

International Relations- Current Affairs

For Prelims 2022

50 IMPORTANT Topics for Prelims 2022

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Year	No Of Questions
➤ 2011	04
➤ 2014	04
➤ 2015	12
➤ 2016	14
➤ 2017	06
➤ 2018	06
➤ 2019	04
➤ 2020	03
➤ 2021	01

India's Neighbourhood



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1. Delhi Declaration on Afghanistan

- Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan was held on 10 November, 2021 in New Delhi in an expanded format.
- The National Security Advisers / Secretaries of the National Security Councils of
 - 1. Republic of India
 - 2. Islamic Republic of Iran
 - 3. Republic of Kazakhstan
 - 4. Kyrgyz Republic
 - 5. Russian Federation
 - 6. Republic of Tajikistan
 - 7. Turkmenistan
 - 8. Republic of Uzbekistan



Important Highlights

- During the conference, it was announced that Afghanistan & its territories cannot be used to shelter or train terrorists, or to finance any act of terrorism.
- The Declaration emphasised on: Secure and Stable Afghanistan, condemning terrorism, Ensuring Fundamental Rights, collective Co-operation and the role of UN.
- Vouched for unity and territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs of Afghanistan.



2. India's Investments in Afghanistan

- The *2011 India-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership* Agreement recommitted Indian assistance to help rebuild Afghanistan's infrastructure and institutions.
- Education and technical assistance for capacity-building in many areas
- India's development assistance is now estimated to be worth well *over \$3 billion*.

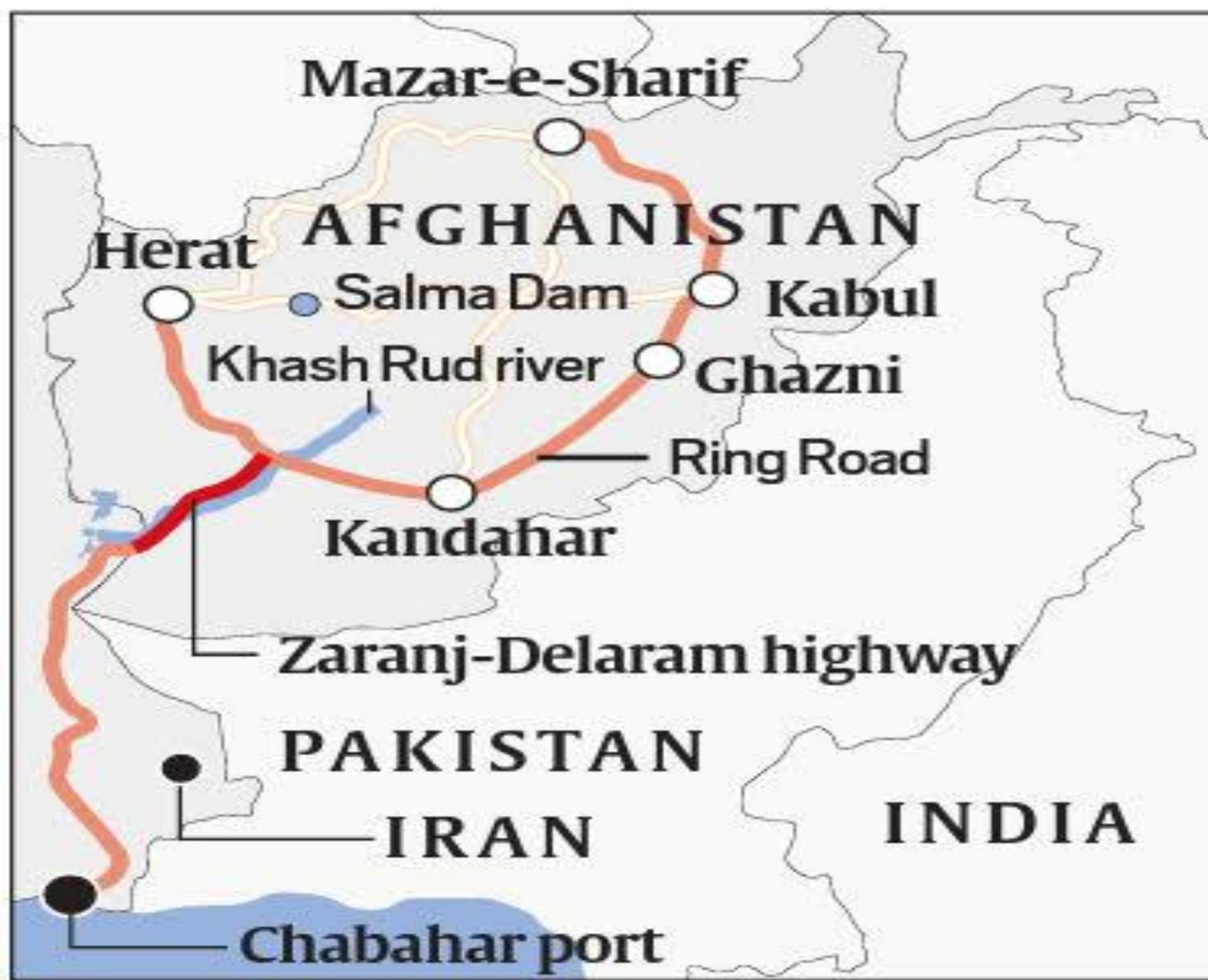
Salma dam- Hydropower and irrigation project.

- *Also called as the Afghan- India Friendship dam*

Zaranj Delaram Highway- Strategic importance to India as this highway *provides alternative route* into landlocked Afghanistan through Iran's Chabahar Port.

