

## APPROACH – ANSWER: G. S. MAINS MOCK TEST - 1410 (2020)

1. *What is Blue Dot Network? Assess its significance for India.*

(150 words) 10

**Approach:**

- Write in brief about Blue Dot Network (BDN).
- Discuss the significance of BDN for India.
- Discuss some of the challenges of BDN.
- Conclude on the basis of above points.

**Answer:**

The Blue Dot Network (BDN) is a multi-stakeholder initiative that aims to bring governments, private sector and civil society together to promote “**high quality, trusted standards for global infrastructure development**”. The projects that are certified will get a “Blue Dot”, thereby setting universal standards of excellence, which will attract private capital to projects in developing and emerging economies.

BDN is led by the U.S.’ International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), and has been jointly launched by the U.S., Japan and Australia. The U.S. has invited India to join and collaborate with the initiative.

### **Significance of Blue Dot Network for India**

- Despite a large number of PPP projects, India faces a huge and growing **infrastructural deficit**, which requires an active and vibrant corporate bond market. BDN certified projects in India would be able to **raise debt**, including from abroad, at cheaper rates.
- The BDN certification will require **standardisation of big-ticket project implementation with transparent arm’s-length finance** and to carry out effective **project delivery**. This will improve the transparency and efficiency of such projects.
- The certifying process would lay particular stress on **viable funding arrangements, environmental soundness and high labour standards**, so as to reduce chances of project failures.
- The initiative will help India achieve its ambitious target of setting up a **National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP)**.
- It will also help in **countering China’s non-transparent Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**, which has been argued to be creating unsustainable levels of debt in the Indian Ocean region.

However, its significance for India will be constrained due to following issues:

- BDN is **just a certification and not a direct financing mechanism**, which will be done by private parties. While such models suit developed countries, the same may not be successful in developing countries like India.
- It will **require coordination among multiple stakeholders** during grading of projects. The countries involved in BDN are still struggling to put a viable bloc. So, the utility of BDN remains to be seen in the future.

Notwithstanding the above issues, the BDN since inception has been able to get support from private firms who have indicated willingness to invest USD 60 billion in BDN projects. India being in need of investment for infrastructure projects, the BDN seems to be a rational choice for India for its investment as well as strategic needs to counter BRI of China.

2. **Explain the role played by the IMF in maintaining global financial stability. Also, discuss the importance of impending reforms in IMF's structure. (150 words) 10**

**Approach:**

- Give a brief introduction of the IMF.
- Discuss how the IMF plays an important role in maintaining global financial stability.
- Highlight why the impending reforms in the IMF's structure is significant.
- Conclude as per the arguments in the answer.

**Answer:**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is a global organization working to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world.

**IMF's role in maintaining global financial stability:**

- **Economic Surveillance:** It monitors global economic trends and developments that affect the health of the international monetary and financial system. It also promotes **dialogue among member countries** on the regional and global consequences of their policies.
- **Lending support:** In case of balance of payment crisis, the IMF can provide **financial assistance** to member countries to support their policy programs.
- **Technical Assistance:** It provides advice and training in areas of core expertise such as regulation of financial systems, statistics, legal framework along with management of fiscal, monetary and exchange rate policies.
- **Data Support:** The IMF works with its members, the Financial Stability Board and other organizations to fill data gaps important for global stability.

However, the IMF suffers from structural issues that limit its effectiveness and legitimacy as the central institution for international macroeconomic stability.

**The importance of impending reforms in IMF's structure:**

- The IMF is a **quota-based institution** where the quota distribution is highly skewed in favour of the developed nations. The G7 group contains more than 40% quota whereas countries like India have around 2.75% quota in IMF. Reforming this would **address the democratic deficit**, which has prevented poor and developing countries from having an effective voice in the IMF.
- The United States has a quota of **17.46 per cent**, which gives it a **unique veto power over crucial decisions at the IMF** as many of them require a *supermajority vote of 85 per cent*, like the amendments to the IMF's Articles of Agreement and compulsory withdrawal of member nations (effectively expulsion) etc.
- IMF also struggles with the **issue of resource adequacy** as currently, **quotas** are the only permanent resources with it, which determine a country's resource contribution and access to financing. Other sources like New Arrangements to Borrow and Bilateral Borrowing Agreements only play a role of a temporary buffer as of now.
- Due to discontent with IMF, regional organisations such as BRICS countries, which account for one-fifth of the global GDP, established the New Development Bank (NDB) and Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA). So, the IMF must implement reforms to **stay relevant**.

The IMF membership has endorsed a **Package on IMF Resources and Governance Reform**. These reforms should be implemented in line with changing economic realities, so as to maintain the credibility of the IMF and make the international financial system less prone to crisis.

3. **An engaging feature of the current global situation is the transformation of the Sino-Russian relationship. Examine the potential of this evolving situation for India's foreign policy. (150 words) 10**

**Approach:**

- Briefly highlight the shift in Sino-Russian ties.
- Mention the key building blocks of Sino-Russian relationship.
- Briefly mention the challenges posed by this relationship to India's foreign policy.
- Discuss the ways in which India can harness the potential of this situation.
- Conclude the answer on the basis of the above points.

**Answer:**

In recent years, China has emerged as an important partner of Russia, in the backdrop of deteriorating ties between Russia and the West. Both countries have deepened their relationship in multiple areas including political, diplomatic, economic and military ties.

**Key building blocks in recent Sino-Russian relationship**

- **Opposition towards the US and its policies:** Both countries share similar dissatisfaction with US led international order, which limit their freedom of action, such as the missile defence deployment and trade related matters.
- **Security and Defence:** Both countries conduct regular military exercises and have signed crucial defence deals in recent years, such as sale of Russian S-400 anti-missile system and SU-35 fighter jets to China.
- **Resources and Energy:** Both countries share a symbiotic relationship, with China being dependent on Russia for its energy needs and Russian companies (Rosneft, Transneft) receiving large sums of money in loans and prepayments from China. Recently, the two countries signed the **Gas pipeline deal** worth \$400 billion.

Such a transformation of Sino-Russian relationship **could pose a challenge** for the foreign policy of India. It could limit India's options in different strategic matters, especially, if this relationship develops into a Russian dependency on China. Also, if Russia starts supplying high end technology to China in the military sphere, India's security could be compromised. There is also the possibility of Russia growing closer to Pakistan because of China's influence.

To **harness the potential**, India will have to either cooperate with Russia and China, or balance against them by drawing closer to the US or with the help of other groupings in the following ways:

- **Develop an overarching Asian solidarity:** India, Russia and China can work together towards bringing all stakeholders in Asia towards developing new institutional architecture in areas of finance, climate change, energy, technology transfer and security.
- **Strengthening the Russia-India-China (RIC) group:** It could contribute towards reduction of mistrust and suspicion between India and China. It will also help India to secure its valuable strategic relationship with Russia which would, otherwise, drift towards China by default.
- **Increasing cooperation in other groupings:** India can participate simultaneously in the Japan-America-India trilateral (JAI), Quad on one hand and in the RIC, SCO and BRICS on the other to build its stature in these groupings.

Recently, Russia invited India to invest in the **Russian Far East (RFE)** and US signed the **Industrial Security Annex** with India. Thus, India can play the crucial role of **swing power and balancer** by engaging bilaterally with all the stakeholders including China, Russia, United States and reposition itself in the changing dynamics of the multipolar world order.

