

INTERNATIONAL RELATION**FOURTH ANNUAL U.S.-INDIA 2+2 MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE**

Recently, the Fourth Annual U.S.-India 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue was held in Washington DC.

What are 2+2 Dialogue between India and its Allies?

- The 2+2 Dialogue is a format of meeting of the foreign and defence ministers of India and its allies on strategic and security issues.
- A 2+2 ministerial dialogue enables the partners to better understand and appreciate each other's strategic concerns and sensitivities taking into account political factors on both sides, in order to build a stronger, more integrated strategic relationship in a rapidly changing global environment.
 - India has 2+2 dialogues with four key strategic partners: the US, Australia, Japan, and Russia.

India-US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue

- The US is India's oldest and most important 2+2 dialogue partner.
- The first 2+2 dialogue between the two countries was held during the Trump Administration in September 2018.
 - The launch of the dialogue was seen as a "reflection of the shared commitment" by India and the US to promote synergy in their diplomatic and security efforts.
- The second and third editions of the 2+2 dialogues were held in Washington DC and New Delhi in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

Major Highlights of recent Dialogue**Discussion on range of issues:**

- India and the U.S. discussed a broad range of issues — from the COVID-19 response, supply chains, climate action to global and regional issues.
- Both the countries discussed ways of mitigating the negative impact of the Ukraine situation on food and energy supplies.
 - U.S. has not made a decision on CAATSA sanctions

Global Partnership and Indo-Pacific Cooperation:

- Both reviewed mutual efforts to respond to the worsening humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and assessed its broader implications.
- The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific in which the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states are respected.
- They affirmed their interest in expanding efforts to promote sustainable and durable infrastructure across the Indo-Pacific and affirmed they would remain engaged through the Blue Dot Network and Build Back Better World (B3W) Initiative.

Logistics cooperation:

- They have agreed to explore further cooperation in the fields of Defence Cyber, Special Forces and expanding the scope of logistics cooperation under LEMOA and during joint exercises.
- Both sides have agreed on the need to revitalise the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) with joint projects on advanced and emerging and critical military technologies, to be executed quickly.

Space:

- They also signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Space Situational Awareness — to further cooperation in outer-space.

Cyber-space:

- The two sides had discussed deepening cooperation also in cyber-space, in order to develop capabilities in both "war-fighting domains."

Situation in Afghanistan:

- The two sides discussed the ramifications of the situation in Afghanistan (where the Taliban has taken over after a chaotic U.S. departure in August last year) for the neighbourhood..

Other countries in India's neighbourhood:

- The two sides discussed other countries in India's neighbourhood — presumably, Sri Lanka, which is in the midst of the worst economic crisis in decades, and Pakistan, which, after intense political drama, has a new Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif, who replaced former Prime Minister Imran Khan, following a no-confidence vote in parliament.

Significance of Meeting

- The Dialogue would enable both sides to undertake a comprehensive review of cross-cutting issues in the India-US bilateral agenda related to foreign policy, defence and security with the objective of providing strategic guidance and a vision for further consolidating the relationship.
- The 2+2 Dialogue will also provide an opportunity to exchange views about important regional and global developments and how we can work together to address issues of common interest and concern.

India- US Relations**About:**

- India and US shared values of democracy, rule of law, human rights, religious freedom that bind the countries together.

Bilateral engagement:

- India and the United States enjoy a comprehensive global strategic partnership covering almost all areas of human endeavour, driven by shared democratic values, convergence of interests on a range of issues, and vibrant people-to-people contacts.
- Regular exchanges at the leadership-level have been an integral element of the expanding bilateral engagement.
- Despite COVID-19 pandemic, India-U.S. cooperation witnessed intense engagement under various bilateral dialogue mechanisms in a wide range of areas including defence, security, health, trade, economic, science & technology, energy and people-to-people ties.