- *Zaranj is located close to Afghanistan's border with Iran*
- Parliament- Built by India at a cost of USD 90 Million.





3. South Asia Energy Security

- South Asia is located between the Himalaya range and the Indian Ocean (north to south) and the Ganga and Indus river valleys (east to west).
- It is home to a quarter of the world's population and consumes a significant amount of energy.
- The region's primary energy consumption climbed by 58% between 1991 and 2000.
- And it is anticipated to expand by another 40% over the following three decades

Additional Information

- Cross-border energy trade is a key part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's neighbourhood-first policy.
- **South Asia Group for Energy (SAGE)** has been established within the **Ministry of External Affairs** to assist in the development of a South Asia-focused energy security architecture (MEA).
- This has been set up under the MEA-run think tank Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS).
- The objective is to achieve a balanced and optimal development of energy infrastructure through mutual understanding and cooperation.

Additional Information

- Bangladesh has achieved 100% electrification recently while Bhutan, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka accomplished this in 2019.
- For India and Afghanistan, the figures are 94.4% and 97.7%, respectively



SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES



- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| ■ India | ■ Maldives |
| ■ Afghanistan | ■ Nepal |
| ■ Bangladesh | ■ Pakistan |
| ■ Bhutan | ■ Sri Lanka |



4. India Bhutan Hydropower Cooperation



- India and Bhutan have signed a memorandum of understanding for their **first joint venture hydropower project**.
- The **600 MW Kholongchhu project** will be built in **Trashiyangtse**, Bhutan's less developed eastern area.
- It's scheduled to be finished in the second half of 2025.



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- Sutlej Jal Vidyut Nigam, a Himachal Pradesh PSU, and Bhutanese Druk Green Power Corporation are the joint venture partners.
- The Kholongchu project is one of four new projects agreed to in 2014 under the Joint Venture Model for the building of hydroelectric projects with a capacity of 2120 MW.
- The following are the other three joint ventures that will be formed:
- Bunakha is 180 MW, Wangchhu is 570 MW, and Chamkharchhu is 770 MW.
- India has built four high-voltage power plants in Bhutan, totaling 2100MW
- (336 MW Chukha, 60 MW Kurichhu, and Tala (1020 MW) and Mangdechhu (720 MW).



- This hydropower cooperation comes under *2006 Agreement on Cooperation in Hydropower*.
- Under a protocol to this agreement, India has agreed to assist Bhutan in the *development of minimum of 10,000 MW* of hydropower and *import of surplus electricity* from same by year 2020.
- Also, there is a *Joint Group of Experts (JGE)* on flood management between India and Bhutan

5. Kalapani Dispute

- In June 2020, Nepal had unveiled a new map of its territories.
- This move drew sharp criticism from India which said the map includes parts of Indian territory.
- The bone of contention is the Kalapani-Limpiadhura-Lipulekh trijunction between Nepal-India and China (Tibet).
- Located on the banks of the river Kali at an altitude of 3600m, the Kalapani territory lies at the eastern border of Uttarakhand in India



Additional Information

- Kalapani is a region located in the easternmost corner of Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district.
- It shares a border on the north with the Tibet Autonomous Region of China and Nepal in the east and south.
- The area is in India's control but Nepal claims the region because of historical and cartographic reasons.
- Nepal's claims to the region is based on Kali river as it became the marker of the boundary of the kingdom of Nepal following the Treaty of Sugauli.
- This was signed between the Gurkha rulers of Kathmandu and the EIC after the Anglo-Nepal War (1814-16).
- According to Article 5, the King of Nepal gave up his claims over the region west of the river Kali which originates in the High Himalayas and flows into the great plains of the Indian subcontinent



Additional Information

- According to Nepal's experts, the east of the Kali river should begin at the source of the river.
- The source according to them is in the mountains near Limpiyadhura, which is higher in altitude than the rest of the river's flow.
- Nepal claims that a land mass, high in the mountains that falls to the east of the entire stretch starting from Limpiyadhura downwards, is theirs.
- Strategically the Lipulekh Pass serves as an important vantage point for India to keep an Eye on China's Movements.
- Since 1962 ITBP keeps a watch on Kalapani



6. China opens first road-rail transport link to Indian Ocean

- The first shipments on a newly-launched railway line from the Myanmar border to the key commercial hub of Chengdu in western China was made recently.
- This passage connects the logistics lines of Singapore, Myanmar and China.
- It is currently the most convenient land and sea channel linking the Indian Ocean with southwest China.
- Chinese have also looked at the Gwadar port in Pakistan as another key outlet to the Indian Ocean that will bypass the Malacca Straits.
- Gwadar is being developed as part of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to the far western Xinjiang region

- Additional Information
- The transport corridor involves a sea-road-rail link.
- **Goods from Singapore reached Yangon Port (Myanmar)**
 - Arriving by ship through the Andaman Sea of the northeastern Indian Ocean
 - And were then transported by road to Lincang on the Chinese side of the Myanmar-China border in Yunnan province.

Trade Corridor



7. China's Status as Developing Country At WTO

- The WTO has not defined 'developed' and 'developing' countries.
- Therefore member countries are free to announce whether they are 'developed' or 'developing'.
- Given the rise in China's per capita income to become an upper middle-income country according to the World Bank.
- Number of nations have called on China to either refrain from seeking benefits available to developing countries.
- China has consistently maintained that it is the "world's largest developing economy".
- China recently indicated that it may be willing to forego many benefits of being a developing country

Benefits of LDC Classification

- The WTO recognises LDCs relying on a classification by the UN based on a criteria that is reviewed every three years.
- LDCs are often exempted from certain provisions of WTO pacts.
- Bangladesh, currently classified as an LDC, receives zero duty, zero quota access for almost all exports to the EU.
- It is, however, set to graduate from the LDC status in 2026 as its per capita GDP has risen sharply surpassing that of India in FY21.