**4. In the context of the "Neighbourhood First" and "Act East" policies of India, Myanmar is a pivotal country. Discuss. (150 words) 10**

**Approach:**

- Introduce by explaining in brief the meaning of "Neighbourhood First" and "Act East" policies of India.
- Discuss how Myanmar plays an important role in this regard.
- Conclude accordingly.

**Answer:**

**"Neighbourhood First"** policy is part of India's foreign policy that actively focuses on frequent high-level political exchanges and "non-reciprocal policy" towards its smaller neighbours. The **"Act East"** policy, on the other hand, is a diplomatic initiative to promote economic, strategic and cultural relations with the extended neighbourhood in the Asia-Pacific region at different levels.

In the context of the above policies, **Myanmar is a pivotal country** due to the following reasons:

- Myanmar stands at the **confluence of both the policies** due to its geo-strategic location at the tri-junction of East, South-East and South Asia.

- Myanmar is the **only South-East Asian country** that **shares a land border** with the **North-Eastern states of India** including Manipur, Nagaland etc. These states also have ethnic and trade ties with Myanmar, thereby increasing its importance for India.
- Myanmar is important for India's **cultural diplomacy**, as it is a part of the Buddhist tourist circuit. It will aid India in exercising its soft power and leveraging its rich Buddhist heritage with other South Asian and ASEAN countries.
- Myanmar is a key component of India's strategy to **bridge South and South-East Asia** through the **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)**. For India, making BIMSTEC work is crucial as several SAARC agreements have not fructified due to frictions in Indo-Pakistan relations.
- Myanmar is at the **center of various infrastructural projects** that connect countries in South and South-East Asia. These include:
  - **India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway project** that will link India with Thailand through Myanmar (and will be extended to Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam).
  - **Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor** that plans to connect the four neighbours of India in the sub-region.
  - **Delhi-Hanoi Rail Link** that envisions a railroad connecting India with the Mekong countries.

However, there are **several issues in the Indo-Myanmar relationship** that need to be addressed. These include displacement of Rohingyas, which can raise security concerns for India, escape of separatist leaders from the North-East to hideouts in Myanmar, increasing Chinese influence in Myanmar, among others.

While Myanmar can act as India's gateway to South-East Asia, India can be Myanmar's gateway to South Asia. Given its strategic location and continued engagement with India in areas such as trade, defence etc., Myanmar can play a crucial role in the success of both "Neighbourhood First" and "Act East" policies.

5. ***Highlight the structure and mandate of the United Nations Human Rights Council. Bring out some of the concerns that have been raised against its working in recent times.***

***(150 words) 10***

***Approach:***

- Briefly write about UNHRC.
- Mention its structure and mandate.
- Highlight the concerns which have been raised against it.
- Conclude with a way forward.

***Answer:***

The UN Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body formed in 2006 within the United Nations system. It is responsible for strengthening the **promotion and protection of human rights** around the world.

**Structure** of the UN Human Rights Council:

- **Composition:** It is made up of 47 member States elected by the UNGA, based on the principle of '**equitable geographical distribution of seats.**'
- The Council has a **Bureau** consisting of a president and four vice-presidents who represent each of the five regional groups, and who serve for a year.
- **Advisory Committee:** It consists of 18 elected independent experts who function as a think tank of the council.
- **Observers:** It includes non-member States, national human rights institutions, and NGOs, which participate actively in Council sessions as observers.

The **mandate** of UN Human Rights Council includes 7 closely related tasks i.e.:

- Protection of victims of human rights abuses
- Promoting the protection of human rights
- Developing concepts and policies

- Setting standards
- Prevention of human rights violations
- Mainstreaming the human rights work of the UN
- Keeping track and execution

The council has made some significant decisions and fact findings in case of human rights violation e.g. in Myanmar, Congo, Yemen and Syria. It has also been instrumental in promoting the rights of specially-abled and LGBTQ communities.

However, the working of the council has been questioned in recent times, as:

- **Membership:** Countries with alleged human rights violations and poor human rights records are often elected to the council unopposed. For instance, the recent election of Philippines in spite of the allegations of massive killings in a bid to control drug menace.
- **Lack of legal powers:** The council has recommendatory powers only; thus lacks any legal powers to impose sanctions on defaulting countries.
- **Politicisation:** Since, members are represented by diplomats tasked with protecting their national interests, the council becomes an inherently political entity. This leads to partisan investigations that seek to protect vested interests rather than condemn human rights violations.
- **Lack of balanced focus:** The council has been criticised for its disproportionate focus on some countries like Israel. This leads to diversion of resources from other areas such as Democratic Republic of Congo and Yemen, where millions of people have been killed or displaced in recent years.

The withdrawal of the USA from the council in 2018 has also hit the credibility of the council. Therefore, various reform measures need to be initiated to ensure the efficient working of the council.

6. ***Highlighting the significance of the Indian diaspora, enumerate the initiatives taken by the government for engaging the Indian Diaspora around the world. (150 words) 10***

**Approach:**

- State the significance of the Indian diaspora.
- Mention the initiatives taken by the government for engaging the Indian diaspora.
- Conclude accordingly.

**Answer:**

The Diaspora encompasses a group of people who can either trace their origins to India or who are Indian citizens living abroad, either temporarily or permanently. The Indian diaspora estimated, at 17.5 million is the largest in the world, according to the UN. They mostly reside in the Middle East, US, UK and Canada.

**Significance of the Indian diaspora:**

- **Socio-economic contribution:** India was the world's top recipient of remittances with its diaspora sending 79 billion dollars in 2018 according to the World Bank, which aid in socio-economic development and poverty reduction.
- **Soft power:** Deemed as 'India's brand ambassadors, they constitute an important part of India's *'soft diplomacy'* aiding India in furthering its foreign policies. For example, their role in the fructification of the Indo-US Nuclear deal.
- **Leadership roles:** NRIs and PIOs are increasingly taking on leadership roles in the fields of IT, politics, medicine etc., which enhances India's international standing.
- **Investment:** NRIs are a significant source of investment in India. They also give an impetus to start-ups by sharing their domain and technical expertise.
- **Culture:** They popularise Indian culture such as yoga and film industries (Bollywood, Kollywood etc). These cultural links strengthen the ties between the host country and India.



### Initiatives by the government to engage the Indian diaspora:

- **Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas** has been held every year since 2003 to mark the contribution of the overseas Indians to the development of India.
- To reduce the vulnerability of Indian workers from exploitation, in 2015, the Ministry of External Affairs launched the **e-migrate system** that requires all foreign employers to register in the database.
- The government has launched **Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana**, a mandatory insurance scheme to safeguard the interests of Indian emigrant workers falling under Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries.
- **Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children** (SPDC) is to make higher education in Indian Universities/Institutes in different fields accessible to the children of overseas Indians (PIOs) and Non-resident Indian students (NRIs).
- **'Know India Programme'** is conducted for the diaspora youth to promote awareness on different facets of life in India.
- The **Indian Community Welfare Fund** assists overseas Indians in times of distress including emergency evacuation of Indian nationals from conflict zones, countries affected by natural disasters etc.
- Under the **Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana**, a group of Indian diaspora aged 45 to 60 are taken on government-sponsored tours of religious places biannually.

Despite these measures, several issues such as lack of availability of dual citizenship, lack of provision for proxy voting for NRIs, threats to their employment status etc. remain. The government should take adequate steps to address their issues and connect India to its vast overseas diaspora and bring their knowledge, expertise and skills on a common platform for India's development.