Defence and Security:

- India-US defence cooperation is based on “New Framework for IndiaUS Defence Cooperation”, which was renewed for a period of ten years in 2015.
- In 2016, the defence relationship was designated as a Major Defence Partnership (MDP).
 - The MDP recognizes a shared desire to build a comprehensive, enduring and mutually beneficial defence partnership.
- Several defence agreements have been signed in recent years. These include:**
 - Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Association (August 2016)
 - Memorandum of Intent between the U.S. Defence Innovation Unit (DIU) and the Indian Defence Innovation Organisation – Innovation for Defence Excellence (2018)
 - Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (September 2018)
 - Industrial Security Agreement (December 2019);
 - Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (October 2020).
- Bilateral military exercises** and defence exchanges are important aspects of deepening military-to-military cooperation.
 - In addition to a number of service-to-service exercises, in 2019 a tri-services exercise– Tiger Triumph- was conducted in November 2019.
 - Bilateral and regional exercises include: Yudh Abhyas (Army); Vajra Prahar (Special Forces); RIMPAC; Red Flag.
 - In November 2020, the Royal Australian Navy joined the U.S.-India-Japan MALABAR Naval Exercise held in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea.
 - Both sides have conducted a number of PASSEX with the US carrier groups in the Indian Ocean Region

Quad:

- The four Quad partners (India, Japan, United States & Australia) first formed a “Core Group” in 2004, to swiftly mobilise aid during the joint response to the 2004 Tsunami. Since 2017, Quad engagements have increased and intensified. In 2019, the first Quad Foreign Ministerial Meeting was held in New York (December 2019).

Counter Terrorism Cooperation:

- Cooperation in counter-terrorism has seen considerable progress with information exchange, operational cooperation and sharing of counterterrorism technology and equipment. India-U.S. Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism oversees the expanding CT cooperation.

Cyber Security Cooperation:

- The India-US Cyber Framework signed in September 2016, provides for expanding cooperation in the cyber domain.

Trade & Economic Relations:

- The rapidly expanding trade and commercial linkages form an important component of the multi-faceted partnership between India and the United States.
- The U.S. is India’s second largest trading partner and a major destination for our exports of goods and services.
- Bilateral trade in goods and services stood at US\$ 146 billion in 2019.
- During the financial year 2020-21, India received the highest ever foreign direct investment amounting to USD 81.72 billion, as per data published by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.
- The US replaced Mauritius as the second largest source of foreign direct investment into India during 2020-21 with inflows of USD 13.82 billion.

- The US is one of the top 5 investment destinations for Indian FDI.

Energy sector:

- India and the US have a strong bilateral partnership in the energy sector.
- In 2010, bilateral Energy Dialogue was launched.

Science and Technology:

- India-US cooperation in Science and Technology is multi-faceted and has been growing steadily under the framework of the India-US Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement signed in October 2005, which was renewed for a period of ten years in September 2019.
- ISRO and NASA are working together to realise a joint microwave remote sensing satellite for Earth observation, named NASA ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR).

Education partnership:

- It is an important pillar of India-US ties and both the countries share strong linkages and history of higher education collaborations.
- The United States Educational Foundation in India (USEFI) was set up after a bilateral agreement on education exchange was signed between India and the US on February 2, 1950

Indian Diaspora:

- About 4.2 million Indian Americans/Indian origin people reside in the US. The Indian Americans [3.18 million] constitute the third largest Asian ethnic group in the US

Frictions in India- USA relations**Trade Deal:**

- The USA is worried about the trade deficit it has with India.
- Further, India's benefits under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) scheme were terminated by Trump in 2019.
- The GSP provides preferential, duty-free access for over \$6 billion worth of products exported from developing countries to the US.

Different cases/ disagreements at WTO:

- India's domestic component clause was a bone of contention.
- Similarly there is lack of consensus over the IPR regime and evergreening of patents.
- Peace Clause and Public Procurement Policy

H1B visas:

- US has ramped up H-1B denials under the executive order "Buy American and Hire American".

Digital Data:

- The US, Japan, etc support Free Flow of Data with Trust whereas India has raised red flags on it.

Agriculture:

- The US has long demanded greater access to American agriculture and dairy products.
- For India, protecting its domestic agriculture and dairy interests was a major reason to walk out of the RCEP agreement.

US-Pakistan Equation:

- The US has often shown a soft corner for Pakistan due to dynamic equations in Afghanistan.

USA tensions with Iran, Russia:

- Putting unilateral curbs on Russian and Iranian imports into India through CAATSA would impinge on India's relations with Iran, Russia, both relations in which India has strong stakes.

Russian attack on Ukraine

- India's strategic partner, the U.S., warned of consequences for any country, including India, which conducts local currency transactions through Russia's central bank or constructs a payment mechanism that subverts or circumvents the U.S.'s sanctions against Russia.
- India's consistent neutral position on Russia's invasion of Ukraine, informed by its choices, has antagonised many countries, including the U.S.
- The Biden administration has been not too happy about India sitting on the fence when it comes to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.
 - India has consistently abstained from voting in the UN meetings, refusing to take a stand in what it sees as a conflict between the two blocs.