International Organizations



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8. Financial Action Task Force

- FATF is an **international watchdog** for financial crimes such as money laundering and terror financing.
- It is an **inter-governmental body** that sets international standards that aim to prevent these illegal activities and the harm they cause to society.
- The FATF was established at the **G7 Summit of 1989** in Paris, over concerns of the member countries about **growing money laundering activities**.
- In the aftermath of the **9/11 terror attack** on the United States, FATF also **added terror financing as a main focus area**.
- This was broadened In 2012, to include restricting the funding of **weapons of mass destruction**.

More on FATF

- The FATF currently has **39 members**.
- **The decision making body of the FATF is known as its plenary**, which meets thrice a year.
- Its meetings are attended by **206 countries of the global network**, including members, and observer organisations.
- **World Bank**, some offices of the United Nations and regional development banks are **observer organizations** within the FATF.



Argentina	France	Japan	Russian Federation
Australia	Germany	Republic of Korea	Saudi Arabia
Austria	Greece	Luxembourg	Singapore
Belgium	<i>Gulf Co-operation Council</i>	Malaysia	South Africa
Brazil	Hong Kong, China	Mexico	Spain
Canada	Iceland	Netherlands, Kingdom of	Sweden
China	India	New Zealand	Switzerland
Denmark	Ireland	Norway	Turkey
<i>European Commission</i>	Israel	Portugal	United Kingdom
Finland	Italy		United States

Members Of FATF

37 Member States

2 Regional Organizations

- European Commission
- Gulf Cooperation Council

Indonesia- Observer

Jurisdictions with strategic deficiencies
GREY LIST

[Albania](#)
[Barbados](#)
[Burkina Faso](#)
[Cambodia](#)
[Cayman Islands](#)
[Haiti](#)
[Jamaica](#)
[Jordan](#)
[Mali](#)
[Malta](#)
[Morocco](#)
[Myanmar](#)
[Nicaragua](#)
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[Panama](#)
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[Senegal](#)
[South Sudan](#)
[Syria](#)
[Turkey](#)
[Uganda](#)
[United Arab Emirates](#)
[Yemen](#)

Jurisdiction no longer subject to increased monitoring

[Zimbabwe](#)

24 Countries on Grey List



Black List Countries

- As for the black list, it means countries designated by the FATF as '**high-risk jurisdictions subject to call for action**'
- In this case the countries have considerable deficiencies in their **AML/CFT regimens**.
- For such countries, the body calls on **members and non-members** to apply **enhanced due-diligence**.
- Currently, two countries- **North Korea and Iran** are on the black list.
- Being listed under the FATF's two lists makes it difficult for countries to get **aid from organisations like the IMF & ADB**.
- It may also affect **capital inflows, foreign direct investments** and portfolio flows in the country.