7. ***Emerging technologies are increasingly playing a key role in international relations. Discuss in the context of MEA's decision of setting up of a new division on New and Emerging Strategic Technologies (NEST).*** (150 words) 10

#### Approach:

- Briefly define emerging technologies.
- Highlight the significance and objective of setting up of a division on New and Emerging Strategic Technologies (NEST) in MEA.
- Discuss the importance of emerging technologies in international relations.
- Conclude accordingly.

#### Answer:

Emerging technologies are those, which are currently developing, or that are expected to be available within the next few years, and creating, or are expected to create, significant social or economic effects. It includes technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning, natural language processing, 3D printing, blockchain, robotic process automation and Internet of Things.

These technologies can play a key role in catalyzing **science diplomacy** in the spheres of weapons of mass destruction, climate change, cyber security, outer space, etc. which require scientific inputs in order to understand and deal with them. Further, they also have the potential to alter the **global balance of power** in favour of developed nations, given the asymmetry in resources and technology prowess that exist between countries with respect to these technologies. Therefore, transfer of technology is a major point of contention among countries in negotiations over different platforms such as Climate Talks.

Recently, the MEA has set up a **New and Emerging Strategic Technologies (NEST) Division** to engage in technology diplomacy and deal with the foreign policy and international legal aspects of new and emerging technologies. This would help India's foreign policy in following ways:

- **Safeguarding national interest:** NEST will be involved in negotiations to safeguard Indian interests, with respect to new and emerging technologies, at multilateral fora like the United Nations, G20 etc. where rules governing the use and access to such technologies could be decided.

- **Threats from dual use applications:** The technologies such as 3D printing etc. can be used to create weapons, synthetic biology and autonomous weapon systems as observed by The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDR). It can provide avenues to rogue states and non-state actors to violate international sanctions and arms control regime. Such threats, imminent from India's neighbourhood, can be addressed with NEST.
- **Assessment of potential risks and benefits:** NEST has been set up in the backdrop of ongoing geopolitical rivalry between the US and China over the issue of 5G. Selection of 5G vendors requires a careful analysis of security risks, strategic concerns, economic factors and foreign policy interests.
- **International legal aspects:** NEST division would play a critical role in the interpretation of current international laws and framing new legal norms.

The NEST can help fill a critical gap in India's diplomacy and supplement existing institutional structures to focus on emerging technologies, and its relevance to national security and domestic interests. Further, it will aid in creation of human resource capacity within the ministry for technological diplomacy work and collaboration with foreign partners in the field of 5G and artificial intelligence.

**8. *India-Nepal relations are based on significant potential for close interdependence, but they are simultaneously marred by periodic frictions. Comment.* (150 words) 10**

**Approach:**

- Briefly mention the recent context of India-Nepal relations.
- Highlight the potential of close interdependence between India-Nepal.
- Give points of frictions between the two nations.
- Conclude on the basis of above points.

**Answer:**

As close neighbours, India and Nepal share a unique relationship of friendship and cooperation characterized by regular exchanges of high level visits, open borders and deep-rooted people-to-people contacts of kinship and culture. The relations are based on significant potential for close interdependence, such as:

- **Strategic location:** Geographically, Nepal is located at an important strategic position in the Central Himalayas. It separates Indian plains from Tibetan plateau and has several passes in its Northern frontier, which makes India vulnerable to a Chinese invasion. Nepal however, is a landlocked country and it needs port facilities for its overseas trade.
- **Contiguous geography:** The southern boundary of Nepal runs along the Terai region and borders UP and Bihar. There is no natural barrier in this border and the region is very porous. There is a similar agriculture, forest and settlement pattern. This has led to economic as well as social interdependence between people since ages with potential of deeper engagements in the future.
- **Water Resources:** Three major tributaries of Ganga i.e. Kosi, Gandak and Karnali originate in Nepal Himalaya. However, owing to lack of capital and technology, Nepal cannot harness its water resources. India can be a viable co-partner and co-beneficiary of these projects.
- **Socio-cultural similarity:** The customs, rituals, religion and behavioural pattern of both the countries are very similar. This has potential for tourism as well as economic potential.

However, despite such potential of interdependence, India-Nepal relations have seen **periodic frictions**, which can be seen as:

- **Boundary dispute:** Nepal claims over the Kalapani region (in Uttarakhand), while India claims over the Susta territory (in Southern Nepal).
- **Nepal's closeness to China:** Nepal has agreed for the trans-Himalayan railway line from Tibet to Kathmandu to support the BRI project of China. The contract of Budhi-Gandak project has also been handed over to China in 2018 rather than to India's NHPC.
- **Unofficial Blockade:** Nepal blames that India intervened in the internal matters of Nepal, and blocked the Indo-Nepal Border for nearly six months in 2015.

- **Distribution of water resources:** Nepal claims that India has taken undue advantage of its generosity in sharing water, by using ambiguous provisions and providing far less benefits than the upper riparian state duly deserves.

Nepal always blames India of having a 'Big Brotherly attitude' towards it. Therefore, to allay such fears, India must try to consider it as an equal partner and introduce new economic, developmental and infrastructure initiatives with Nepal that will not only bring tangible benefits to Nepali citizens but also address the vulnerabilities that will emerge in Nepal as the country engages with China. India and Nepal have also initiated review of 1950 Treaty in this regard.

9. ***Giving an account of WHO's triple billion targets, highlight the reforms it has initiated to achieve these.*** (150 words) 10

**Approach:**

- Describe the WHO's triple billion targets and funding required for it.
- Discuss the WHO reforms, which have been initiated due to it.
- Conclude on the basis of above points.

**Answer:**

The World Health Organisation in its 13th General Programme of Work (2019-2023) has embarked on a 5-year strategic plan with focus on three bold targets. These 'triple billion' targets are:

- one billion more people benefitting from **universal health coverage** (UHC);
- one billion more people better protected from **health emergencies**;
- one billion more people enjoying **better health and well-being**.

It has been highlighted that the organization will need to raise \$14.1 billion over the next five years to meet these "triple billion" targets. However, the projected income of the WHO is just \$4 billion. It means that WHO has a projected funding gap of \$10.1 billion over the next 5 years. Therefore, to reach the triple billion targets, appropriate levels of flexible, aligned and predictable funding will be critical.

In order to align its processes and structures with the **"triple billion" targets and the Sustainable Development Goals**, WHO has adopted following reforms to strengthen the institution:

- **Align the work of headquarters, regional offices and country offices**, and eliminate duplication and fragmentation.
- **Reinforcing WHO's normative, standard-setting work**- supported by a new Division of the Chief Scientist and improved career opportunities for scientists.
- Driving **new fundraising initiatives** to diversify WHO's funding base, reduce its reliance on a small number of large donors and strengthen its long-term financial stability.
- **Making WHO relevant in all countries** by overhauling the Organization's capabilities to engage in strategic policy dialogue. This will be led by a new **Division of Data, Analytics and Delivery** to enhance the collection, storage, analysis and usage of data to drive policy change in countries.
- Creating a new **Division of Emergency Preparedness**, as a complement to WHO's existing work on emergency response.
- **Harnessing the power of digital health and innovation**- by supporting countries to assess, integrate, regulate and maximize the opportunities of digital technologies and artificial intelligence, supported by a new Department of Digital Health.
- **Investing in a dynamic and diverse workforce through new initiatives**- including the WHO Academy, streamlined recruitment process to cut hiring time in half, management training, etc.

