of IMD, K. J. Ramesh said.**

- Tropical cyclones in India's neighbourhood begin as 'depressions' or gradual build-up of natural air and pockets of low pressure.
- Cyclones are ranked by the IMD on a 5-point scale with the mildest having a speed of 62-88 kmph and the strongest, a 'super cyclonic storm at 221 kmph.
- Cyclone Fani was ranked as an 'extremely severe cyclonic storm'.

2. Cyclone Fani Struck Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal (May 3, 2019):

- On May 3, 2019, the extremely severe cyclonic storm Fani struck the coast of Odisha unleashing torrential rains and winds with speeds between 175-185 kmph.
- The cyclone caused the death of 41 people and 14 million people were affected.
- About 16,000 villages were impacted in 14 districts and 51 urban local bodies were affected.
- Fani damaged 1.6 lakh electric poles.
- "Fani was one of the rarest of rare summer cyclones. It tore apart critical infrastructure, especially power, telephone and water supplies," according to the Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, who reviewed the situation.
- Mr. Patnaik sought Centre's assistance and stressed that coastal Odisha needed funds to the tune of ₹10,000 crore for building disaster-resilient power infrastructure. Odisha is also seeking ₹7,000 crore for converting five lakh kutcha houses to pucca dwellings and setting up a disaster-resilient telecom network.
- "As Odisha faces such extreme calamities frequently, we seek special category status for the State," the Odisha Chief Minister said.
- On May 6, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced ex gratia of ₹2 lakh to the next of kin of the deceased and ₹50,000 to the seriously injured. Mr. Modi promised further assistance after the assessment by an inter-ministerial Central team.
- The total loss in financial terms caused by the cyclone Fani in Odisha is estimated to be around ₹50,000 crore.
- The Centre has announced ₹1,000 crore interim funding for Odisha apart from the ₹341 crore it had release in anticipation of cyclone Fani's landfall.

3. Action Taken by Odisha in Response to Cyclone Fani:

- The Chief Minister of Odisha Naveen Patnaik said nearly 12 lakh people were evacuated and shifted to safer locations within 24 hours ahead of the cyclone Fani from about 10,000 villages and 52 urban agglomerations in the largest such exercise at the time of a natural calamity in the country.
- The evacuees were accommodated in over 4,000 shelters, including 880 specially designed cyclone centres where free cooked food was served to them, according to Mr. Patnaik.
- Around 2,000 emergency workers, along with civil society organisations, personnel of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), the Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF) and one lakh officials were engaged in the restoration work, according to a statement by the Odisha Chief Minister.

4. Rescue Efforts by the Navy and the Coast Guard:

- The Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) deployed men, material and assets as part of the preparatory efforts for the Fani cyclone.

- The Navy and the ICG launched Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations as soon as the 'extremely severe cyclonic storm' Fani crossed the Odisha coast.
- The Eastern Naval Command intensified rescue operations in Chilika and Puri. Additional relief material and medical teams were sent to Odisha from Visakhapatnam, the Navy said.
- INS Ranvijay and Airavat with helicopters sailed to Odisha from Visakhapatnam with relief material and medical teams, joining rescue operations with INS Sahyadri, Ranvir and Kadmatt.
- Dornier maritime reconnaissance aircraft were also deployed for aerial survey to assess the impact of the cyclone.
- From April 23, 2019, the ICG had launched preparatory efforts after signs of low pressure build-up in South East Bay of Bengal.
- As part of the effort, 34 disaster response teams were kept on standby at various places and two ships, ICGS Sagar and Shaurya, sailed from Chennai with one helicopter on-board for aerial surveillance and assistance.

5. UN Agency Praised India for Timely Response to Cyclone Fani:

- The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) commended the Indian Meteorological Department's "almost pinpoint accuracy" of early warnings of Cyclone Fani that helped authorities conduct a well-targeted evacuation plan and minimise the loss of life.
- "India's zero casualty approach to managing extreme weather events is a major contribution to the implementation of the Sendai Framework and the reduction of loss of life from such events," Mami Mizutori, head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) said.
- The Sendai Framework is a voluntary and non-binding agreement which recognises that the State has the primary role to reduce disaster risk but that responsibility should be shared with other stakeholders, including the local government.
- "The almost pinpoint accuracy of the early warnings from the Indian Meteorological Department had enabled the authorities to conduct a well-targeted evacuation plan, which had involved moving more than one million people into storm shelters," according to Denis McClean, spokesperson, UNISDR.
- The UNISDR also appreciated the advisory distributed by India's National Disaster Management Authority and local authorities days before Fani made landfall in an effort to minimise loss of life and injury.

II. Conclusion:

- Although the cyclone Fani caused a lot of damage across coastal Odisha, but its management set an example globally on how early warnings, preparation and informed public participation can reduce loss of life.
- As India prepares for frequent intense cyclones along its coastal States, the focus needs to be on resilience and strengthening adaptation
- Better management of cyclones and other disasters can be attained through houses and shelters designed to withstand disasters, accurate early warning systems, periodic drills as well as financial risk reduction through insurance
- India's other States need to emulate Odisha in dealing with disasters.
- The disaster caused by cyclone Fani is acute and the challenge is to rehabilitate those who lost their homes and livelihoods