Way ahead

- 2+2 meeting is an opportunity for the two countries to further discuss their differences over Russia and elaborate on the bilateral agenda in terms of the progress that has been made on new initiatives.
 - Though behind closed doors, they'll have an opportunity to have deep discussions about Russia.
 - It is well timed, and the tenor of those talks will be a good indicator of the overall direction of the strategic partnership and will tell us whether the strains of the sharply divergent views over Russia are going to have a long-term impact on the partnership.

- The 2+2 meeting is a good opportunity to work on other aspects of this relationship while exchanging views quietly, as strategic partners should, in areas where they may not see eye to eye.
- **Participation of US entities in Industrial collaboration and partnership in research and development** will be critical for the success of India's 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' campaigns.
 - India's desire for increased investments by US defence companies in India under the 'Make in India' programme.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM

1. Enhanced Pinaka Rocket System

- Pinaka Mk-I (Enhanced) Rocket System (EPRS) and Pinaka Area Denial Munition (ADM) rocket systems have been successfully flight-tested by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Indian Army at Pokhran Firing Ranges.
 - A total of 24 EPRS rockets were fired for different ranges.

About Pinaka Rocket System

- The Pinaka rocket system has been developed by Armament Research and Development Establishment, Pune supported by High Energy Materials Research Laboratory, another Pune-based laboratory of DRDO.
- The EPRS is the upgraded version of the Pinaka variant which has been in service with the Indian Army for the last decade.
- The system has been upgraded with advanced technologies enhancing the range to meet the emerging requirements.
- After establishing the performance efficacy of the enhanced range version of Pinaka, the technology was transferred to the industries viz. Munitions India Limited (MIL) and Economic Explosives Limited Nagpur.

2. Johkasou technology

- 'Johkasou' , a Japanese technology-based packaged sewage treatment plant for the domestic, industrial and commercial sectors in the city.
- Johkasou in Japanese language means, purification Tank. Johkasou products are approved by the government of Japan and are extensively deployed across Japan as a part of government policy.
- As a matter of fact, more than 26% of Sewage in Japan is treated through Johkasou systems. Over 8 million Johkasou are running successfully in Japan and several millions are installed in various other countries.
- Technology was soft launched in 2018, the plants are being operated in various locations across South India. It was found that the maintenance cost was about 80% lower compared to other technologies.
- In Japan the sludge generated from johkasou is appropriately treated at night soil treatment facility before used as fertiliser or industrial fuel.
- This way Johkasou can play the role of a wastewater treatment facility to become a system that integrates the technology and its management, which is useful for both mankind and environment.
- Core Concept of Johkasou is to treat domestic waste water locally and Reuse it locally, which is very appropriate for India in current circumstances.

3. State Energy and Climate Index List

- NITI Aayog has launched the State Energy & Climate Index-Round I.

About

- The State Energy & Climate Index (SECI) Round I ranks the states' performance on 6 parameters, namely
 - DISCOM's Performance
 - Access, Affordability and Reliability of Energy
 - Clean Energy Initiatives
 - Energy Efficiency
 - Environmental Sustainability
 - New Initiatives.
 - The parameters are further divided into 27 indicators.
- Based on the composite SECI Round I score, the states and UTs are categorised into three groups: Front Runners, Achievers, and Aspirants.
- The States have been categorised based on size and geographical differences as larger and smaller States and UTs. The index is based on 2019-20 data
- **Top Performers**

- Gujarat, Kerala, and Punjab have been ranked as the top three performers in the category of larger states.
- Goa, emerged as the top-performing state in the smaller states category, followed by Tripura, and Manipur.
- Among UTs, Chandigarh, Delhi, and Daman & Diu/Dadra & Nagar Haveli are the top performers.
- It is the first index that aims to track the efforts made by States and UTs in the climate and energy sector.

Suggestions:

- This edition of the report reveals that some of the important data is not available at the state level.
 - There is a need to develop a robust mechanism for capturing such data so that it can be incorporated in future editions of the report.
- Synergy and partnership among the Centre and the States will be critical for achieving energy and climate-related goals and making the country self-reliant in the energy sector.
- Achieving the ambitious climate targets would require a conducive policy environment to encourage investment.
- The best practices of the States should be regularly documented and disseminated through mediums such as SECI to promote peer-to-peer learning.
 - For instance, each State can learn from the best performing States/UTs.