This new structure is **based on four pillars** i.e. the Programmes pillar, the Emergencies pillar, the External Relations & Governance pillar and the Business Operations pillar. However, there has been widespread criticism of WHO in its response to the COVID-19 crisis. This highlights that these reforms need to be implemented in letter and spirit to achieve the triple billion targets.



10. *India has good relations with both Israel and the Palestinian leadership. In this context, assess the role India can play in bringing lasting peace to the region. (150 words) 10*

**Approach:**

- Introduce by highlighting the good relations India shares with Israel and Palestine.
- Mention the advantages India has to act as a neutral arbiter in the region.
- Highlight the shortcomings and conclude appropriately.

**Answer:**

India and Israel share good relations across various dimensions ranging from military to trade to alliances in science and technology and cultural relations. While India has increased security ties with Israel, it has simultaneously strengthened ties with the Palestinian Authority. Apart from the strong political support to the Palestinian cause at bilateral and international levels, India has extended various forms of economic assistance to the Palestinian people (establishing training centres, schools).

Therefore, this 'friend to all' image of India makes it a capable player to bring peace to the region, in the following ways:

- India has made a major shift in its foreign policy by **de-hyphenating Israel from Palestine** and is thereby prepared to deal with the two separately and independently. The ability of India to act independently can be seen from the fact that India went against the US in a vote at the UN to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.
- India also assumes importance in the backdrop of the United States' decision to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem that affected its **image as a neutral arbiter** in the Israel-Palestine conflict.
- The efforts by Palestine to establish an international **multilateral mechanism of negotiations** envision a prominent role for India.
- India should **leverage its growing influence** in the world to counsel both parties to exercise restraint and move towards a two-state solution. It should continue to use its voice in the United Nations and work with major states in the world towards that end without directly participating in the peace process.

However, the Indian efforts to restore peace and order in the region may be marred by its lack of diplomatic resources and dwindling economic power. There are also concerns over the tackling of extremist organisations like Hamas, which may pose questions for India as it tries to combat terrorism on the global level. Also, this may lead to spilling over effects in the Indian sub-continent thereby inhibiting India's ambitions of acting as a neutral arbiter in the region.

Therefore, these issues need to be tackled as India tries to present its credentials as a global leader. With a neutral image, and growing power, India can position itself in a leading role, rather than just a balancing force in the region.

11. *Why did India decide not to join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)? Discuss in the context of domestic interests, India's experience of the free trade agreements and prevailing realities of external trade. (250 words) 15*

**Approach:**

- Briefly discuss Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).
- Write about the reasons for India's withdrawal from RCEP addressing each of the concerns raised in the question.
- Suggest way forward for India in the changing world trade order.

**Answer:**

Introduced in 2011, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) was proposed to be an agreement between the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its 6 free trade agreement (FTA) partners viz. Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea. It was meant to be the biggest free trade agreement representing 40 percent of global commerce and 35 per cent GDP involving 16 countries.

India, however, after seven years of negotiation has decided not to join the agreement, owing to a wide variety of reasons:

### 1. Domestic Interests:

- **Industries and Farmers:**
  - A free entry to China and ASEAN countries would have further damaged India's manufacturing and service sector, which are already not performing well. The RCEP could have an adverse impact on 'Make In India' initiative to boost manufacturing and job creation.
  - The RCEP did not offer enough protection to Indian agro-businesses especially those related to dairy products, spices, rubber and coconut and would have faced dumping from the South Asian spice majors like Sri Lanka; Vietnam and Indonesia have cheap rubbers to export; Australia and New Zealand would hamper India's domestic dairy industries.
- **Trade balance:**
  - India ran trade deficits with at least 11 of the 15 partners in the RCEP.
  - Its trade deficit with these countries has almost doubled in the last six years - from \$54 billion in 2013-14 to \$105 billion in 2018-19, out of which China alone accounts for \$ 53 billion.
  - At present, India ships 20 percent of all its exports to the RCEP countries and receives 35 percent of all imports from them.
  - Also, there were limited opportunities for India to boost its exports as there were no assurances on getting access to markets (for its service exports) and non tariff barriers imposed by the partner countries.
- **Public Procurement Segment:**
  - India was unwilling to cater to demands from some RCEP countries to open up the public procurement segment.

### 2. Past experience with free trade agreements

India is currently a part of 14 bilateral and Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs), including SAFTA, India-ASEAN CECA, India-Korea CEPA, with a dozen more under negotiation. However, they have not worked well for India as per NITI Aayog report published in 2017.

- India's exports to FTA countries has not outperformed overall export growth or exports to rest of the world.
- FTAs have led to increased imports and exports, although the former has been greater.
- India's trade deficit with ASEAN, Korea and Japan has widened post-FTAs
- India's exports are much more responsive to income changes as compared to price changes and thus a tariff reduction/elimination does not boost exports significantly.
- Utilisation rate of RTAs by exporters in India is very low (between 5 and 25%).

### 3. Prevailing realities of external trade:

The present era has been marked with protectionism, led by the trade war between US and China. China is argued to have saturated its trade potential with the rest of the member nations of the RCEP. Hence, greater access to Indian markets is seen to be imperative to the sustainability of China's manufacturing sector.

India already has bilateral FTAs with ASEAN, Korea and Japan and negotiations are underway with Australia and New Zealand. It must fully utilize these existing FTA's by following an integrated approach recognizing interdependence between trade in goods, services and investment; going beyond tariffs into subsequent layers of non-tariff policies, regulatory mechanisms and legal framework; effectively dealing with Rules of Origin and reducing compliance cost and administrative delays.

12. *It has been argued that the ties between India and Bangladesh are currently passing through a golden chapter. Critically discuss.* (250 words) 15

**Approach:**

- Give a brief introduction about India-Bangladesh relations.
- Discuss some recent developments in India-Bangladesh relations justifying the fact that it is currently passing through a golden chapter.
- Bring out some challenges/issues that are hampering this relation.
- Conclude accordingly.

**Answer:**

India not only shares the longest land border with Bangladesh but also shares common history, language, religion, culture. Location of Bangladesh also makes it a key player in India's 'Act East policy' and 'Neighbourhood First' policy. Thus, India-Bangladesh relationship is one of the most important bilateral relation for India.

These relations witnessed unprecedented cooperation over the last few years leading to the observation that they are witnessing a 'golden chapter' or 'Shonali Adhyaya'. This become clearer as one observes the following:

- There has been frequent exchange of visits at the highest political level between the two countries in recent times. For e.g. PM Sheikh Hasina's visit to India in October, 2019.
- The operationalization of the long pending **Land Boundary Agreement** between India-Bangladesh in 2015 resolving the contentious issues of land border demarcation, enclaves and adverse possession. This was preceded by the resolution of Maritime boundary issue between the two countries in 2014.
- Bangladesh has emerged as **India's largest trade partner in South Asia**. Both countries have signed over 90 agreements between 2015 and 2018 to boost trade relations.
- Focus on establishing Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) at places such as Agartala and Petrapole has facilitated cross-border trade and movement of people.
- Four **Border Haats** have been established for the benefits of communities living along border areas in North-East India.
- Cumulative **FDI from India to Bangladesh** has more than doubled from 2014-18 to around 570 million USD.
- Multiple connectivity projects are in development between the two neighbours. Through **Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade**, India is assisting Bangladesh to capture the potential of waterways. **Akhaura-Agartala rail track** will provide a major boost to development and economy of eastern Bangladesh & north eastern India and reduce distance between Kolkata and Dhaka by almost 1100 km.
- Through **defence cooperation framework pact**, India is providing military equipment and technology transfer for enhancing cooperation in the field of strategic and operational studies. Bangladesh is helping India in **combating secessionist activities in North Eastern India** by denying safe havens for them.
- **SAARC satellite and National Knowledge Network** helps in boosting Bangladesh's digital capacity.
- **India is an important development partner of Bangladesh**. India has extended 3 Lines of Credits (LOCs) to Bangladesh in the last 8 years amounting to USD 8 billion. This is the largest amount of LOC extended to any country by India.
- **Cultural ties are being strengthened** through joint declaration for celebration of Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary (2019), 50 years of Bangladesh War of Liberation (2021) etc.

