

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**NEW INDIA-FRANCE DISCUSSIONS**

Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron held extensive discussions on a range of bilateral and pressing global issues.

Key Takeaways from India-France Joint Statement

- France and India expressed serious concern over the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. They unequivocally condemned civilian deaths in Ukraine and called for an immediate cessation of hostilities.
 - Both countries underlined the need to respect the UN Charter, international law and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states.
- Both share a vision of a free, open and rules-based Indo-Pacific region, based on a commitment to international law, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, freedom of navigation and a region free from coercion, tensions and conflicts.
- India and France reaffirmed their commitment to deepen the India-European Union Strategic Partnership and look forward to working closely together in the implementation of the India-EU Connectivity Partnership.
- France and India expressed deep concern about the current aggravation of global food security and nutrition, already impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, and especially in developing countries.
- India and France have agreed on setting up a bilateral strategic dialogue on space issues.
- Both sides welcomed the ongoing intense cooperation across all defence domains. Joint exercises (Shakti, Varuna, Pegase, Desert Knight, Garuda) illustrate efforts towards better integration and interoperability wherever possible.
- Both sides also agreed to work jointly to increase the mobility of students, graduates, professionals and skilled workers while strengthening their efforts to combat irregular migration.

India and France Relations**About:**

- The two countries are committed to the shared values of democracy, fundamental freedoms, rule of law and respect for human rights.

Strategic:

- In 1998, the two countries entered into Strategic Partnership which is emblematic of their convergence of views on a range of International issues apart from a close and growing bilateral relationship.
- France has stood by India through thick and thin, beginning with 1998 when India conducted nuclear tests and the entire world was against us.

Support:

- France has continued to support India's claim for permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council and the reforms of the United Nations. France's support was vital in India's accession to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) and Australia Group (AG).
- France continues to support India's bid for accession to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

Indo-Pacific:

- France is a preferred partner in the Indo-Pacific and there is now a blueprint for cooperation in this field in the form of a Joint Strategic Vision for cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region concluded by both countries in 2018.

Space:

- Space has always been central to the strategic partnership of our two countries.
- India and France have a rich history of cooperation in the field of space for over 50 years with ISRO and the French Space Agency (CNES) carrying on various joint research programmes and launch of satellites.

New areas of cooperation:

- India and France are increasingly engaged in new areas of cooperation like security in the Indian Ocean region, climate change including the International Solar Alliance, and sustainable growth and development among others.

Economic Cooperation:

- Both India and France have important bilateral investments and trade and commercial cooperation, particularly in sectors involving IT corridors, smart-cities, railways, capital and trade exchanges, skill development etc.

Blue economy:

- Both nations have inked a roadmap to enhance their bilateral exchanges on the blue economy and forge a common vision of ocean governance based on the rule of law and cooperate on sustainable and resilient coastal and waterways infrastructure.

Maritime Security:

- India and France already have a high level dialogue on maritime security, and this enables the two to raise strategic issues in the Indo-Pacific.

Defence:

- Cooperation in defence is the cornerstone of the India France strategic partnership.
 - The two countries have a Ministerial level Defence dialogue, which has been held annually since 2018.
- The three services also have regular defence exercises; viz. Exercise Shakti (Army; the last one took place in November 2019 in India), Exercise Varuna (Navy; is scheduled to be held in the gulf of Oman from 25 to 27 April 2021), Exercise Garuda 9 (Air Force; July 2019 in France).
- Purchase of Rafale aircraft: The Inter-governmental agreement for purchase of 36 Rafale fighter aircrafts (30 fighter aircrafts and 6 trainers) by India in flyaway condition was signed in New Delhi on 23 September 2016.
- P-75 Scorpene Project: The contract for six Scorpene submarines from DCNS (Naval Group) was signed in October 2006.

Environment and Renewable Energy:

- France is a founding member of the International Solar Alliance (ISA), announced by PM Modi in 2015 at UN Climate Change CoP21.

Cooperation in the fields of S&T and Education:

- In the field of S&T, the Indo-French Centre for the Promotion of Advance Research (CEFIPRA) based in New Delhi, established in 1987, plays a major role by identifying and funding joint proposals for research projects.

Counter-terrorism:

- India and France have consistently condemned terrorism and have resolved to work together for adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) in the UN.

Culture:

- Indian culture enjoys a wide following amongst the people of France.
- The International Day of Yoga has been organised by the Embassy of India in Paris and other cities of France since 2016 and has received wide acclaim and press coverage.
- Year long celebrations have also been organised to commemorate 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, 550th Birth Anniversary of Shri Gurunanak Devji .

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM

1. Super cyclones in India, Bangladesh: numbers exposed to severe flooding projected to rise hugely

- A new study has found that super cyclones are likely to have a much more devastating impact on people in South Asia in future years.
- The paper was published in the Royal Meteorological Society journal Climate Resilience and Sustainability recently when the India Meteorological Department was tracking Asani, classified as a severe cyclonic storm and predicted to weaken into a cyclone.
- The research, led by the University of Bristol and including scientists from Bangladesh, looked at the 2020 Super Cyclone Amphan, the most costly cyclone to have made landfall in South Asia. They projected its consequences in different scenarios of sea level rise due to global warming.

