

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

Time: 45 Min

Date: 12-02-2025

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INDIA-SRI LANKA FISHERIES DISPUTE

Context

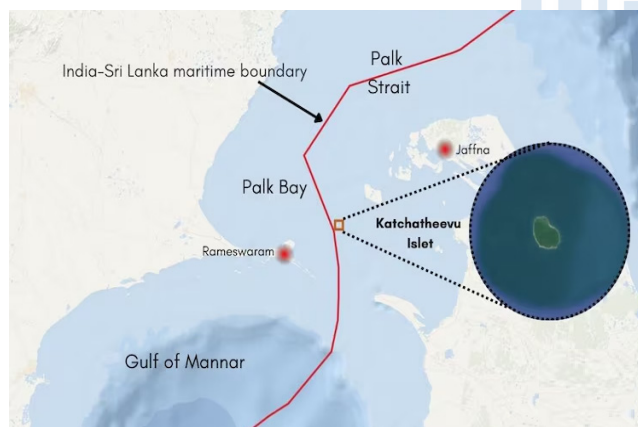
- The **maritime boundary between India and Sri Lanka**, particularly in the **Palk Strait**, has been a long-standing contentious issue. Allegations of **illegal fishing, destructive fishing practices, and frequent arrests** of Indian fishermen by the **Sri Lankan Navy** have fueled diplomatic tensions between the two nations.

Historical Context

- India and Sri Lanka have defined their **maritime boundary** through a series of agreements, focusing on **territorial waters, exclusive economic zones (EEZ), and fishing rights**:
 - 1974 Agreement:** India recognized Sri Lanka's sovereignty over **Katchatheevu**, an uninhabited island in the **Palk Strait**.
 - 1976 Agreement:** Extended the **maritime boundary** and restricted **fishing rights** to the respective countries.

Key Issues

- Recurrent Arrests & Seizures:**



- Indian fishermen, especially from **Tamil Nadu**, frequently **cross the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL)** in search of fish due to **depleting fish stocks** in Indian waters.
- Sri Lankan authorities have responded with **arrests, boat confiscations, and legal actions**, straining diplomatic relations.
- Violation of the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL):**
 - The **IMBL**, established under the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**, demarcates territorial waters.

- Indian fishermen claim **historical fishing rights** beyond the IMBL, leading to legal and diplomatic conflicts with Sri Lanka.
- Ecologically Destructive Fishing Methods:**
 - Bottom trawling** by Indian fishermen is a major concern for Sri Lanka, as it **damages marine habitats** and depletes fish stocks.
 - Sri Lankan fishermen advocate for **sustainable fishing practices** to **protect their waters from over-exploitation**.
- National Security Concerns:**
 - Sri Lanka fears that organized trawler intrusions could be **exploited by Tamil militant groups for illegal activities**.
- Katchatheevu Island Dispute:**
 - Indian fishermen **retain limited rights** to use **Katchatheevu** for **drying nets and resting**, but its sovereignty remains a contentious issue.
 - Tamil Nadu politicians** periodically demand its return to India, keeping the dispute alive in public discourse.
- Livelihood Crisis:**
 - Declining fish stocks in Indian waters** have forced **Indian fishermen into Sri Lankan territory**, increasing conflicts.
 - Sri Lankan Tamil fishermen**, recovering from **decades of civil war (1983–2009)**, find their **livelihoods threatened** by Indian fishing incursions.

International Laws on Freedom of Fishing

- UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA, 1995):** Requires nations to comply with Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) for fishery access.
- UNCLOS (1982):** Article 87 restricts high-seas fishing for states that fail to comply with international conservation measures.

Recent Developments

- Diplomatic Talks & Agreements:** India and Sri Lanka have **held multiple discussions** on the issue, with Sri Lanka urging India to **ban bottom trawling**.
- Joint Working Group on Fisheries:** A bilateral mechanism to address fishing disputes and explore sustainable solutions.
- Deep-Sea Fishing Initiatives:** The **Indian government** has introduced **schemes to promote deep-sea fishing**, but **implementation has been slow**.

- **Continued Arrests:** Despite diplomatic efforts, **arrests of Indian fishermen persist**, with incidents reported in **2023, 2024, and early 2025**.