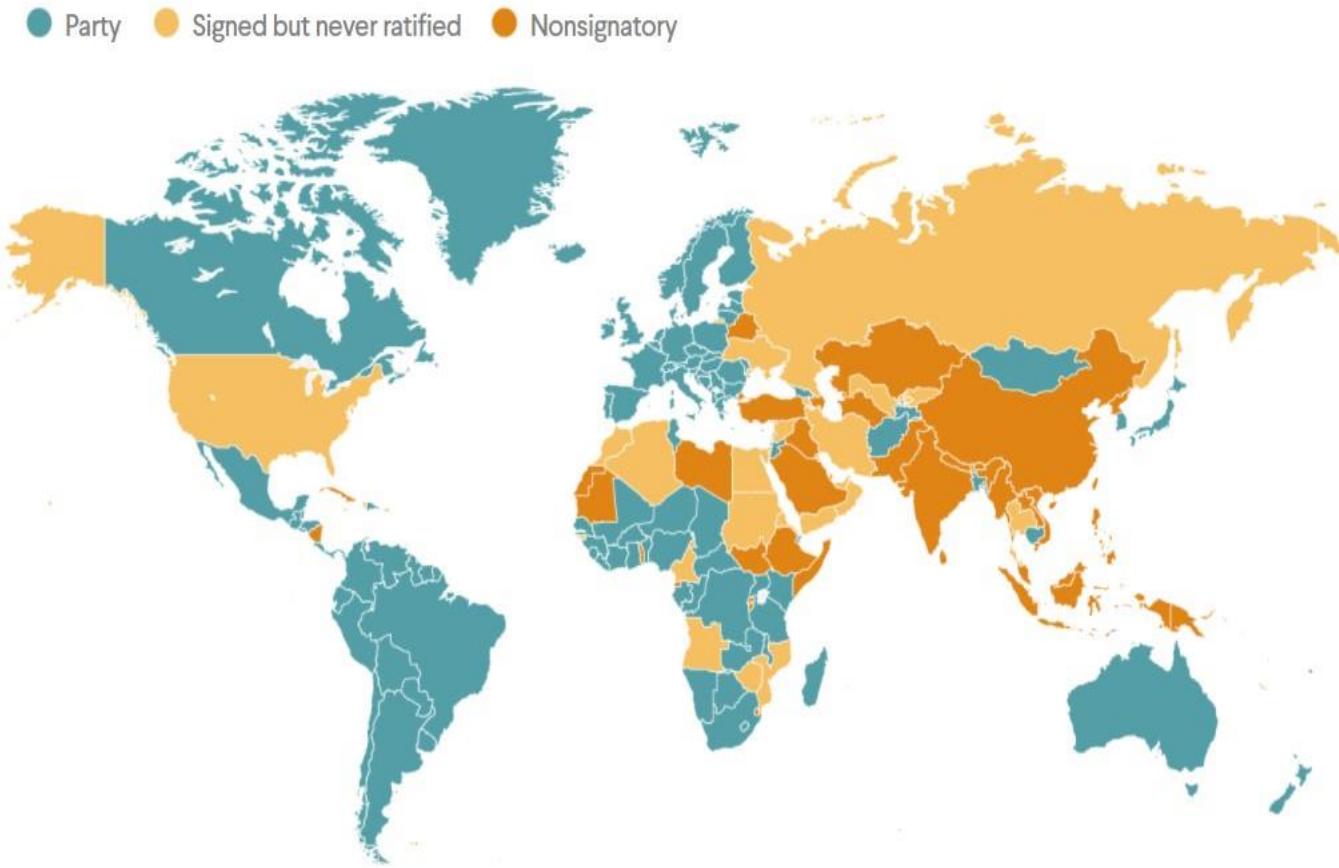
9. International Criminal Court

- The International Criminal Court is a **permanent court to prosecute serious international crimes committed by individuals.**
- It tries crimes such as **genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and aggression.**
- The court was established to fight **global impunity** and bring to justice criminals **under international law**, regardless of their rank or stature.
- This is not to be confused with the United Nations' **International Court of Justice, also at The Hague (Netherlands)**
- **International Court of Justice is an integral part of the United Nations and acts as its primary judicial branch.**
- In fact, the United Nations Security Council enforces the rulings and judgements passed by this court.



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Rome Statute

- Before the ICC became **functional in 2002**, its founding treaty was adopted by the **UN General Assembly in 1998 in Rome, Italy**, thereby making it the Rome Statute.
- To become a member of the ICC or State party to the Rome Statute, countries have to **sign the statute and ratify it** under their respective legislatures
- **123 countries are currently members of the ICC**, with African countries making up the largest bloc.
- **India, China, Iraq, North Korea and Turkey never signed the Rome Statute.**
- Others including the **US, Russia, Israel and Syria signed, but never ratified it.**



How Does The ICC Function?

- The court carries out its investigations through the **Office of the Prosecutor** and has **18 judges**.
- Both the **judges and prosecutors hold non-renewable nine-year terms**.
- The current prosecutor of ICC is **Mr. Karim Khan**.
- There are **pre-trial, trial, and appellate benches** in the ICC.
- The prosecutor **conducts a preliminary examination** in a matter, before seeking permission from pre-trial judges to open a full investigation.

How Does The Prosecutor Open Investigation?

- When a case is **referred by a member country** in its own territory
- When a case is **referred by the UN Security Council**.
- When the prosecutor takes up a case on his own.

Can Non Member States Be Prosecuted?

- If alleged crimes were **perpetrated by non-members** in member states.
- If the **non-members accept the court's jurisdiction**.
- When the **Security Council** authorises it.



What cases has the ICC deal in the past?

1. In 2011, the UN Security Council had referred the situation in **Libya** to the ICC.
2. UNSC had put allegations that **Muammar Gaddafi, the then de facto leader of Libya, and his son and brother in law**, were responsible for civilian killings.
3. The ICC **does not try any individuals** till they are present in the courtroom, meaning Libya's case has been stuck.
4. In 2019, the ICC **opened an investigation** into alleged persecution of the **Rohingya population** across the borders of Myanmar and Bangladesh.
5. Investigation is also going on into **alleged war crimes committed in Afghanistan since 2003**, when Afghanistan became a Member of ICC.

10. NATO

1. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is a military alliance between the United States, Canada, and their European allies.
2. The founding members of NATO signed the North Atlantic Treaty on April 4, 1949.
3. NATO's primary purpose was to defend member nations from threats by communist countries.
4. On December 1, 2015, NATO announced its first expansion since 2009, offering membership to Montenegro.
5. Currently there are 30 Member States in NATO.
6. Established by Washington Treaty.
7. *Headquarters- Brussels*

How Does NATO Work?

- It offers Protection of Freedom & Stability for Members & Their Regions.
- When One NATO nation is attacked, all NATO nations will retaliate.
- USA Contributes to Almost **75% of NATO's Budget.**
- NATO protection Does not extends to Civil wars or Internal Coups.
- Jens Stoltenberg is Secretary General of NATO (He was Former PM of Norway)

Composition

- Since its founding, the admission of new member states has increased the alliance from the original 12 countries to 30.
- The most recent member state to be added to NATO was North Macedonia on 27 March 2020.
- Membership is open to “any other European state in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area.”
- NATO's Article 5 spells out its key principle of collective defense
- “If any member of the alliance is attacked, it shall be considered an attack on all members”
- Article 5 has been invoked just once: Following the terrorist attacks on the U.S. on Sept. 11, 2001.



Founding Member States of NATO?

- The 12 founding member countries of NATO are Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States.



NATO's eastern expansion

European countries' membership by year



1949

Belgium
Denmark
France
Iceland
Italy
Canada
Luxembourg
Netherlands
Norway
Portugal
United Kingdom
United States

1952 – 1990

Greece
Turkey
Germany
Spain

1999
Poland
Czech Republic
Hungary

2004 – 2009

Bulgaria
Estonia
Latvia
Lithuania
Romania
Slovakia
Slovenia
Albania
Croatia

2017 – 2020

Montenegro
North Macedonia

■ Current aspirations
to join

Map excludes founding members Iceland, United States and Canada.