Findings:

- The researchers used sophisticated climate model projections to anticipate the scale of those affected by cyclones in the rest of this century.
- They found that if the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere continues at the same scale, more than two-and-a-half times (250%) the population in India, as compared to the 2020 event, would experience flooding of greater than 1 metre.

- In Bangladesh, the increase in the number of people at risk is anticipated to be more modest — a rise of 60% to 70%. This, however, factors in declining coastal populations in future.
- If the Paris Agreement climate goals of 2°C warming above pre-industrial levels are adhered to, the modelling showed, population exposures to flooding would drop close to zero in that country. But in India, even in this scenario, the exposures still showed an alarming increase — between 50% to 80% more people compared to 2020 are expected to experience flooding in future.

Takeaways:

- The study “presents a critical piece of evidence in support of ramping down our greenhouse gas emissions to achieve the Paris Agreement climate goals, where other lines of evidence all too often focus on high income countries where impacts are lower, and adaptation is more easily achievable”, lead author Dann Mitchell, Professor of Climate Science, was quoted as saying in a media release from the University of Bristol.
- A strong, rapid and sustained greenhouse gas reduction is essential to achieve goals of the Paris Agreement and to reduce losses and damages of highly vulnerable countries like Bangladesh.

2. Andaman to get gas-based power plant

- Environment Ministry has approved an exemption to laws governing regulation of coastal zones
- The Union Environment Ministry has approved an exemption to the laws governing the regulation of coastal zones and has paved the way for gas-powered plants to be set up on the Andaman and Nicobar islands.
- The Island Coastal Zone Regulation (ICRZ), 2019, limits infrastructure development on vulnerable coastal stretches.

Enabling provision

- In the aftermath of a proposal from the Andaman and Nicobar Coastal Zone Management Authority (ANZMA), an expert body of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, called the National Coastal Zone Management Authority (NCZMA), recommended in August 2021 that it was necessary to provide an “enabling provision in the ICRZ notification” to meet the energy requirement of the islanders while reducing the dependence on highly polluting energy sources such as conventional diesel generator (DG) sets.
- The NCZMA has recommended that gas-based power plants be permitted within the Island Coastal Regulation Zone area only on islands with geographical areas greater than 100 sq. km.
- The Central government, following this, invited comments from the public on modifications to the ICRZ, and on May 5, issued a notification accepting the National Coastal Zone Management Authority recommendation.
- The Andaman and Nicobar administration is expected to commission a 50-MW power project running on liquefied natural gas at Hope Town, Port Blair, to be developed by the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC).
- Following visits by the NTPC personnel, a dual-fuel power plant that runs on both diesel and LNG is expected to be commissioned.

Back-up clause

- Diesel is necessary, the Andaman administration authorities argued, as a back-up fuel when the region faced inclement weather.
- There has been an increased interest in the development of the Andaman region following a policy push by the NITI Aayog.
- A proposed project plans to develop the Greater Andaman region or the southernmost stretch of the island group.
- Proposals include a 22-sq.km airport complex, a transshipment port (TSP) at South Bay at an estimated cost of ₹12,000 crore, a parallel-to-the-coast mass rapid transport system and a free trade zone and warehousing complex on the south western coast.

3. From Amphan to Asani: How and why are cyclones named?

Cyclone Asani, which developed over southeast regions of Bay of Bengal and intensified into a ‘severe cyclone’, was named by Sri Lanka. Asani means “wrath” in Sinhalese.

How are the cyclones named?

- In 2000, a group of nations called WMO/ESCAP (World Meteorological Organisation/United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific), which comprised Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand, decided

to start naming cyclones in the region. After each country sent in suggestions, the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones (PTC) finalised the list.

- The WMO/ESCAP expanded to include five more countries in 2018 — Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.
- The list of 169 cyclone names released by IMD in April 2020 were provided by these countries — 13 suggestions from each of the 13 countries.

Why is it important to name cyclones?

- Adopting names for cyclones makes it easier for people to remember, as opposed to numbers and technical terms. Apart from the general public, it also helps the scientific community, the media, disaster managers etc.
- With a name, it is also easy to identify individual cyclones, create awareness of its development, rapidly disseminate warnings to increase community preparedness and remove confusion where there are multiple cyclonic systems over a region.

What are the guidelines to adopt names of cyclones?

- While picking names for cyclones, countries need to follow some rules. If those guidelines are followed, the name is accepted by the panel on tropical cyclones (PTC) that finalises the selection.

The guidelines are:

- The proposed name should be neutral to (a) politics and political figures (b) religious believes, (c) cultures and (d) gender
- Name should be chosen in such a way that it does not hurt the sentiments of any group of population over the globe
- It should not be very rude and cruel in nature
- It should be short, easy to pronounce and should not be offensive to any member
- The maximum length of the name will be eight letters
- The proposed name should be provided with its pronunciation and voice over

The names of tropical cyclones over the north Indian Ocean will not be repeated. Once used, it will cease to be used again. Thus, the name should be new.