However, there are some challenges, which need to be addressed sensitively to make this bilateral relation more robust:

- **River disputes** need to be resolved as India shares 54 trans-boundary rivers with Bangladesh. Some of the major disputes include Teesta River water sharing issue, Tipaimukh Hydroelectric power project on Barak River etc.
- **Issue of illegal immigrants** especially in Assam needs to be resolved amicably as both the countries have their own version.

- Bangladesh expects India to resolve the **Rohingya crisis** by putting pressure on Myanmar.
- **Border management** remains a bigger challenge due to the porous nature of the border, which provides pathways to smuggling, trafficking in arms, drugs, people and cattle.
- **Delay in execution of projects** like Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (**BBIN**) Initiative.
- **The China factor** is a challenge for India, as China is increasing its presence in Bangladesh, which can induce Bangladesh to the China card to supplement its bargaining capacity against India.
- **Increasing radicalization** as presence of groups like HUJI, Jamaat-e-Islami and HUJI-B fuels anti India sentiments.

India-Bangladesh have definitely matured in the last few years. However, looking at Bangladesh's importance in view of North East India's security and development, balancing China in the Bay of Bengal region etc. India needs to look into the existing challenges and resolve them on a priority basis to further strengthen the India-Bangladesh relations.

**13. India has consistently argued for nuclear disarmament yet has not signed some of the most significant global treaties in this context. What are the reasons for the same? Do you think its time to revisit India's stand on the issue? (250 words) 15**

**Approach:**

- Briefly highlight how India has consistently argued for nuclear disarmament over time.
- Mention some significant treaties and discuss the reasons why India has not signed them.
- Bring out benefits for India in signing these treaties at present times.
- Conclude by discussing how India can approach this issue.

**Answer:**

India has always been a proponent of nuclear disarmament. In 1954, the Indian PM became the first head of state to call for a standstill agreement proposing a ban on nuclear testing. This tradition continued to inform India's stand as seen in:

- India signed the Partial Test Ban Treaty in 1963.
- In 1965, India advocated a strong non-discriminatory treaty banning nuclear proliferation.
- India proposed a comprehensive proposal for complete and universal nuclear disarmament to the UN in 1988.
- India adopted a No First Use of Nuclear Policy after its second test, Pokhran-2 in 1998.
- India in its Draft Nuclear Doctrine in 1999, stated that a global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament is a national security objective.
- In 2015, at the conference of disarmament, Geneva, India again pushed for disarmaments through multilateral agreements to increase restraints on the use of nuclear weapons.

However, despite being a robust advocate of nuclear disarmament, India has not been party to various global treaties related to containment of nuclear proliferation and disarmament like Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), newly concluded Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapon (TPNW).

This is because of numerous apprehensions:

- Treaties like CTBT and NPT are **discriminatory** and favour the nuclear weapons states, who have already achieved sophistication in nuclear technology.
- There is **no commitment to a time frame** for dismantling existing nuclear weapons and universal disarmament.
- They do not address **India's security concerns** emerging from its hostile neighbours. While India would waive the possibility of testing and developing its own nuclear weapons, whereas China would be able to retain its arsenal as per the NPT.
- Signing these treaties would also **hinder India's strategic nuclear program**
- India supports the view that treaties should focus on all aspects like disarmament, elimination and verification. But the **verification process** is not robust in most of the treaties.

By not signing these treaties, India has developed its own nuclear program and protected its security interests. However, joining some of these major treaties can be beneficial for India in the long run in following ways:

- It will enhance India's **strategic interests** by facilitating the entry of India into the Nuclear Supplier Group as well as strengthen its claim to the UNSC.
- India's entry would make it a key stakeholder around **policy and decision making** in the field of **non-proliferation and arms control**.
- It may help **end the nuclear race** in Asia as Pakistan may be coerced into following India.
- India will gain access to **critical dual-use technologies**, which can help India in areas such as disaster management, plane crash sites, mining and exploration etc.
- India will become better integrated with the **international scientific community in the field of nuclear technology**.

India has demonstrated exceptional strategic realism by negotiating a US-India civil nuclear agreement, which was followed with India-specific exemptions from the International Atomic Energy Agency, the NSG and also many bilateral deals with other countries. With India already being recognized and accepted as nuclear power globally, it may look into joining these treaties to further gain from them. However, this should follow from the global order amenable to India's strategic concerns, elimination of discriminatory criteria, and should happen in a phased manner like joining as an observer member initially.

**14. Given the increasing salience of the Indo-Pacific concept in global discourse, India has taken various measures to advance its Indo-Pacific vision. Comment. (250 words) 15**

**Approach:**

- Briefly write about the increasing importance of the Indo-Pacific region globally.
- Highlight the significance of Indo-Pacific region for India.
- List down the initiatives taken by India with respect to its Indo-Pacific vision.
- Conclude by concisely suggesting measures that can be taken to safeguard its Indo-Pacific strategy.

**Answer:**

Indo-Pacific region is a geographic expanse comprising the Western Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean. The concept has gained salience and strategic overtones in recent times, with various actors putting forward their vision.

**Salience of Indo-Pacific in global discourse:**

- It encompasses emerging economies such as China, India, and Indonesia etc. with significant contribution to global GDP.
- This region includes vital trade routes and choke points for global commerce, including the Straits of Malacca.
- USA's growing emphasis on the Indo-Pacific concept and the Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy is to contain China's rise.
- There is political contestation over the geographical construct of this region, with India and Japan considering even East Africa to be part of it.

**Significance of Indo-Pacific for India:**

- **Strategic Interest:** India can be a net security provider assuming responsibility for stability.
- **Ensure Freedom of Navigation:** Around 95% of India's foreign trade passes through this region, which consists of critical Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC)
- **Containment of China:** In the backdrop of Belt and Road Initiative, String of Pearls theory, Indo-Pacific presents an opportunity to counter China's aggressive policies.
- **Economic Potential:** Indo-Pacific can aid India's economic growth through:
  - Engagement with actors like ASEAN, Japan and the USA.
  - Natural resources like oil and hydrocarbons are found in the South China Sea.
  - Development of North Eastern States that can become a gateway for India to integrate with this region.
  - Integration with the Blue Economy that is efficient, equitable and sustainable.