Source: NATO



NATO MEMBER COUNTRIES



11. CSTO

1. The CSTO is a Russia-dominated security alliance & Russia contributes 50% of its budget.
2. Post the fall of USSR, some members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) signed a mutual Defence treaty named Collective Security Treaty.
3. Meant as a replacement for the Warsaw Pact, the Treaty came into force in 1994.
4. The CSTO has six members today: **Russia, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan.**
5. In 2002, CSTO came into existence.

Warsaw Pact

- Formally known as the Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance, the **Warsaw Pact was created on 14 May 1955**
- It was created immediately after the accession of West Germany to the Western Alliance
- It was established by the **Soviet Union** and 7 other Soviet satellite states in Central and Eastern Europe.
- Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland and Romania were it's members.
- The Warsaw Pact embodied what was referred to as the Eastern bloc
- The break-up of the Warsaw Pact (February 1991) was shortly followed by the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991.

What do we Know About CSTO?

1. CSTO is based on the principle of collective security or the idea of "**one for all and all for one**".
2. An **aggressor against any one state** in the organisation is considered to be an **aggressor against all other states**.
3. All the members would act together to repel the aggressor.
4. Collective Security is also the principle on which NATO, the UN and earlier the League of Nations were founded.

Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)



Q. In Context of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, which if the following statements is INCORRECT:

- (a) The CSTO is a Russia-dominated security alliance & Russia contributes 50% of its budget.
- (b) CSTO is based on the principle of collective security or the idea of “one for all and all for one”.
- (c) CSTO came into existence in 2002.
- (d) Russia, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan are Member states of CSTO.

12. G 20

- The G20 is an annual meeting of leaders from the countries with the largest and fastest-growing economies.
- Its members account for 85% of the world's GDP, and two-thirds of its population.
- The G20 Summit is formally known as the “Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy”.
- The G20 or Group of Twenty is an intergovernmental forum comprising 19 countries and the European Union (EU).
- It works to address major issues related to the global economy, such as international financial stability, climate change mitigation, and sustainable development.



Additional Information

- The G20 was founded in 1999 in response to several world economic crises. (Asian Financial Crisis 1997)
- Since 2008, it has convened at least once a year, with summits involving each member's head of government or state, finance minister, foreign minister.
- Each year, a different G20 member country assumes the presidency starting from 1 December until 30 November.
- The 2021 summit was held in Italy.
- The 2022, 2023 and 2024 summits will be hosted by Indonesia, India and Brazil respectively.



Member	Trade bil. USD (2018) <small>[citation needed]</small>	Nom. GDP mil. USD (2022) ^[47]	PPP GDP mil. USD (2022) ^[47]	Nom. GDP per capita USD (2022) ^{[48][49]}	PPP GDP per capita USD (2022) ^[47]	HDI (2019)	Population (2018) ^[50]	Area km ²	P5	G4	G7	BRICS	MIKTA
Argentina	127	564,277	1,195,581	12,187	25,822	0.845	44,570,000	2,780,400	No	No	No	No	No
Australia	481.1	1,748,334	1,605,196	67,464	61,941	0.944	25,182,000	7,692,024	No	No	No	No	Yes
Brazil	650.0	1,833,274	3,680,942	8,570	17,208	0.765	210,869,000	8,515,767	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Canada	910	2,221,218	2,236,928	57,406	57,812	0.929	38,179,630	9,984,670	No	No	Yes	No	No
China	4,629	19,911,593	30,177,926	14,096	21,364	0.761	1,396,982,000	9,596,960	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
France	1,227.4	2,936,702	3,677,579	44,747	56,036	0.901	65,098,000	640,679	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Germany	2,834	4,256,540	5,269,963	51,104	63,271	0.947	82,786,000	357,114	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
India	830.7	3,291,398	11,745,260	2,342	8,358	0.645	1,334,221,000	3,287,263	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Indonesia	368.9	1,289,295	3,995,064	4,691	14,535	0.718	265,316,000	1,904,569	No	No	No	No	Yes
Italy	1,047.4	2,058,330	2,972,091	34,777	50,216	0.892	60,756,000	301,336	No	No	Yes	No	No
Japan	1,486.6	4,912,147	6,110,075	39,243	48,814	0.919	126,431,000	377,930	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
South Korea	1,140.4	1,804,680	2,735,870	34,994	53,051	0.916	51,665,000	100,210	No	No	No	No	Yes
Mexico	915.2	1,322,740	2,890,685	10,166	22,216	0.779	124,738,000	1,964,375	No	No	No	No	Yes
Russia	687.5	1,829,050	4,365,443	12,575	30,013	0.824	146,850,200	17,098,242	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Saudi Arabia	369.1	1,040,166	2,002,542	28,759	55,368	0.854	33,203,000	2,149,690	No	No	No	No	No
South Africa	187.8	426,166	937,964	6,979	15,361	0.709	57,420,000	1,221,037	No	No	No	Yes	No
Turkey	391	692,380	3,212,072	8,081	37,488	0.820	71,867,000	783,562	No	No	No	No	Yes
United Kingdom	1,157.1	3,376,003	3,751,845	49,761	55,301	0.932	66,466,000	242,495	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
United States	4,278	25,346,805	25,346,805	76,027	76,027	0.926	328,116,000	9,833,517	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
European Union		17,199,536	23,730,275	38,560	53,201	0.900	512,600,000	4,233,262	No	No	Yes	No	No

