

INTERNATIONAL RELATION**Why the Gulf matters for India**

CONTEXT: The BJP's action against its own leaders underlines the significance of the Gulf region for India. Barring the Jewish state of Israel, the 10 other countries of the Gulf region — Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iran, Iraq, Bahrain, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Jordan and Yemen — together account for one-fifth of the world's Muslim population, and are among the strongest voices of the Muslim world.

Why is the region important for India?

- India has enjoyed centuries of good relations with countries like Iran, while smaller gas-rich nation Qatar is one of India's closest allies in the region.
- The two most important reasons for the relationship are oil and gas, and trade.
- Two additional reasons are the huge number of Indians who work in the Gulf countries, and the remittance they send back home.

How much trade does India do with countries in this region?

- According to India's embassy in Riyadh, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which includes UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait, "has emerged as a major trading partner of India" and has "vast potential as India's investment partner for the future".
- The GCC's substantial oil and gas reserves are of utmost importance for India's energy needs".
- **UAE:** The UAE was India's third largest trading partner in 2021-2022, and second largest for both exports (\$28 billion) and imports (\$45 billion) when these are counted individually. In terms of total trade volume, the UAE (\$72.9 billion) was behind the United States (\$1.19 trillion) and China (\$1.15 trillion). The UAE accounted for 6.6% of India's total exports and 7.3% of imports in the last financial year, up 68.4% since the previous year when international trade was impacted by the pandemic.
- **Saudi Arabia:** At a total volume of \$42.9 billion in 2021-22, Saudi Arabia was India's fourth largest trading partner. While exports were low at \$8.76 billion (2.07% of India's total exports), imports from Saudi Arabia were the fourth largest at \$34.1 billion (7%), up 50% from the previous year. Most of it was crude oil.
- **Iraq:** It was India's fifth largest trading partner in 2021-22 at \$34.3 billion.
- **Qatar:** The total trade was \$15 billion, accounting for just 1.4% of India's total trade, but the country is India's most important supplier of natural gas. Qatar accounts for 41% of India's total natural gas imports. The UAE accounts for another 11%.

How much oil does India import?

- According to an analysis by the Observer Research Foundation in recent context, more than 84% of India's petroleum demand, which included crude oil and petroleum products, was met with imports. The 239 million tonnes of oil petroleum imports were worth \$77 billion, and accounted for nearly one-fifth of the country's total imports last year.
- India sourced crude oil from 42 countries in 2021-22, up from 27 countries in 2006-07. However, the top 20 sources of India's oil imports consistently accounted for over 95% of India's oil imports and the top 10 countries accounted for over 80% in the last 15 years. The share of Persian Gulf countries in India's crude imports has remained at around 60% over the last 15 years.
- In 2021-2022, the largest exporter of oil to India was Iraq, whose share has gone up from 9% in 2009-2010 to 22%.
- Saudi Arabia has accounted for 17-18% of India's oil imports for over a decade. Kuwait and UAE remain major oil exporters to India. Iran used to be the second largest oil exporter to India in 2009-2010, its share went down to less than 1% in 2020-21, due to US sanctions.

How many Indians work in the Gulf, and how much remittance do they send?

- According to Ministry of External Affairs data, more than 13.46 million Indian citizens work abroad. If Persons of Indian Origin (those who have taken up citizenship of other countries, and their descendants) are added, this number goes up to over 32 million.

- Counting only the 13.4 million non-resident Indians (NRIs), the Gulf has the largest numbers. The UAE (3.42 million), Saudi Arabia (2.6 million) and Kuwait (1.03 million) together account for over half of all NRIs.
- In terms of remittances from abroad, India was the largest recipient in 2020 at \$83.15 billion, according to World Bank data. This was nearly twice the remittances to the next highest recipient, Mexico, at \$42.9 billion.
- The largest contributor is the huge Indian Diaspora in the Gulf.
- According to the Reserve Bank of India the GCC countries accounted for more than 50% of the total \$69 billion remittances received by India in 2016-17.
- The UAE accounted for 26.9%, Saudi Arabia for 11.6%, Qatar for 6.4%, Kuwait for 5.5% and Oman for 3%. Beyond the GCC, remittances from the US accounted for 22.9%, second only to the UAE.

What the efforts made by present government?