## ASIA PACIFIC AND INDO-PACIFIC REGIONS



### Measures taken by India to advance Indo-Pacific vision:

- **ASEAN-centrality:** India's Indo-Pacific vision is premised upon the principle of 'ASEAN-Centrality'. India's **Act East Policy** provides the guiding framework to take the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership to the next level. India is also engaged with the **East Asia Summit (EAS)** and has also introduced the **Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative (IPOI)**.
- **Participation in Regional Organisations:** India has been an active participant in mechanisms like **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)**, Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (**BIMSTEC**), and Mekong Ganga Economic Corridor (**MGC**). Through Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (**FIPIC**), India is moving towards engaging with Pacific Island countries.
- **Indo-Pacific Maritime Cooperation:** India has increased maritime exercises with South-East and East Asian countries such as Vietnam, Singapore, Indonesia, and Japan.
- **Economic Engagement:** India's trade in Indo-Pacific region is growing, whereby India has Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements with Japan, South Korea, and Singapore; and Free Trade Agreements with ASEAN and Thailand.
- **Strategic cooperation other countries:** This includes **2+2 dialogue** with the US, Japan, and Australia, trilateral dialogues between India-Japan and US, India-Japan-Australia, Russia-India-China, India-Australia-Indonesia, and **Quadrilateral meetings** between India, Japan, Australia and the US.
- **Western Indian Ocean:** India's Indo-Pacific policy has been extended to include areas of Western Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea, Gulf nations, the island nations of the Arabian Sea and Africa.
- The Ministry of External Affairs established a new **Division for the Indo-Pacific** in 2019 to help consolidate India's vision of the Indo-Pacific across the Government of India.

For an inclusive, open and secure Indo-Pacific region, it is necessary to maintain dialogue, a common rules-based order, freedom of navigation, unimpeded commerce, and settling disputes in accordance with international law. India's multi-layered engagement with China, its strategic partnership with the USA and Russia and focus on the SAGARMALA initiative and Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) is key to ensuring a stable, open, and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

**15. Overcoming the hesitations of history, India and USA are on the path of developing a truly Comprehensive Global Strategic partnership. Analyse. (250 words) 15**

**Approach:**

- Discuss the major reasons that led to friction in Indo-US relationship.
- State how Indo-US relationship is on the path of developing a truly Comprehensive Global Strategic partnership.
- Briefly discuss the issues, which poses hurdle towards strategic partnership.
- Conclude on the basis of the above points.

**Answer:**

In spite of many convergent grounds like democratic systems of governance, cultural pluralism and secularism between India and the US, both remained estranged for much of the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century or the Cold War era. The ideological and strategic divergence marked their relations for long.

In recent decades however, **leadership in both countries** took strategic decision to put the India-U.S. ties on a stronger footing. The visit of President Donald Trump to India in February 2020 displayed the warmth in these relations. On this occasion, both these countries reaffirmed the commitment to strengthen their comprehensive global strategic partnership. This evolution can be seen through the following:

- **Nuclear cooperation:** India and the US signed the India-US Nuclear Agreement in 2005, which lifted a three-decade U.S. moratorium on nuclear energy trade with India. It also paved the way for India's access to global nuclear commerce.
- **Defence cooperation:** After signing deals like COMCASA, LEMOA etc, both countries are aspiring towards the early conclusion of Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA). Recently, the USA reaffirmed India's status as a 'Major Defence Partner'.
- **Counter-terrorism:** The countries signed the India-U.S. Counter-Terrorism Cooperation Initiative in 2010 to strengthen capabilities to effectively combat terrorism. Recently, both countries have agreed to establish a new **Counter-Narcotics Working Group** between their respective law enforcement agencies.
- **Strategic Convergence in the Indo-Pacific:** The US has appreciated India's role as a net provider of security as well as developmental and humanitarian assistance in the Indian Ocean Region. The countries have signed the First Amendment to Statements of Guiding Principles (SGP) on Triangular Cooperation for Global Development in Asia and Africa as part of their Indo-Pacific partnership.
- **People to People ties:** with more than four million people of Indian origin in the USA, people to people ties has become a strong pillar of these relations.
- **Space collaboration:** US-India space collaboration has witnessed rapid growth since the 2000s. Currently, ISRO and NASA are working together on several missions such as NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) mission, Mars Exploration Mission etc.
- **Cooperation in the renewable sector:** The two countries have undertaken several initiatives in the sector such as establishment of 'PACEsetter Funds' to support innovative clean energy access projects. The US International Development Finance Corporation has also announced a \$600 million financing facility for renewable energy projects in India.
- **Dialogue Mechanisms:** India and the United states have sought to engage each other and the result is development of more than 50 bilateral dialogue mechanisms including the two plus two dialogue launched in 2018

Nonetheless, both these countries also have occasional frictions that need to be addressed to move the ties forward.

- The transactional attitude of the Trump administration on trade issues is on display through unsavory twitter statements, the removal of GSP benefits to India and escalation of tariffs.
- Changing attitude of the US immigration policy having an impact on H-1B visas, which has been a key element of the people to people and commercial ties between the two countries.
- Perennial differences over the approach on the issue of Intellectual Property Rights.
- Recent removal of India from US' list of developing countries for the purpose of deciding on trade related practises.

India-US relation remains critical in shaping the world order in the 21st century in an increasingly multi-polar world order. Convergence of interests and values would be a key driver for these relations in the future. The nations have vowed to strengthen their partnership, anchored in mutual trust, shared interests, goodwill and robust engagement of their citizens. A constant engagement and dialogue augurs well for the intent of developing a truly comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership between the two countries.

**16. United Nations Security Council (UNSC) must reflect changing global reality. Discuss in the context of existing structure and functions of the UNSC and the demands for reforms.**

**(250 words) 15**

**Approach:**

- State the structure and functions of the UNSC.
- Discuss the factors due to which demand for UNSC reforms arises with regard to its structure and functions.
- Conclude on the basis of the above points.

**Answer:**

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN).

It is **primarily mandated** to maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the UN by investigating any dispute that might lead to international conflicts. They also call on members to apply economic sanctions and other non-combative measures to prevent or stop aggression. It also takes calls on admission of new members.

Currently, the **structure of the UNSC** involves fifteen members- five permanent (P5) and ten non-permanent. The P5 i.e. China, US, France, UK, and Russia, have the power to veto any substantive resolution. The ten temporary members hold their seats on a rotating basis by geographic region and are elected by the UN General Assembly with a two-third majority for two-year terms, with five replaced each year. They do not exercise veto power.

However, there are **demands for UNSC reforms** with regard to its structure and functions due to the following:

- **Status quo:** There has been little change in the structure of UNSC since its inception in 1945, when wartime victors appropriated permanent veto-wielding seats for themselves. There is no change in the composition of the UNSC except for once in 1963 to add four non-permanent members.
- **Inadequate regional representation:** Europe is over-represented in the UNSC permanent membership while Asia that has approximately 59.76% of the world population, is represented by only one member. Further, despite about 75% of its work being focused on Africa, there is no permanent member from Africa. In addition, South America has no representation in the UNSC. Thus, the composition of UNSC reflects the prevailing global North-South divide.
- **Centralized decision making process:** The current governing capacity of international security relations is captured by the elite class of countries, which does not suit the current global security needs. To maintain the legitimacy of the body, there is an urgent need to democratize the UNSC.
- **Credibility crisis:** Lack of reform and frequent interventions in the Middle East by the United States and its allies have been detrimental to the credibility of the UNSC.
- **Transnational issues:** Issues such as economic interdependence, environmental degradation, global health issues, terrorism etc. call for effective consensual multilateral negotiations.
- **Demands of other major global powers:** India, Brazil, Germany and Japan have formed the G4 to negotiate reforms of the Council and support each other's bids for permanent seats on it. Similarly, the African Union has demanded a permanent UNSC seat for an African nation.