Invitee	Officeholder	State	Official title
African Union (AU)	Macky Sall	Senegal	President (Chairperson) since February 2022
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)	Hun Sen	Cambodia	Prime Minister (2022 chair)
	Lim Jock Hoi	N/A	Secretary-General
Financial Stability Board (FSB)	Randal K. Quarles	N/A	Chairperson
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	Qu Dongyu	N/A	Director-General
International Labour Organization (ILO)	Guy Ryder	N/A	Director General
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	Kristalina Georgieva	N/A	Managing Director
Spain ^[43]	Pedro Sánchez	Spain	Prime Minister
New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD)	Paul Kagame	Rwanda	President (chair)
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)	Mathias Cormann	N/A	Secretary-General
United Nations (UN)	António Guterres	N/A	Secretary-General
World Bank Group (WBG)	David Malpass	N/A	President
World Health Organization (WHO)	Tedros Adhanom	N/A	Director General
World Trade Organization (WTO)	Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala	N/A	Director General

Permanent Guests to G 20



The G20 developing nations

- Occasionally called as the G21, G23 or G20+) is a bloc of developing nations established on 20 August 2003.
- Distinct and separate from the G20 major economies.
- The group emerged at the 5th Ministerial WTO conference, held in Cancún, Mexico, from 10 September to 14 September 2003.
- The group accounted for 60% of the world's population, 70% of its farmers and 26% of world's agricultural exports.
- Its origins date back to June 2003, when foreign ministers from Brazil, India and South Africa signed a declaration known as the Brasilia Declaration, on June 6, 2003



13. G 7

- The G7, originally G8, was set up in 1975 as an informal forum bringing together the leaders of the world's leading industrial nations
- The summit gathers leaders from the European Union (EU) and Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- The major purpose of the G-7 is to discuss and deliberate on international economic issues.
- It sometimes acts in concert to help resolve other global problems, with a special focus on economic issues.
- Russia was formally inducted as a member in the group in 1998, which led G7 to become G8.
- Post Annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia was removed from G 7.



Cornwall Summit, 2021

- Since 2014, this is the second time the Prime Minister will be participating in a G7 meeting.
- India had been invited by the G7 French presidency in 2019.
- India has been Invited this year (2022) to the G7 Summit in Germany.
- The G7 summit agreed measures to dissuade multinational companies from shifting profits to low tax havens.
- Leaders signed up to levy a minimum 15% corporate tax rate.



Build Back a Better World (B3W)

- An Affirmative Initiative for Meeting the Tremendous Infrastructure Needs of Low- and Middle-Income Countries.
- President Biden and G7 partners agreed to launch the bold new global infrastructure initiative Build Back Better World (B3W).
- Through B3W, the G7 and other like-minded partners will coordinate in mobilizing private-sector capital in four areas of focus.

➤ Climate

➤ Health security

➤ Digital technology

➤ Gender Equity

It is value-driven, high-standard, and transparent infrastructure partnership led by major democracies to help narrow the \$40+ trillion infrastructure need in the developing world



14. Tax Inspector Without Borders (TIWB) Programme

Context

- Seychelles launched the TIWB programme in partnership with India.

About the TIWB

- Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB) is a joint initiative of the *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)* and the *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)* supporting countries in building tax audit capacity.
- TIWB Programmes complement the broader efforts of the international community to **strengthen co-operation** on tax matters and contribute to the **domestic resource mobilisation** efforts of developing countries.



- **The objective of the TIWB Initiative** is to enable sharing of tax audit knowledge and skills with tax administrations in developing countries through a targeted, real time "learning by doing" approach.
- **TIWB is focused on promoting hands-on assistance** by sending Experts to **build audit and audit-related skills** pertaining to specific international tax matters and the **development of general audit skills** within developing tax administrations.

15. Middle East Quad

What's' New Quad'?

- On October 18, **Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States** began a new quadrilateral economic forum which will deal with **climate change, energy, and maritime security**.
- Similar to the original Quadrilateral Security Dialogue of India-US-Australia-Japan, this **new quad engages India and US' cooperation against instability**.
- While the original quad **reportedly counters China**, this quad targets the instability in the Middle East (West Asia).



Aim of New Quad

- The new 'quad' aims to **counter China's monopoly** in the 5G race, **semiconductors, technology, space** and also **limit its expansionist ideas**.
- Limiting China's actions of opening up **new ports, naval base, surveillance and military incursions** in South China sea and on land.
- **Combined with UAE's capital and oil resources**, Israel's advanced technology, **India's manufacturing abilities** and US' global demand.
- The new quad is a major power with **geopolitical, security, climate and strategic intent**.



16. International Court of Justice

- The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN).
- It was **established in June 1945** by the Charter of the United Nations and began work in April 1946.
- The seat of the Court is at the **Peace Palace in The Hague (Netherlands)**.
- Of the six principal organs of the United Nations, it is the only one not located in New York (United States of America).
- The Court's role is to settle, in **accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by States**.
- And to give **advisory** opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorised United Nations organs and specialised agencies.

Members of the Court

- The International Court of Justice is composed of **15 judges elected to nine-year terms of office by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council.**
- These organs vote simultaneously but separately.
- In order to be elected, a candidate must receive an **absolute majority of the votes** in both bodies.
- In order to ensure a degree of continuity, **one third of the Court is elected every three years.** Judges are eligible for re-election.
- Should a judge die or resign during his or her term of office, a **special election is held as soon** as possible to choose a judge to fill the unexpired part of the term.
- *Former SC judge Dalveer Bhandari is one of the Judges to ICJ*

The 15 judges of the Court are distributed in following regions:

- Three from Africa.
- Two from Latin America and Caribbean.
- Three from Asia.
- Five from Western Europe and other states.
- Two from Eastern Europe



17. REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP (RCEP)



Context

- RCEP has come into force w.e.f. 1st January 2022.

What Is RCEP?

- The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a trade agreement between the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand.
- The pact aims to cover trade in goods and services, intellectual property, etc.



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When was RCEP introduced?