- Since coming to power in 2014, the present Government has kept a special focus on maintaining or enhancing India's relations with most of the countries in the region.
- Visits to the Region: The Indian Prime Minister (PM) has visited the region several times since 2014. He visited the UAE in 2015, 2018 and 2019, and Abu Dhabi's crown prince came to India in 2017 and 2018. Visits were made to Qatar and Iran in 2016, and Saudi Arabia in 2016 and 2019. In 2018, he went to Jordan, Palestine and Oman besides UAE, and became the first Indian Prime Minister to visit the Palestinian territory of Ramallah. He visited Bahrain in 2019. There have been similar reciprocal visits by leaders from these countries during these eight years. Even during the pandemic, Indian and Gulf region leaders maintained regular contact.
- Highest civilian honour: Due to this, Palestine, Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Jordan have excellent relations with India and Maldives and Bahrain have bestowed their highest civilian honour on India's Prime Minister.
- Giving importance to their religion: On his trips, the Indian Prime Minister has also visited some of the most popular mosques in those countries, including the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi in 2015, and the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque in Muscat in 2018.

Way Ahead

- Avoiding any such conflicts, there must be a clear synergy in India and the GCC countries consolidating their traditional areas of cooperation — energy, trade and investment. They need to adopt an integrated and cohesive approach to develop ties in diverse areas — renewable, water conservation, food security, digital technology and skills development.

PRELIMS

1. Ex SAMPRITI-X

- SAMPRITI is an important bilateral defence cooperation endeavour conducted alternately by both countries which aims to strengthen and widen the aspects of interoperability and cooperation between both the armies.
- The Indian contingent of company strength is being represented by a Battalion of the DOGRA
- During the joint military exercise Ex SAMPRITI-X, armies of both the Nations will share expertise in multiple simulated scenarios of Counter Terrorism, Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief and UN Peacekeeping Force under UN mandate.

Other Military Exercises of India with other

- **JIMEX** : India-Japan
- **Ex-Desert Knight 21 exercise**: It is a bilateral air exercise to be held between Indian Air Force and the French air and Space Force.
- **Indra Dhanush**: It is a joint air force exercise between the Indian Air Force and the Royal Air Force of the United Kingdom
- **Exercise Pitch Black**: India and Australia. The main aim of the exercise is to practice Defensive Counter Air combat and Offensive Counter Air Combat

- **AUSINDEX:** Bilateral naval exercise between the Indian Navy and the Australian Navy. Both countries hold bilateral army exercises named AUSTRALIND.
- **Dharma Guardian:** The joint military exercise named “Dharma Guardian” between India and Japan. The exercise is aimed at developing mutual understanding and respect between militaries of both countries, as also facilitate in tracking worldwide phenomenon of terrorism
- **Aviandra:** India and Russia joint air exercise.
- **Nomadic Elephant:** India and Mongolia joint exercise.

2. Agni-4 Missile

- Recently, India successfully carried out a night launch of the nuclear-capable Agni-4 ballistic missile from the APJ Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha. The successful test reaffirms India's policy of having a 'Credible Minimum Deterrence' Capability. The successful test was carried out under the aegis of the Strategic Forces Command. The Strategic Forces Command is operationally responsible for all of India's nuclear assets.
- **About:** The surface to surface Agni-IV missile having 4000 km strike range is a two stage missile. It is 20-metre long and weighs 17 tonnes. It is equipped with modern and compact avionics to provide a high level of reliability. It is an Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile with a range of around 4,000 km. Developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- **Features:** It is equipped with state-of-the-art Avionics, 5th generation On Board Computer and distributed architecture. It has the latest features to correct and guide itself for in-flight disturbances. The most accurate Ring Laser Gyro based Inertial Navigation System (RINS) and supported by the highly reliable redundant Micro Navigation System (MINGS), ensures the vehicle reaches the target within two digit accuracy.

3. Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs)

The CBI is in the process of sending requests to several countries seeking information under the MLATs about those involved in the online sexual abuse of minors and circulation of child pornographic material on social media platforms.

What are MLATs?

- The MLATs in criminal matters are the bilateral treaties entered between the countries for providing international cooperation and assistance.
- These agreements allow for the exchange of evidence and information in criminal and related matters between the signing countries.
- **Benefits of Treaty**
- It enhances the effectiveness of participating countries in the investigation and prosecution of crime, through cooperation and mutual legal assistance.
- It will provide a broad legal framework for tracing, restrain and confiscation of proceeds and instruments of crime as well as the funds meant to finance terrorist acts.
- It will be instrumental in gaining better inputs and insights in the modus operandi of organized criminals and terrorists.
- These in turn can be used to fine-tune policy decisions in the field of internal security.
- **Enforcing MLATs in India**
- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is the nodal Ministry and the Central authority for seeking and providing mutual legal assistance in criminal law matters.
- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) may be involved in this process when such requests are routed through diplomatic channels by these Ministries.
- Section 105 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) speaks of reciprocal arrangements to be made by the Centre with the Foreign Governments

4. Tiangong Space Station

- Tiangong means “Heavenly Palace”.
- It was 10.4 metres long and 3.35 metres wide at its widest point, and weighed 8.6 metric tonnes.