Some of the names picked by India were suggested by the general public. An IMD committee is formed to finalise the names before sending it to the PTC.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Q1. India’s engagement with BRICS demonstrates that it retains strategic autonomy and engages with all major powers irrespective of incongruences. However, BRICS countries need greater connectivity and more inter-grouping trade to claim their rightful space global economic order urgently. Analyse. (250 words)

Introduction

BRICS is the acronym coined for an association of five major emerging national economies that have similar economic development. The five countries are Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Together, BRICS accounts for about 40% of the world’s population and about 30% of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product), making it a critical economic engine.

- It’s an emerging investment market and global power bloc. For India, BRICS is strategic especially in times where there is lot of geopolitical flux.

Body

Areas of engagement with BRICS

- **Economic Cooperation:** There are rapidly growing trade and investment flows between BRICS countries as well as economic cooperation activities across a range of sectors.
 - Agreements have been concluded in the areas of Economic and Trade Cooperation; Innovation Cooperation, Customs Cooperation; strategic cooperation between the BRICS Business Council , Contingent Reserve Agreement and the New Development Bank.
- **Reform of multilateral institutions:** BRICS was founded on the desire to end the domination of the western world over institutions of global governance (IMF, World Bank, UN) and strengthen multilateralism.
- **Combat Terrorism:** Terrorism is an international phenomenon impacting all parts of the world. Recent developments in Afghanistan stress the need to bridge the gap between rhetoric and action.
 - In this context, BRICS is attempting to shape its counter-terrorism strategy by crafting the BRICS Counter-Terrorism Action Plan.

- It contains specific measures to fight radicalisation, terrorist financing and misuse of the Internet by terrorist groups.
- Promoting technological and digital solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals: This will help to improve governance and will also prove beneficial in the current situations e.g. Global pandemic response.
- **Expanding people-to-people cooperation:** This will improve gradually once all the travel restrictions are eased.

Challenges faced by BRICS

- Relations with other countries: There is a rift between India and China. This is because of various reasons like Chinese aggression in Eastern Ladakh.
 - China and Russia have strained relations with the
 - On the other hand, the other BRICS member has a liberal approach with the west. This is also impacting the functioning.
- **Internal challenges of Brazil and South Africa:** BRICS countries have not done enough to assist the Global South to win optimal support for their agenda.
- **Trade:** Though BRICS seeks to deepen trade ties, Chinese domination of trade creates apprehensions in the minds of other countries that the Chinese economy may threaten their economies.
- **Maintaining Internal Balance:** Current pandemic exposed the over-dependence of value chains on China and their vulnerability. Thus, there is a need to deepen intra-BRICS cooperation in areas like agriculture, trade etc. But at the same time, the BRICS have to ensure there is no critical dependency on anyone partner country.
- China policies: China's economic rise has created a serious imbalance within BRICS. Also, its aggressive policy, especially against India, puts BRICS solidarity under exceptional strain.

Conclusion

- BRICS nations need to recalibrate their approach and to recommit to their founding ethos. BRICS must reaffirm their commitment to a multi-polar world that allows for sovereign equality and democratic decision making by doing so can they address the asymmetry of power within the group and in global governance generally.
- They must build on the success of the NDB and invest in additional BRICS institutions. It will be useful for BRICS to develop an institutional research wing, along the lines of the OECD, offering solutions which are better suited to the developing world. Neighbours believe in its nuclear doctrine through effective confidence building measures.

DAILY QUIZ

1. With reference to Indian elephants, consider the following statements:
 1. The leader of an elephant group is a female.
 2. The maximum gestation period can be 22 months.
 3. An elephant can normally go on calving till the age of 40 years only.
 4. Among the States in India, the highest elephant population is in Kerala.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 and 2 only	b) 2 and 4 only	c) 3 only	d) 1, 3 and 4 only
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2. Consider the following about census in India
 1. Census in India does not have a statutory back up
 2. Census carried out by Ministry of Home Affairs
 Choose the correct statement/s using the code given below

a) 1 only	b) 2 only	c) Both	d) Neither 1 nor 2
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3. Emission gap report released by which of the following

a) World bank	b) UNEP	c) UNDP	d) UNFCC
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4. Consider the following statements
 1. Working of rocket engine is guided by Newton's third law of motion
 2. GSLV is a 4-stage that uses alternate combination of liquid and solid fueled rocket stages.
 3. Geostationary Satellite is a special form of Geo- synchronous Satellite which orbits Earth over equator.
 Choose the correct statement/s using the code given below

a) 1 and 2 only	b) 2 and 3 only	c) 1 and 3 only	d) All of the above
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5. The adaptation gap report released by which of the following

a) World bank	b) UNEP	c) UNDP	d) UNFCC
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