Equitable representation of all the regions in the UNSC is critical to decentralizing its governing power and authority over the member nations. This transformation will enable nations of all the regions to raise their concerns impacting peace. The impending reforms will make the UNSC more representative and participatory body, while also upholding its credibility. Thus, the promotion

of international peace and order can be attained through the deepening of democracy in the UNSC itself.

In this context, India seeks a permanent seat in the Security Council as it is one of the fastest growing economies in the world and is also one of the largest contributors to UN peace-keeping missions. Further, India is seen as a responsible power, which adheres to the rule of law, accepted global norms etc. Therefore India's elevation will make the UNSC more credible and representative.

**17. South China Sea disputes are regional in nature but global in terms of possible consequences. Examine. (250 words) 15**

**Approach:**

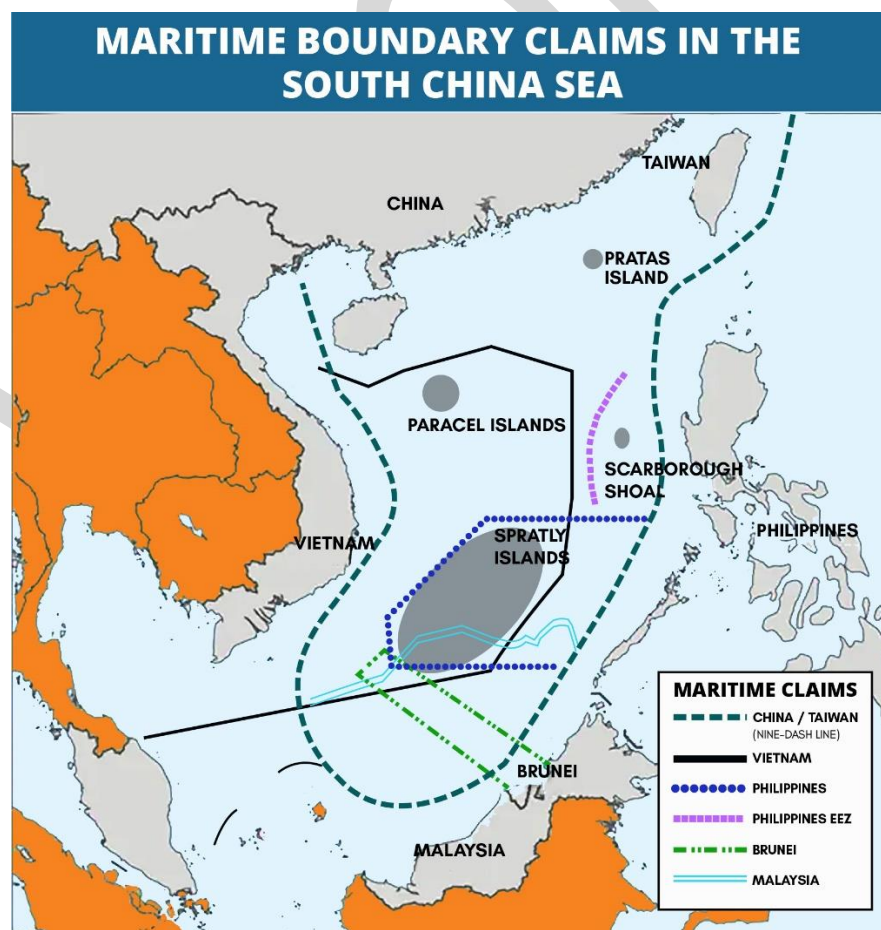
- Giving a brief background on the dispute, highlight its regional nature.
- Mention the global consequences of the same.
- Conclude appropriately.

**Answer:**

The disputes in the South China Sea are regional in nature as they are about competing island and maritime boundary claims among five countries, i.e. Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. The disputes are over territory and sovereignty over ocean areas including Scarborough shoal, Gulf of Tonkin and the Paracels and the Spratlys - two island chains claimed in whole or in part by them.

The concerned nations have been involved in military confrontation as this area is associated with their nationalistic pride. These disputes have been further complicated by China's aggressive territorial claims regarding the islands and naval patrols.

This has serious regional ramifications as it also includes an attempt to influence Vietnam's exclusive economic zone, which led to the failure of a \$200 million Vietnamese oil and gas development project.





Although the disputes may be regional in nature, but it is global in terms of **possible consequences**:

- **Freedom of navigation:** South China Sea is a **critical shipping lane for global trade** as it handles more than \$3 trillion in economic flows. The freedom of navigation and transit may be compromised imposing economic costs on various countries.
- **Escalation of dispute:** There is concern that China might seek to impose an **Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ)** in the South China Sea. This would further heighten the tensions for global trade and transit operations.
- **Disregard for global constitutionalism:** Though the **Permanent Court of Arbitration** in *Philippines v. China* agreed that China's fishing practices and island-building activities were severely damaging, the refusal by China to accept the order has threatened the **global rules based order**.
- **Militarisation and enforcement:** The disputes have set a precedent where the states will rely on military power in order to enforce contested claims and competing rights in shared domains, which threatens global security and peace. Examples of recent destabilizing actions include **Chinese warships pushing U.S. destroyers** off course by threatening collision and the United States sending unauthorized military ships to the islands.
- **Geo-political impact:** It has further **complicated the geopolitical environment** as US led Quad is bracing to contain a rising China by raising the importance of **the Indo-Pacific region**. This can be witnessed by increasing frequency of military exercises in the region.
- **Environmental impact:** The PCA arbitration also found that China violated its obligation to protect and preserve the marine environment under UNCLOS. The Outer Space Treaty places standards for due regard and state responsibility for environmental harm in an effort to preserve the **global commons** such as the South China Sea.

Therefore, the dispute in the South China sea has global consequences and requires a shared understanding between the nations to solve the issues. The ASEAN efforts to enforce a code of conduct in the region are a step in the right direction.

**18. Some of the achievements of BRICS are impressive, however much more is needed for it to achieve its objectives and true potential. Explain. (250 words) 15**

**Approach:**

- Give a brief introduction about the BRICS.
- Highlight the achievements of BRICS.
- Provide arguments to bring out the measures needed for it to achieve its objectives and true potential.
- Conclude by suggesting the way forward to ensure smooth sailing of BRICS.

**Answer:**

BRICS is the group composed by the five major emerging countries - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, which together represent about 42% of the population, 23% of GDP, 30% of the territory and 18% of the global trade. It was established to deepen, broaden and intensify cooperation with the groupings and among the individual countries. It aims to promote more sustainable, equitable and mutually beneficial development. Various achievements have been accomplished by BRICS in pursuance of these objectives so far:

- **Multipolar influence on world affairs:** The grouping has established parallel global institutions such as New Development Bank and Contingent Reserve Arrangement. Therefore, it has created space for emerging countries and has overcome the unipolar influence of the USA in the world economic governance system.
- **Established multi-layered pragmatic research cooperation:** It has established platforms such as the Partnership on New Industrial Revolution, which focuses on cooperation in digitalization, industrialization, innovation, inclusiveness and investment. It also collaborates in research in various areas such as agriculture, energy, tuberculosis, science and technology etc.



- **Addressing global issues:** It has emerged as a platform for discussing global issues such as IMF reforms, climate change, terrorism etc. from the point of view of emerging economies.
- **Cooperation on trade:** Platforms such as the BRICS Academic Forum and Business Council have helped in improving the understanding of each other's industry, academia and government and thereby increasing cooperation in trade. There are also discussions regarding trade in national currencies, visa liberalization and standards harmonization.
- **Addressed bilateral issues:** It has helped countries to iron out their bilateral differences in order to protect multilateral efforts under BRICS owing to its significance. For example, India's using BRICS card to resolve Doklam standoff.