4. Government approve continuation of revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)

- RGSA Launched in 2018.
- It is a centrally sponsored scheme
- **Aim:** Strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions for achieving Sustainable Development Goals. Convergence with Mission Antyodaya and emphasis on strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions in 117 Aspirational districts.
- It is an effort in the direction of achieving “Sabka Sath, Sabka Gaon, Sabka Vikas”.
- The RGSA helps more than 2.55 lakh Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to develop governance capabilities through inclusive local governance with focus on optimum utilisation of available resources.
- Priority will be given to subjects of national importance that affect the excluded groups the most, e.g. poverty, primary health services, nutrition, immunization, etc.
- This scheme extends to all States and UTs of the country and will also include institutions of rural local government in non-Part IX areas, where Panchayats do not exist.
- It will establish the institutional structure for capacity building of PRIs at the national, state and district level with adequate human resources and infrastructure.
- Panchayats will progressively be strengthened through incentivisation on the basis of nationally important criteria which will encourage competitive spirit among them.
- The funds are not released district-wise/Panchayat-wise under the scheme.
- Under the scheme of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan there is no provision for forming new Panchayats. Formation or reorganization of Panchayats is done by the respective States/ Union Territories as per their requirement.
- No permanent post will be created under the scheme but need based contractual human resources may be provisioned for overseeing the implementation of the scheme and providing technical support to States/UTs for achieving goals under the scheme.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Q1. Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) creates opportunities for augmenting the income of the farmers and supplement their financial needs in procuring various inputs required for farming. Elucidate. (250 words)

Introduction

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) is a central sector scheme under the government of India which provides income support to the farmers and their families. PM-KISAN scheme was first implemented as the Rythu Bandhu scheme by the Government of Telangana where a certain amount was handed directly to the eligible farmers

Body**About Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi**

- The scheme was started with a view to augment the income of the farmers by providing income support to all landholding farmers' families across the country, to enable them to take care of expenses related to agriculture and allied activities as well as domestic needs.

- Under the Scheme an amount of Rs.6000/- per year is transferred in three 4-monthly instalments of Rs.2000/- directly into the bank accounts of the farmers, subject to certain exclusion criteria relating to higher income status.
- The entire responsibility of identification of beneficiaries rests with the State / UT Governments.
- The Scheme initially provided income support to all Small and Marginal Farmers' families across the country, holding cultivable land upto 2 hectares. Its ambit was later expanded w.e.f. 01.06.2019 to cover all farmer families in the country irrespective of the size of their land holdings.

Importance of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)

- The revised Scheme is expected to cover around 2 crore more farmers, increasing the coverage of PM-KISAN to around 14.5 crore beneficiaries, with an estimated expenditure by Central Government of Rs. 87,217.50 crores for year 2019-20.
- Earlier, under the scheme, financial benefit has been provided to all Small and Marginal landholder farmer families with total cultivable holding upto 2 hectares with a benefit of Rs.6000 per annum per family payable in three equal instalments, every four months.
- Now the cash transfer is not linked to the size of the farmer's land, unlike Telangana's Rythu Bandhu scheme, under which farmers receive ₹8,000 per annum for every acre owned.
- Though what the programme offers is meagre, it promises some relief to poor farmers by partially supplementing their input costs or consumption needs.

Shortcomings reported

- **Practical Difficulties:** The benefits of PM-KISAN have not reached farmers in most parts of the country. There are 125 million farming households owning small and marginal holdings of land in the country, who constitute the scheme's original intended beneficiaries.
 - However, at present, the list of beneficiaries includes only 32% (40.27 million) of these households.
 - Further, a majority of the intended beneficiary households are yet to receive even their first instalment of ₹2,000. Only 27% (33.99 million) received the first instalment, and only 24% (29.76 million) received the second.
- In budgetary terms, only 17% of the estimated ₹75,000 crore expenditure has been spent.
- **Structural Issues:** PM-KISAN offers ₹6,000 a year per household in three instalments. Broadly speaking, this amounts to only about a tenth of the production cost per hectare or consumption expenditure for a poor household.
- While landless tenants have been left out in both the schemes (PM KISAN, Rythu Bandhu) the link with land size makes the support provided by the Telangana scheme more substantial.
- **Uneven implementation:** Moreover, implementation in certain States has been prioritized.
 - P., for instance, accounts for one-third of total beneficiary households 33% (11.16 million) in the first instalment and 36% (10.84 million) in the second.
 - About half of the State's SMF households have been covered, a total of 17 States have received a negligible share of the first instalment, accounting for less than 9%.
- Further, the scheme recognizes only landowners as farmers, Tenants who constitute 13.7% of farm households and incur the additional input cost of land rent, don't stand to gain anything if no part of the cultivated land is owned.