- The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership was introduced during the **19th ASEAN meet held in November 2011**.
- The RCEP negotiations were **kick-started** during the **21st ASEAN Summit in Cambodia** in November 2012.

China's role in RCEP

- RCEP was **pushed by Beijing in 2012** to counter another FTA that was in the works at the time:
- The **Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)**. The US-led TPP excluded China.
- However, in **2016 US President Donald Trump** withdrew his country from the TPP.
- Since then, the **RCEP has become a major tool for China** to counter the US efforts to prevent trade with Beijing.



When was it Signed?



- Leaders from 15 Asia-Pacific nations signed the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement on **15 November 2020**.
- This was nearly eight years to the day after negotiations began for the **trade and investment accord**.
- The signing took place virtually during an RCEP Leaders' Summit, **timed to coincide with various other leaders' and ministers' meetings** among Asia-Pacific economies.



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17. Exercise Malabar



- Malabar is a multilateral war-gaming naval exercise that was started in 1992.
- It began as a bilateral exercise between the navies of India and the United States.
- Two more editions of the exercise were carried out in 1995 and 1996, after which there was a break until 2002 in the aftermath of India's nuclear tests.
- From 2002 onward, the exercise has been conducted every year.
- Japan and Australia first participated in 2007, and since 2014, India, the US and Japan have participated in the exercise every year.



Additional Information



- In 2020 Australia joined the Malabar Exercise on India's request in order to contain China in the Indo-Pacific region.
- For the first time in over a decade, Malabar 2020 saw the participation of all four Quad members.
- *Malabar 2020 was conducted in 2 phases*
- Phase 1 was conducted off Visakhapatnam in Bay of Bengal from 3-6 November 2020.
- The second phase was conducted in the Arabian Sea from 17-20 November 2020
- *Malabar 2021 was the first joint maritime exercise* within the framework of Quad in the Western Pacific .



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18. QUAD

- Following the Indian Ocean tsunami, India, Japan, Australia, and the US created an informal alliance to collaborate on disaster relief efforts.
- In 2007, then PM of Japan, Shinzo Abe, formalised the alliance, as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or the Quad.
- The Quad was supposed to establish an Asian Arc of Democracy but was hampered by a lack of cohesion amongst its members.
- In 2017, faced again with the rising threat of China, the four countries revived the Quad.
- They broadened it's objectives and created a mechanism that aimed to slowly establish a rules-based international order



Additional Information



- Quad is not structured like a typical multilateral organisation and lacks a secretariat and any permanent decision-making body.
- Additionally, unlike NATO, the Quad does not include provisions for collective Defence.
- They have instead chosen to conduct joint military exercises as a show of unity and diplomatic cohesion.



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Objectives of Quad



- The group's primary objectives include
- Maritime security
- Combating the Covid-19 crisis
- Addressing the risks of climate change
- Creating an ecosystem for investment in the region
- Boosting technological innovation



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19. Arctic Council

- The Arctic Council is the **leading intergovernmental** forum promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among-
 1. Arctic States
 2. Arctic Indigenous peoples
 3. Other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues
- Issues of **sustainable development** and **environmental protection** in the Arctic are discussed in this forum.
- It was formally established under the Ottawa Declaration in 1996.

Member States of Arctic Council

- ✓ The Ottawa Declaration defines these states as Members of the Arctic Council.
- ✓ **The 8 States** have territories **within the Arctic** and thus carry the role of stewards of the region.
- ✓ Their **national jurisdictions and international law** govern the lands **surrounding the Arctic Ocean** and its waters.
- ✓ The **Northern regions of the Arctic States** are home to more than four million people.
- ✓ Their **health and well-being** is on the top of the Arctic Council's agenda



Arctic Council

Eight Arctic countries poised to sign a multilateral treaty to coordinate search and rescue operations in the region