Potential Solutions

- **Bilateral Agreements on Fishing Rights:**
 - ♦ A structured agreement allowing **regulated access to Sri Lankan waters** for Indian fishermen under **specific conditions**.
- **Technology and Sustainable Fishing:**
 - ♦ Encouraging **Indian fishermen to adopt sustainable fishing practices** and transition to **deep-sea fishing** instead of bottom trawling.
- **Joint Patrolling and Monitoring:**
 - ♦ Strengthening **cooperation between Indian and Sri Lankan Coast Guards** to prevent **illegal crossings** and ensure **fair treatment of fishermen**.
- **Compensation and Livelihood Support:**
 - ♦ The **government should provide financial aid and alternative employment opportunities** for affected fishermen to reduce dependence on illegal fishing.
- **People-to-People Diplomacy:**
 - ♦ **Facilitating dialogue** between **Indian and Sri Lankan fishing communities** to **foster mutual understanding** and **reduce tensions**.

Conclusion

- The India-Sri Lanka maritime dispute remains a **complex issue with economic, diplomatic, and ecological dimensions**. While **diplomatic discussions continue**, a **comprehensive approach** involving **sustainable fishing practices, alternative livelihoods, and enhanced maritime cooperation** is crucial to achieving a **long-term resolution**.

Source: TH

CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX (CPI) 2024

Context

- India ranked **96 out of 180 countries** in the **Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2024**.

About

- The **Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2024** highlights how corruption is hindering **global efforts to combat climate change**.

- The index ranks **180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption**.
- It uses a **scale of zero to 100**, where “zero” is highly corrupt and “100” is very clean.
- The report has been compiled by **Transparency International**.
- Corruption is an evolving global threat that does far more than undermine development – it is a key cause of **declining democracy, instability and human rights violations**.

Key CPI 2024 Findings

- 85% of the world's population lives in countries with **CPI scores below 50**.
- India scored 38 out of 100, dropping one point from 2023, and ranked 96th.
- **Least Corrupt Countries:** Denmark, Finland, Singapore.
- **Most Corrupt Countries:** South Sudan, Somalia, Venezuela.

How Corruption is Affecting Climate Action?

- **Weakens Climate Policies:** Corruption prioritizes the interests of a few powerful groups over the public good, leading to weaker environmental policies.
- **Erodes Governance & Law Enforcement:** Poor governance and lack of transparency reduce accountability in climate decision-making.
- **Misuse of Climate Funds:** Many climate-vulnerable nations score below 50 on CPI, increasing risks of fund misallocation.
- **Worsens Inequality:** Marginalized communities bear the brunt of climate change due to ineffective policies.
- **Undermines Multilateralism:** Corruption influences climate negotiations, empowering fossil fuel lobbyists and reducing transparency.

Recommendations

- **Strengthen Anti-Corruption Measures:** Integrate safeguards in climate finance and policies.
- **Increase Transparency in Climate Policy:** Implement lobbying regulations and open climate finance records.
- **Enhance Investigations & Protections:** Protect whistleblowers and environmental activists.
- **Promote Public Engagement:** Ensure communities affected by climate change are included in decision-making.

Source: Transparencia

MANIPUR UNREST RAISES THE QUESTION OF PRESIDENT'S RULE

Context

- The resignation of the Chief Minister of Manipur has loomed the possibility of President's Rule in the state.

Article 356 of the Constitution

- Article 356** empowers the President of India to impose **President's Rule** in a state when governance cannot be carried out as per constitutional provisions.
- This typically follows a report from the Governor, stating that the state machinery has failed.
 - The President issues a proclamation that transfers the state government's functions to the Centre and the state legislature's powers to Parliament.
 - The judiciary, especially the **High Court, continues to function** without interference.
 - The proclamation remains **valid for up to two months** but must be **approved by both Houses of Parliament** to extend further.
 - If approved, the **Rule can last for six months** and be extended in increments of six months, up to a maximum of **three years**.

President's Rule in India

- Since the adoption of the Constitution, **Article 356** has been invoked **134 times** across various states and Union Territories.
- Manipur and Uttar Pradesh** have seen its imposition the most, at ten times each. However, some states and UTs have spent longer durations under central control than others.
 - Other states, like **Jammu and Kashmir or Punjab**, might have had fewer instances but longer periods of central rule due to specific circumstances like prolonged political instability or security concerns.

S R Bommai v Union of India (1994) Case

- The Supreme Court, in the landmark **S R Bommai v. The Union of India** case placed restrictions on the misuse of **Article 356**.
- The judgment established that;
 - The President's decision is subject to **judicial review**.
 - Courts can strike down the imposition if found illegal, malafide, or based on extraneous considerations.