Way forward

- For the scheme to be effective, PM-KISAN needs to be uniformly implemented across regions.
- Cash transfers will cease to be effective if the state withdraws from its other long-term budgetary commitments in agricultural markets and areas of infrastructure such as irrigation.
- Subsidies for inputs, extension services, and procurement assurances provide a semblance of stability to agricultural production.
- There is a strong case to include landless tenants and other poor families to the scheme.
- PM-KISAN can be formulated in the side-lines of Odisha's Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme, which includes even poor rural households that do not own land.
- Moreover, though the scheme is conceptualized to supplement agricultural inputs, it ceases to be so without the necessary link with scale of production (farm size) built into it. It becomes, in effect, an income supplement to landowning households. Thus if income support is indeed the objective, the most deserving need to be given precedence. Neighbours believe in its nuclear doctrine through effective confidence building measures.

DAILY QUIZ

Q1. With reference to State Energy and Climate Index, consider the following statements:

1. It was launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

2. The States have been categorised based on size and geographical differences as larger and smaller States and UTs.
3. The index is based on 2019–20 data.
4. Gujarat, Kerala, and Punjab have been ranked as the top three performers in the category of smaller states.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Q2. With reference to “Learning Poverty”, consider the following statements

1. Learning Poverty means being unable to read and understand a short, age-appropriate text by age 10.
2. Learning Poverty is higher for boys than for girls in India.

Which of the following statements is/are correct?

- (a) Neither 1 nor 2 (b) 2 only (c) **1 and 2 only** (d) only 1

Q3. Which of the following currencies are included in the basket of Special Drawing Rights (SDR)?

1. Indian Rupee
2. British pound sterling
3. Japanese yen
4. Chinese renminbi

Select the correct answer using the code given

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

Q4. With reference to HELINA Missile, consider the following statements:

1. It is a third generation fire and forget class anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) system.
2. It is mounted on the Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH).
3. It has all weather day and night capability.
4. A variant of the HELINA Weapon System called DHRUVASTRA is being inducted into the Indian Navy.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Q5. With reference to Deputy Speaker, consider the following statements:

1. The Deputy Speaker is subordinate to the Speaker.
2. He has a special privilege of becoming the Chairman of any Parliamentary Committee to which he is a member.
3. He has voting rights at first instance unlike the Speaker.

Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?

- (a) **1 and 3 only** (b) 2 only (c) 1 and 2 only (d) only 1

Q6. Consider the following statement about the term “Great Green Wall” Recently seen in news

1. It was launched by UNEP to restore and hold back expansion of sahara desert to south ward
2. This green wall extended along the sahel region , Djibouti from west to Senegal in East
3. The ambition of the initiative is to restore 100 million ha land by 2030

Choose the correct statement /s using the code given below

- a) 1 and 2 only b) 1 and 3 only c) 2 and 3 only (d) **3 only**

Q7. Botanical survey of India ,In its new publication” Plant Discovery 2020” which was released recently has added many new taxa/ species to the country’s flora

1. Western Himalayas
2. North eastern Himalayas
3. Western ghats
4. Eastern Himalayas

Arrange the above region with reference to their contribution were made to the Taxa/Species by percentage

- a) 1>3>2>4 b) 2>1>4>3 (c) **3>1>4>2** d) 3>4>2>1

Q8. Examine the following statement with regards to Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan

1. Under the scheme there is provision for forming new panchayats
2. This scheme will extended to all the state and UTs including institution of rural local government in non part- IX areas where panchayat does not exists

Choose the correct statement/s using the code given below

- a) 1 only (b) **2 only** c) Both d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q9. “Johkasou technology” often seen in news is related to

- a) DNA replication b) Irrigation technique c) Space technology (d) **Sewage treatment**

Q10. “strait of Kerch “ recently seen in news connects which of the following seas

- a) Mediterranean and Red sea b) Black sea and Aegean sea
c) Black sea and Sea of Marmara (d) **Black sea and Sea of Azov**