Draft treaty

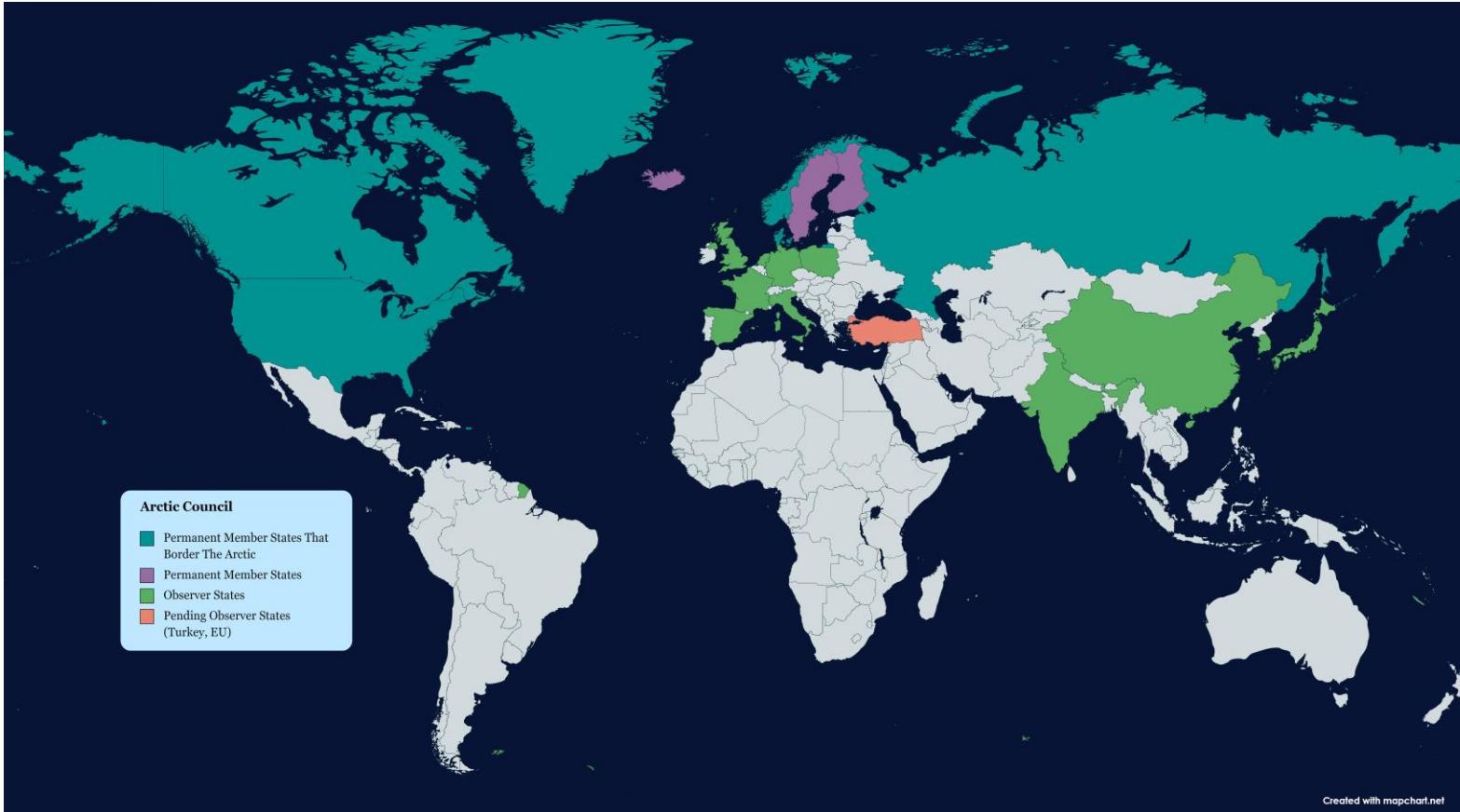
- Drawn up by foreign ministers in Iceland on December 16
- Divides the Arctic into specific search and rescue areas



Arctic Council States

1. **Russia**
2. **Finland**
3. **Denmark**
4. **Norway**
5. **Sweden**
6. **Greenland**
7. **USA**
8. **Canada**

Observer States- Arctic Council



- Germany, 1998
- Netherlands, 1998
- Poland, 1998
- United Kingdom, 1998
- France, 2000
- Spain, 2006
- China, 2013
- India, 2013
- Italy, 2013
- Japan, 2013
- South Korea, 2013
- Singapore, 2013
- Switzerland, 2017



- ✓ India's association with Arctic is **over 100 years old**, having been one of the original High Contracting Parties to the *Svalbard (formerly Spitsbergen) Treaty in February 1920*.
- ✓ The treaty was **signed on 9 February 1920** and submitted for registration in the League of Nations Treaty Series on 21 October 1920
- ✓ Even today, the Treaty provides the **right of visa-free access** and conduct of **economic and commercial activities** to the citizens of India in Svalbard.
- ✓ India got a **Permanent Observer status** in the Arctic Council in 2013 along with other Asian States, **China, Japan, Singapore and South Korea**.
- ✓ India's **first scientific expedition** to the Arctic Ocean in **2007**
- ✓ Indian research station '**Himadri**' at Ny-Ålesund was dedicated to the nation in **2008**.
- ✓ India is the **only developing country** apart from China to have an **Arctic research base**.

The Svalbard Treaty (originally the Spitsbergen Treaty) recognises the **sovereignty of Norway** over the Arctic archipelago of Svalbard, at the time called Spitsbergen.



- ✓ India's Arctic Policy, released by the Government of India on 17 March 2022.
- ✓ This fulfils a **longstanding need for a clear articulation** on a rapidly transforming Arctic.
- ✓ Arctic is **warming three times faster** than the rest of the world.
- ✓ This is leading to **major transformation of global shipping routes** and **increased availability of mineral and hydrocarbon resources**.
- ✓ India's **Arctic Policy is timely** and is likely to provide a direction to India's policy-makers on **contours of India's engagement** with the region.

Pillars of The Arctic Policy

1. Science and research.
2. Climate and environmental protection
3. Economic and human development
4. Transportation and connectivity
5. Governance and International cooperation
6. National capacity building



Consider the following countries:

1. Denmark
2. Japan
3. Russian Federation
4. United Kingdom
5. United States of America

Which of the above are the members of the 'Arctic Council'?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3
- (b) 2, 3 and 4
- (c) 1, 4 and 5
- (d) 1, 3 and 5



20. India Joins High Ambition Coalition (HAC) for Nature and People

Context

- At a ceremony held between the French and Indian governments on 7th October in New Delhi, India officially joined the **High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People**.
- It is a group of **more than 70 countries** encouraging the adoption of the global goal to protect 30x30.

Important Points

- India's announcement comes in the lead up to a **high-level biodiversity meeting**, hosted by China.
- HAC members currently include a **mix of countries** in the global north and south; **European, Latin American, Africa and Asia countries are among the members**.
- India is the **first of the BRICS bloc** of major emerging economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) to join the HAC.



What is HAC?

- The High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People was initiated at the **“One Planet Summit”** in Paris in January 2021.
- The High Ambition Coalition (HAC) for Nature and People is an Inter governmental group of **70 countries** co-chaired by **Costa Rica and France and by the United Kingdom as co-chair**
- It champions a **global deal for nature and people** with the central goal of protecting at least **30% of the world's land and ocean** by 2030.
- The **30x30 target** is a global target which aims to halt the accelerating loss of species, and protect vital ecosystems that are the source of our economic security.





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