- The state legislature alone would be suspended, and the executive and other arms of governance would continue unless Parliament ratified the proclamation within two months.

Emergency Provisions

- Part XVIII** of the Constitution speaks of emergency provisions.
- The emergency provisions can be classified into three categories:
 - Articles 352, 353, 354, 358, and 359** which relate to National emergency,
 - Articles 355, 356, and 357** which deal with the imposition of President's rule in States in a certain situation and,
 - Article 360** which speaks of financial emergency.

Way Ahead

- President's Rule, while a constitutionally sanctioned instrument, remains a debatable issue in Indian politics.
- The ongoing debate surrounding its application, as seen in the Manipur situation, underscores the need for a balanced approach, ensuring both the stability of state governments and the preservation of constitutional values.

Source: IE

INDIA-EFTA DESK

Context

- India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA)** have taken a significant step towards deeper economic collaboration with the **inauguration of the India-EFTA Desk**.

About

- This initiative follows the recently concluded **India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA)**, making EFTA the **first European bloc to formalize a trade pact with India**.
 - India has received an investment commitment of \$100 billion in 15 years from the EFTA, allowing several products such as Swiss watches, chocolates and cut and polished diamonds at lower or zero duties.
- India-EFTA Desk** will serve as the **bridge between businesses on both sides**, promoting ease of doing business.

- ♦ It will support EFTA businesses looking to invest, expand, or establish operations in India.
- ♦ It will drive investment in renewable energy, life sciences, engineering, and digital transformation.

Significance for India

- EFTA has a strategic importance to India's development goals.
 - ♦ Norway's expertise in green shipping, Switzerland's advancements in rail networks, Iceland's leadership in geothermal energy, and Liechtenstein's high-value manufacturing.
- The research collaborations between IITs and the Arctic University of Norway, will demonstrate TEPA's broader scope beyond trade.

About European Free Trade Association (EFTA)

- The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) is the **intergovernmental organisation of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland**.
- It was set up in **1960** by its then seven Member States for the promotion of **free trade and economic integration between its members**.
- **Trade with India:** India-EFTA two-way trade was about \$24 billion in 2023-24 against \$18.65 billion in 2022-23.
 - ♦ Switzerland is the largest trading partner and investor in India followed by Norway in the bloc.

India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement

- **Market Access:** The EFTA states has imports and exports of goods and services close to \$1.3 trillion in 2021, making them the **10th largest merchandise traders** and **eighth largest services traders worldwide**.
 - ♦ It would provide Indian businesses with improved access to the markets of EFTA member countries.
- **Diversification of Trade Partners:** Reducing dependency on a few key trading partners can help mitigate risks associated with economic fluctuations in specific regions.
- **Tariff Reductions:** The trade agreements typically involve the reduction or elimination of tariffs on goods traded between the participating countries.
 - ♦ This can make Indian goods more competitive in EFTA markets, potentially boosting exports.

- **Technology and Innovation Exchange:** EFTA companies are world leaders in pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, machinery manufacturing, R&D-driven technology products, geothermal-related technologies, marine technology, energy-related services, financial services, banking and insurance.

- ♦ Collaboration in research, technology transfer, and innovation can be enhanced through a trade agreement.
- **Potential for Increased Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** It can attract foreign direct investment by creating a more favorable and predictable business environment.
- **Mutually Beneficial Trade:** EFTA has a track record of negotiating mutually beneficial trade agreements, which to date cover an extensive network of 29 free trade agreements (FTAs) with 40 partner countries.

Concerns

- **Divergent Regulatory Standards:** Harmonizing standards related to product quality, safety, and environmental regulations is crucial for smooth trade, and differences may lead to additional compliance costs for businesses.
- **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR):** Both parties need to agree on the standards and enforcement mechanisms for patents, copyrights, trademarks, and other intellectual property issues.
- **Services and Investment Barriers:** Concerns may arise if there are obstacles to the free flow of services or restrictions on foreign investment in certain sectors.
- **Labor and Environmental Standards:** Ensuring that the trade deal includes provisions for maintaining or improving labor rights and environmental protections is essential.

Way Ahead

- The potential benefits of a TEPA between India and EFTA states are significant.
- This is not merely a transactional arrangement to improve market access, but the basis for a long-term relationship grounded with a vision for mutual growth.
- The EFTA desk embodies this commitment by fostering connections that benefit economies and societies of all parties, not just economically but socially and environmentally as well.