Although BRICS has progressed towards achievement of its objectives, much more steps are required to be taken to achieve its true potential:

- Iron out the differences and work together to facilitate concrete **trade and investment mechanisms** within its members.
- **Building on the success of the NDB**, as it is yet to disperse loans to non-member countries. So far all the loans disbursed totaling \$5.1 Billion are to its members only, with other developing countries like African countries looking at the NDB for their infrastructural requirements.
- Establish a **permanent secretariat** for continuous discussions on matters of common interest, draft resolutions, and monitor the implementation of decisions.
- Operationalise other **coordinating agencies**, such as a Committee of Foreign Ministers, a Committee of Central Bank Heads etc.
- Push for BRICS-led effort to meet global commitments under **the Paris Agreement** and **Sustainable Development Goals**.

The new political realities require the BRICS nations to recalibrate their approach and to recommit to their founding ethos. Thus, to ensure the continued significance of BRICS, the countries must reaffirm their commitment to a multipolar world that allows for sovereign equality and democratic decision-making. It would address the asymmetry of power within the group and help in strengthening multilateralism.

19. ***The relevance of the Non Aligned Movement (NAM) has remained a perennial question after the end of the cold war. What are the ideas that this grouping can work on to answer this question in the changing global context?*** (250 words) 15

**Approach:**

- Give a brief introduction about the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).
- Write about the questions raised on its relevance at the end of the cold war.
- Discuss ways in which it can maintain its relevance by working on various ideas in the changing global context.
- Give an appropriate conclusion based on the above points.

**Answer:**

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was established by newly independent countries in 1961. The context of this development was tied with the logic of strategic rivalry between US and USSR leading to a bipolar system marked by competing military alliances. The NAM's objective was to **keep away from the power politics of the two superpowers** and **pursue independent foreign policy**. These countries wanted to follow their own path of development and did not want to compromise on their newly won political freedom by joining any of the military blocs. The collapse of USSR in 1991 marked the end of Cold War as well as the defining strategic rivalry. This also led to questions being raised on NAM's relevance in the post cold war period.

In this context, the debate has also included the need for NAM to reinvent itself to remain relevant. Most notably in 2019 India's External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar put forward compelling arguments. He argued that:

- Multilateralism is undoubtedly under strain today. It is important that NAM - that represents two thirds of the world's population - continues to work together and take the lead in building multilateral governance structures that are capable of meeting these challenges.
- There is a need to reform and revitalise the current arrangements and working methods of our Movement, to allow us to pursue a positive and forward looking agenda. At the same time, we must guard against attempts to divide us and to misuse multilateral platforms to further narrow interests.

The following ideas may provide the way forward in this context:

- The present world is grappling with **serious environmental issues** such as climate change, environmental degradation, natural calamities etc. which can only be faced together and NAM representing 2/3rds of the world population can take the lead in **establishing effective multilateralism**.
- The **development needs of NAM countries are similar** in terms of poverty reduction, economic growth and social transformation. NAM can serve as an important forum for south-south cooperation.
- NAM countries **stand to lose a lot by radicalisation and terrorism**, the single biggest threat not only to international peace and security, but also to development. This fight has to be fought collectively and across all fronts.
- Technology is transforming our world at an unprecedented rate. Though **digital and data-based technologies, artificial intelligence etc.** hold immense promise for the quality of life, these present **new challenges** in the form of implications for the future of work, threats to privacy, cyber crime and data theft. Again, the only way to address these issues, which cut across borders, is to act together.
- NAM as a grouping of 120 countries can play a meaningful role in the United Nations to bring about **nuclear arms control and disarmament** by nuclear powers.

It must be recalled that the idea of NAM was not just to evade the power struggle. It also stood for **peaceful coexistence** and the world is still far from being a peaceful, just and secure place. Further, **regional cooperation** among the third world was also one of the core components of NAM, which remains important in the changing global context as well. There are many issues, including the fulfillment of the right to development, that bind NAM countries together and make for the continuing relevance of the movement. NAM can play a key role in successfully confronting unilateralism and interventionism by acting collectively at various forums.

**20. *Indo-UAE relations have reached an extraordinary level of friendship and bonhomie. Analyse the strategic nature of these relations in the context of important issues and recent developments.* (250 words) 15**

**Approach:**

- Give a brief backgrounder of the Indo-UAE relations.
- Discuss how these relations are strategic in the context of important issues and the recent developments.
- Give a brief conclusion.

**Answer:**

India and the UAE enjoy strong friendship based on age-old cultural, religious and economic ties. India and UAE recently elevated their relationship to **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**. Strengthening of this relationship is also evident from four high level visits since 2015 and gestures of top leaders of both countries of breaking their respective diplomatic protocols to receive the other in person during state visits.

The strategic nature of these relations can be understood in the context of cooperation on important issues and recent developments in them such as:

- **Energy cooperation:** UAE is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest crude oil supplier for India. This relationship has transformed from a transactional relationship into **a strategic partnership in energy security**

with both countries **investing in each other's energy sector**. UAE is participating in India's strategic petroleum reserve while a consortium of Indian oil companies has acquired a 10 per cent stake in the Lower Zakhum Offshore oil field in Abu Dhabi.

- **Investments in infrastructure:** UAE promised to establish a US\$75 billion **investment fund**. A trilateral agreement was also signed for the joint development of a refinery in Maharashtra with an estimated cost of US\$44 billion.
- **Defence cooperation:** India-UAE are focusing on improving military cooperation including bilateral naval exercises, possibilities for joint defence manufacturing, maritime security cooperation etc. India, in its largest ever export order, will supply 50,000 artillery shells used with the Bofors guns to the UAE.
- **Counter-terrorism cooperation:** UAE is emerging as a key counter-terror partner for India with both working towards strengthening international and multilateral regimes to effectively address the challenges posed by terrorism.
- **Cooperation in the field of manpower:** More than 2.5 million Indians live in the UAE, which is among the largest number of expatriates anywhere in the world, repatriating \$13.6 billion a year to India. The two countries are exploring the possibility of linking their respective e-platforms for the benefit and welfare of Indian workers coming to the UAE
- **Space:** The two sides are discussing cooperation in the areas of remote sensing, space science, satellite navigation, launching services, academic cooperation and industry interactions and also in the UAE's Mars mission.
- **Trade:** UAE is India's third largest trading partner with bilateral trade standing at USD 60 billion during 2018-19. The UAE is India's re-export hub for the markets in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. To further boost trade, agreements in various areas such as manufacturing, IT, renewable energy, currency swap etc. have been signed in recent years.
- **Cooperation in regional development:** Both countries are working to explore cooperation in regional and global forums. They have also signed an MoU for cooperation in developmental projects in sub-Saharan Africa.
- **UAE-India food corridor:** UAE entities are expected to invest up to USD 7 billion in India's food sector in the next three years. Areas of cooperation may include establishment of logistics hubs, cold storage, warehousing and more to operationalise the food corridor that aims to secure the UAE's food security.

Despite these, the progress towards realizing a full-spectrum strategic partnership faces challenges largely due to structural, economic and administrative issues in India and worsening regional political situation in the Gulf. Nevertheless, the bilateral relations between two countries have shown an upward trend and the way forward for New Delhi is to seize the momentum and develop a greater basis for a strategic partnership to safeguard its core national interests while avoiding regional entanglements.