IX.6. WATER**SUMMARY****I. Introduction:**

- 1. Water a Renewable and Finite Natural Resource Available Globally**
- 2. March 22 - World Water Day - to Focus Attention on Sustainable Management of Freshwater Resources**
- 3. The Increasing Demand for Agricultural Products the Reason behind the Freshwater Withdrawals**
- 4. The Global Challenge of Water Management**
- 5. Water a Key Strategic Issue - Scarcity of Water Threatens Economic Growth and Leads to Social Tensions**
- 6. Water a Leading Policy Issue in India**
- 7. Lack of Coherent National Water Policy**
- 8. Water a State Property**
- 9. Inter-State Disputes on Sharing of River Waters**
- 10. Management of Water Resources in India:**
 - Initial Focus on Irrigation
 - Use of Water Increased with Green Revolution
 - 1980s - Private Investment in Irrigation Increased
 - In the 1990s there was a decline in public investments in irrigation.
 - Overexploitation of Groundwater Resources
 - Availability and Accessibility of Potable Drinking Water Facilities a Problem in Many Parts of the Country
 - Conservation and Ensuring Water Security for Future Generations

II. Current Situation in India:

- **India's ability to achieve higher economic growth, environment sustainability and enhance quality of life for citizens would be determined by water**
- **India has 17% of the World's population but only 4% of the world's fresh water resources**
- **Currently 75% of the households in India do not have access to drinking water and nearly 90% of rural households do not have access to piped water**
- **About 25% of the global groundwater usage annually is undertaken in India which is also the world's largest groundwater extractor**
- **Five Indian cities figure in the world's 20 largest cities under water stress.**
- **Water consuming crops like rice and sugarcane are widely grown in water scarce states in India consuming large amounts of water for irrigation per hectare**

III. Success of Swachh Bharat Mission to help in 'Nal se Jal' Piped Drinking Water Scheme for Every Rural Household by 2024:

- **On June 5, 2019, the Union Minister for Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said that the Swachh Bharat Mission was instrumental in reducing groundwater contamination.**
- **"The World Health Organisation (WHO) 2018 study had estimated that the Swachh Bharat Mission will save over 3 lakh lives by the time India is declared Open Defecation Free (ODF)."**
- **"India's Swachh Bharat Mission has been an example and inspiration to other countries, especially in Africa, but also East and South Asia,"**

- “We believe our programme had four reasons for its success that we can share with the rest of the world: political leadership, public financing, partnerships and people’s participation,”
- India has increased its population with access to a protected drinking water source less than 30 minutes away from 79% in 2000 to 93% in 2017.
- Percentage of households in India getting piped water remained stagnant at 44% over the 17 year period.
- The newly created Jal Shakti Ministry is expected to consolidate water policy and management which had been spread across seven Ministries.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that the Government’s aim was to ensure piped water to every rural household by 2024
- The Nal se Jal scheme aims to provide piped drinking water to every rural home by 2024.
- Piped water can be a transformative project and would play a key role in reducing India’s water stress.
- Piped water projects would help in harnessing technology to enhance water conservation.
- Aim of the Government’s integrated approach to water-related issues under the Jal Shakti Ministry was to provide piped drinking water to every rural home by 2024.

IV. Jal Shakti Abhiyan Launched (July 1, 2019):

- The Central Government launched the Jal Shakti Abhiyan on July 1, 2019 to enhance rainwater harvesting and conservation efforts in 255 water-stressed districts of the country.
- The Jal Shakti Abhiyan is aimed at making water conservation and promotion of irrigation efficiency a public campaign through asset creation and communication campaigns.
- The Jal Shakti Abhiyan is a time-bound, mission-mode water conservation and irrigation efficiency campaign for water security in rural India.
- The Jal Shakti Abhiyan campaign will run from July 1, 2019 to September 15, 2019 in States receiving rainfall during the south-west monsoon, while States receiving rainfall during the north-east monsoon will be covered from October 1, 2019 to November 30, 2019.
- During this period, officers, groundwater experts and scientists would work together with State and district officials in India’s water-stressed districts for water conservation, resource management and irrigation efficiency.
- The areas of focus would be the following:
 - Water conservation and rain water harvesting
 - Renovation of water bodies
 - Renovation of borewell recharge structures
 - Watershed development
 - Intensive afforestation

V. Conclusion:

1. Water a Critical Resource which can Enhance India’s Economic Growth

2. Suggestions to Meet India’s Water Challenge:

- “Need to restore, conserve and augment all existing local water bodies. Telangana’s Mission Kakatiya is an example where state water bodies restored 46,000 water tanks.”
- “Need to utilise advanced technology. Remote sensing and geographic information system can enable real time data on water and catalyse communities to conserve water resources.”
- “Community management of water and formation of water users’ association can lead to success at grassroots level.”

- “India needs to radically improve its farm water efficiency.”
- “A major cause for India’s groundwater crisis is the legal framework that ties up water rights with land rights and allows landowners to extract unlimited groundwater. The example to follow is Maharashtra, which has controlled extraction of groundwater through legislation.”
- “There is an imperative for a rational and pragmatic policy for pricing water. Pricing of water will ensure adequate investment in water infrastructure.
- “Ensuring universal, affordable, efficient and high quality water through reuse of waste water, building rainwater catchments, dual piping, desalination as well as water legislation, dynamic water pricing, public education, R&D.”

3. Water Crisis and Better Management of Water Resources:

- Water Crisis: Diminishing supply of fresh water against a sharply accelerating demand.
- Two Approaches to Towards Water Management
- Treating Water as a Tradable Commodity
- Treating Water as a Community Resource
- Water Crisis More Related to Water Management than to Water Scarcity

4. Need to Protect the Water Resources from Degradation

5. Groundwater Situation Becoming Critical

6. Water Sector Reform - Need to Involve Communities to Protect Water Bodies

7. Efficient Use of Water Resources:

- Setting the correct price for water would increase the efficient use of water
- Efficient use of water in the agricultural sector is essential as agriculture accounts for more than 70 per cent of water use in India
- Need to bring in innovation in recycling and reuse of wastewater for industrial use and utilising modern technologies for desalination.