Source: PIB

INDIA-RUSSIA DEFENCE COOPERATIONS

In News

- Recently, Russia's state-owned defense export company (Rosoboronexport) proposed a partnership with India on the **Russian fifth-generation fighter aircraft (FGFA), the Su-57E**.

India-Russia Defence cooperations

- Defence cooperation is a key aspect of the **India-Russia strategic partnership**, guided by the Agreement on the Programme for Military Technical Cooperation.
- The India-Russia defense cooperation also includes the supply and development of military equipment and technology, as well as agreements like the military technical cooperation and a Navy-to-Navy cooperation agreement.

Cooperation Frameworks

- Agreement for 2021-2031** signed during the India-Russia 2+2 Dialogue in 2021
 - It aims to strengthen military cooperation in R&D, production, and after-sales support of armaments and military equipment.
- IRIGC-MTC** : India and Russia have a structured approach for military cooperation, led by the **India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-MTC)**, established in 2000.
- Annual Defence Minister Meetings**: The Defence Ministers meet annually to review ongoing projects and discuss military cooperation.
- Bilateral Projects**: It includes the supply of S-400, licensed production of T-90 tanks and Su-30 MKI, supply of MiG-29 and Kamov helicopters, INS Vikramaditya (formerly Admiral Gorshkov), production of Ak-203 rifles in India and BrahMos missiles.
- Joint Exercises - "INDRA"**: Tri-Service joint exercises, including the Indra exercise, have been held.
 - India also participated in the International Army Games and Ex Vostok in Russia.
 - Exercise Aviaindra**, a Biennial Air Force level exercise between Indian and the Russian Federation.
- India and Russia had previously signed a joint development deal in 2010 for the fifth-generation fighter aircraft (FGFA) program, but India withdrew in 2018 due to issues with technology transfer.

Latest Developments

- Su-57E in India**: Russia's state-owned defense export company offered to localize production of the **Su-57E in India**, potentially starting as early as 2025, at the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) plant.
 - It would provide advanced fifth-generation technologies, including engines, Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radars, optics, AI elements, software communication, and air weapons.
 - These technologies could benefit **India's Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) program**.
- Additionally, Russia proposed **long-term cooperation** with India in upgrading aircraft capabilities, building on 60 years of successful collaboration in aircraft production.
- Russia is considering a **logistics support agreement similar to India's Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)** with the US.
 - This would allow mutual use of military bases for refuelling, repairs, and resupply.
- Russia recently authorized the signing of the **Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement (RELOS)**, which will facilitate military exchanges, exercises, training, port calls, and humanitarian assistance operations.

Importance

- India views Russia as a long-time ally, particularly from the Cold War era, with significant cooperation in defence, oil, nuclear energy, and space exploration.
- India-Russia defence relations** are robust which highlight the compatibility of their military hardware, which India largely procures from Russia.
- The potential logistics agreement holds strategic significance for India, especially in the Arctic region, as it would enhance India's presence in this geopolitically critical area with access to Russian military facilities.

Issues and Concerns

- Reliance on import** : India is trying to develop into a defence manufacturing hub.
 - But it lacks a strong industrial base for military equipment.

- **Russia -Ukraine War** has raised concerns about Russia's ability to meet timelines for spares and hardware.
 - ♦ Western sanctions on Russia have raised concerns about delays in military deliveries
- **China Factor** : The partnership has become complicated due to Russia's growing ties with China, especially in light of the ongoing war in Ukraine, which is seen as a challenge for India.

Conclusion

- India-Russia military technical cooperation has evolved over time from a buyer-seller framework to one involving joint research and development, co-development and joint production of advanced defence technology and systems.
- Therefore to maintain their partnership ,India and Russia must address emerging issues.
 - ♦ This collaboration will continue to play a key role in shaping regional and global security.

Source :TH

INDIA'S FDI POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR INVESTMENTS

Context

- The Government has put in place a policy framework for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) that is transparent, predictable, and easily comprehensible.

What is Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) ?

- It refers to **investments made by foreign entities** (individuals or companies) in the business interests of another country, typically in the form of **ownership or control of enterprises**.
- At present, **FDI is prohibited** in lottery, gambling and betting, chit funds, Nidhi company, real estate business, and manufacturing of cigars, cheroots, cigarillos and cigarettes using tobacco.

Routes for FDI in India

- **Automatic Route:** No prior approval is required.
 - ♦ Investors need to inform the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) after making the investment.
 - ♦ Most sectors, such as manufacturing and software, fall under this route.
- **Government Approval Route:** Requires prior approval from the concerned Ministry or Department.
 - ♦ Sectors such as telecom, media, pharmaceuticals, and insurance fall under this route.

Key Features of FDI Policy Framework

- **Automatic Route for FDI:** More than **90% of FDI** inflows occur through the automatic route, minimizing regulatory bottlenecks.
- **Sectoral Liberalization:** Recent policy relaxations in Defence, Insurance, Petroleum & Natural Gas, Telecom, and Space have improved investment opportunities.
- **Insurance Sector Reforms:** The Union Budget 2025 announced an increase in the sectoral cap for the insurance sector from **74% to 100%**, provided the entire premium is invested in India.
- **Competitive Federalism:** The government promotes healthy competition through different initiatives to showcase positive business ecosystems and logistics performance across states and UTs.
 - ♦ Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP) rankings,
 - ♦ Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) report, and
 - ♦ Investment Friendliness Index of States (announced in Union Budget 2025).

Importance of FDI

- **Balance of Payments (BoP):** FDI helps bridge the current account deficit by bringing in foreign capital.
- **Currency Stability:** Healthy inflows support the value of the **rupee** in global markets.
- **Technology Transfer:** FDI facilitates the transfer of advanced technologies and managerial skills, boosting productivity and competitiveness.
- **Multiplier Effects:** FDI has indirect positive impacts on related sectors, leading to increased production, exports, and employment generation.

Steps taken by Government

- **Liberalized FDI Policy:** Increased FDI limits in defense (74%), insurance (74%), and single-brand retail (100%).
- **Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Schemes:** Launched in sectors like electronics, pharma, textiles, and automobiles to attract foreign investment.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Programs like Gati Shakti, Bharatmala, and Sagarmala focus on improving connectivity.
- **Digital Ecosystem:** Promotion of digital payments, e-governance, and technology-driven reforms.

Way Ahead

- **Prioritize Infrastructure Capex:** Ensure timely project execution and attract public-private partnerships (PPPs).
- **Workforce Skilling:** Collaborate with the private sector to upskill the workforce to meet industry demands.
- **Strengthen R&D and Innovation:** Promote research and development to enhance productivity and innovation in key sectors.

Source: PIB

NEWS IN SHORT

SANT GURU RAVIDAS**Context**

- PM Modi paid tributes to **Sant Guru Ravidas** on his birth anniversary.

About

- Guru Ravidas, a revered saint of the Bhakti movement in the **15th and 16th centuries**, is known for his powerful message of unity, devotion, and service to humanity.
- He was a disciple of **Sant Kabir**, and is considered the founder of the **Ravidassia religion**.

Life and Teachings

- He was a staunch advocate against **caste-based discrimination** and worked tirelessly for the **upliftment of marginalized communities**.
- He promoted the principles of human **equality, love, and brotherhood**, transcending religious and social barriers.
- He gave a very broad message of **'karma'** to society by coining the popular Hindi saying **'Mann Changa to Kathauti Mein Ganga'** (If your mind is pure, the Ganges is in your tub).

Legacy

- Ravidas's devotional verses were included in the Sikh scriptures known as **Guru Granth Sahib**.
- **The Panch Vani text** of the **Dadu Panthi tradition** within Hinduism also includes numerous poems of Ravidas.
- The Chief Architect of our Constitution, **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar** embodied the Constitutional principles around the values expressed by Guru Ravidasji.

Source: AIR

THAIPUSAM**In News**

- The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi greeted on the occasion of Thaipooosam.

About Thaipusam

- The name "Thaipusam" comes from "**Thai**" (the **Tamil month**) and "**Poosam**" (the star at its highest point during the festival).
- It is a Hindu festival celebrated to honour **Lord Murugan (also known as Lord Kartikeya)**, the Hindu god of war, victory, and wisdom, while also being a symbol of courage, determination, and spiritual growth.
 - ♦ Thaipusam commemorates when Lord Murugan received the divine vel (spear) from Goddess Parvati to defeat the demon Surapadma.
- The festival is celebrated on the full moon day in the Tamil month of Thai.
- It is widely celebrated by the Tamil community in Tamil Nadu, India, and globally in places like Sri Lanka, Singapore, and Malaysia.

Source: IE

FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE**Context**

- Foot and mouth disease (FMD) is a highly contagious viral disease of livestock with a significant economic impact.

About

- FMD is a highly transmissible disease caused by infection with an **Aphthovirus**, a member of the family **Picornaviridae**.
- The disease affects cattle, swine, sheep, goats and other cloven-hoofed ruminants.
- **Symptoms:** Fever, Blisters on the tongue, lips, mouth, hooves, and mammary glands, Erosions, Excess saliva, Loss of appetite, Lameness and Abortions.
- **Transmission:** FMD is transmitted by;
 - ♦ Direct contact with infected animals,
 - ♦ Indirect contact with contaminated objects like vehicles, clothing, footwear, and bedding,
 - ♦ Consuming contaminated feed or milk,
- **Treatment:** There's no specific treatment for FMD. Symptoms usually clear up in 7 to 10 days.
 - ♦ A topical oral anesthetic may help relieve the pain of mouth sores.

National Animal Disease Control Programme (NADCP)

- The Programme was launched in **2019** with a provision of 100% central assistance to states and Union Territories for Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) vaccination.
- NADCP was included as a component under **Livestock Health and Disease Control programme (LHDCP) scheme** from **2021**.

Source: PIB

UK-INDIA YOUNG PROFESSIONALS SCHEME

In News

- The ballot for the United Kingdom-India Young Professionals Scheme (YPS) will open soon .

About Scheme:

- It was launched in February 2023 and it allows UK and Indian nationals, aged 18 to 30, to live, study, travel, and work in the other country for up to two years.
- It is **part of a 2021 Migration and Mobility Agreement**, with a cap of 3,000 participants per year for each country.
- It is not extendable, unlike regular work visas, and does not allow applicants to bring dependents.
- In 2023, over 2,100 Indian nationals received YPS visas for the UK.
- Eligibility:** Candidates are required to have a qualification in the UK bachelor's degree or above and proof of £2,530 in savings to support themselves in the UK.
 - There is no requirement for a job offer or salary conditions, unlike other UK work visas, such as the skilled worker or health and care worker visas, which have stricter conditions including a certificate of sponsorship and minimum salary thresholds.

Source :IE

BIMSTEC YOUTH SUMMIT

In News

- India hosted the **1st BIMSTEC Youth Summit** in Gandhinagar, Gujarat

About the summit

- It is organized by India's Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Ministry of External Affairs, and CII YI as the knowledge partner.

- It brings together over 70 young leaders from the seven BIMSTEC countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand) to discuss challenges and opportunities in areas such as entrepreneurship, technology, digital connectivity, and sustainable development.
- The theme, **"Youth as a bridge for intra-BIMSTEC exchange,"** focuses on empowering youth to address regional issues and collaborate on solutions for a better future.
- Objectives :**It aims to foster youth engagement and development in the region, aligning with India's "Neighborhood First" and "Act East" policies, and its vision for regional security and growth (SAGAR).

Do you know ?

- The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) was established in 1997 with the signing of the **Bangkok Declaration**.
- Initially called BIST-EC (Bangladesh-India-Sri Lanka-Thailand Economic Cooperation), it later expanded to include Myanmar in December 1997 and Bhutan and Nepal in 2004, changing its name to BIMSTEC.
- Focus:** Initially focused on six sectors (trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism, fisheries), cooperation expanded in 2008 to include agriculture, health, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, environment, culture, people-to-people contact, and climate change.

Source: BS

GROSS DOMESTIC KNOWLEDGE PRODUCT (GDKP) TO MEASURE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

In Context

- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) held a session on the "Conceptual Framework of GDKP Measurement."

About Gross Domestic Knowledge Product (GDKP)

- The concept of GDKP was first propounded by **Prof. Umberto Sulpasso of the University of Southern California along with Prof. Jeff Cole**.
- It is a proposed metric designed to measure the knowledge generated and utilized within an economy and serve as a supplementary indicator to GDP.

- GDKP evaluates a nation's growth and future using **four fundamental pillars**:
 - ♦ **Knowledge Items (Ki)**: Identifying modern and traditional cultural knowledge that contributes to the country's intellectual capital.
 - ♦ **Country's Knowledge Producing Matrix (CKPM)**: Analyzing knowledge produced by government institutions, private organizations, and households.
 - ♦ **Country's Knowledge User Matrix (CKUM)**: Measuring the value of knowledge purchased by individuals and private entities, reflecting its demand and practical application.
 - ♦ **Cost of Learning**: Similar to the cost of living, this metric is proposed as a political reference point for government budget allocations and policy decisions.

Significance

- The initiative aims to quantify the impact of knowledge, innovation, and intellectual assets on India's economic and social landscape.
- GDKP could provide a more holistic picture of economic growth driven by research, innovation, and technology.

Source: IE

WORLD'S 1ST HYBRID QUANTUM SUPERCOMPUTER

In News

- Engineers in Japan have successfully activated **Reimei**, the **world's first hybrid quantum supercomputer**.

About

- The **20-qubit quantum computer** has been seamlessly integrated into **Fugaku**, the **world's sixth-fastest supercomputer**, marking a significant milestone in high-performance computing.
- Unlike most quantum computers that rely on superconducting qubits, Reimei utilizes **trapped-ion qubits**—a technology that isolates charged atoms (ions) in an electromagnetic ion trap and uses lasers to precisely manipulate their quantum states.
- The integration of Reimei into Fugaku aims to tackle complex calculations that traditional

supercomputers struggle with, particularly in physics and chemistry research.

Source: TH

IIT MADRAS DEVELOPS INDIGENOUS SHAKTI SEMICONDUCTOR CHIP

Context

- IIT Madras & ISRO has developed SHAKTI-based semiconductor chip.

About

- The chip, named **IRIS (Indigenous RISC-V Controller for Space Applications)**, is based on the **SHAKTI microprocessor**.
- SHAKTI systems use **RISC-V**, an **open-source processor technology**, and are supported by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology under the **'Digital India RISC-V' (DIRV) initiative**.
- This development marks a significant step toward **self-reliance in space and semiconductor technology**.
- It is designed for fault tolerance and reliability, making it suitable for space missions.

Source: IT

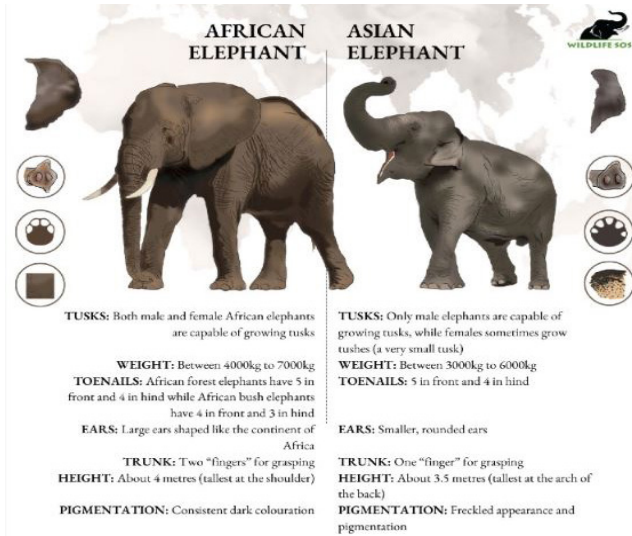
ASIAN ELEPHANTS

Context

- African and Asian elephants are entirely different species with unique habits, habitats, and adaptations.

Asian Elephant

- The Asian elephant (**Elephas maximus**), is distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia.
- It is the **largest living land animal in Asia**. Three subspecies are currently recognised: **the Sri Lankan, the Indian, and the Sumatran elephant**.
- **Appearance**: Smaller than their African counterparts, Asian elephants are easily recognizable by their "small" rounded ears.
 - ♦ They often have a hump on their back, a double-domed head with two humps, and a single "finger" on their trunk for grasping.



- **Habitat:** Habitat ranges from wet tropical evergreen forests to semi-arid thorn and scrub forests.
 - ♦ However, the highest densities of the elephant population are found in tropical deciduous forests.

- ♦ Elephants are '**mega-herbivores**' that require vast tracts of forests and grasslands rich in food and water to survive.
- **Distribution:** Currently, they are found in four fragmented populations in the south, north, central and northeast India.
- **IUCN Status: Endangered**
- **Threats:**
 - ♦ Habitat loss
 - ♦ Human-animal conflict
 - ♦ Illegal Wildlife trade

Population of Elephants in India

- India is home to **60%** of the Global population of Asian Elephants.
- The current population estimates indicate that there are about 50,000-60,000 Asian elephants in the world and there are nearly 30,000 elephants in India.

Source: TH