- It was launched on September 15, 2016 and, in late 2016, hosted two Chinese astronauts for 30 days in what was China's longest manned space mission so far.
- The recently decommissioned space lab followed the Tiangong-1, China's first space station, which crashed into the southern Pacific Ocean on April 1, 2018 after Chinese scientists lost control of the spacecraft.
- China had launched Tiangong-1 in 2011 as proof-of-concept of technologies for future stations.
- The Tiangong will be fully operational by the end of 2022.

Features

- The significant feature of Tiangong is its two robotic arms.
- The US has previously expressed concern over its ability to grab objects including satellites from space.
- The 10-meter-long arm was in action previously seen in action successfully grabbing and moving a 20 tonne Tianzhou-2 cargo ship in a test.
- One of the noteworthy tasks for the Shenzhou-14 crew is to test and operate the large and small
- The small arm is quite flexible and can perform operations with greater precision.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. Besides being a moral imperative of a welfare state , primary health structure is a necessary precondition for sustainable development ‘ Analyze. (150)

Introduction

Primary health care is a term used to describe the first contact a person has with the health system when they have a health problem. The Welfare State is a concept of government in which the State plays a key role in the protection and promotion of the economic and social well-being of its citizens.

Primary health structure is a moral imperative of a Welfare State:

- Right to Health is a part and parcel of Right to Life and therefore right to health is a fundamental right guaranteed to every citizen of India under Article 21 of the Constitution.
- As a Directive Principle of State Policy, Article 47 talks about raising the level of nutrition and the standard of living of people and to improve public health. It provides an obligation on the state to provide primary health facilities.

Primary health care is the most efficient and effective way to achieve health for all. Primary health structure is a necessary precondition for sustainable development in the following ways:

- Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 talks about 'Ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all at all ages'. Access to quality health care would not be possible without an effective primary health structure.
- Lack of availability of subsidised and timely treatment leads to affordability issues and creates a vicious cycle of poverty and heightens the out of pocket expenditure of people.
- Health conditions, disabilities, and unhealthy behaviors can all have an effect on educational outcomes and can also lead to social exclusion.
- At a societal level, poor population health is associated with lower savings rates, lower rates of return on capital, and lower levels investment, all of these factors can and do contribute to reductions in economic growth.

Conclusion

As recognized in the 2018 Astana Declaration, the Primary Health Care approach is the most effective way to sustainably solve today's health challenges. The National Health Policy 2017 envisages providing a larger package of assured comprehensive primary health care through the Health and Wellness Centers' and advocates allocating major proportion of resources to primary care.

QUIZ

1. Consider the following statements with reference to recently amended Service rule of Armed Forces.
 1. All three-star and four-star officers from the three services, including those who retired in the last two years, will be eligible for consideration.

2. All Lt Generals in the Army and equivalent officers in the Navy and Air Force, who retired after June 2020, are under consideration.
Choose the correct statement/s using the code given below
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2**
 - Neither 1 nor 2
2. With reference to Ozone consider the following
- Breathing ozone can increase the risk of asthma attacks
 - The essential raw ingredients for ozone are nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
- Which of the above statement/s is/are not correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2**
3. With reference to recently released Environment Performance Index 2022 consider the following statements
- The EPI, a biennial index, was started in 2002 as Environmental Sustainability Index by the World Economic Forum in collaboration with the UNEP and the Columbia University Center for International Earth Science Information Network.
 - In the recent report India is among bottom five countries
- Select the correct statement/s using the codes given below
- 1 only
 - 2 only**
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
4. Consider the following statement with regards to recently released State Food Safety Index Award.
- Recently for the first time Ministry of consumer affairs released the index
 - Among the small states category Goa topped the list
- Choose the incorrect statement using the codes given below
- 1 only**
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 and 2
5. Consider the following statement with reference to recently launched Single Nodal Agency (SNA) dashboard.
- The Single Nodal Agency (SNA) dashboard, a system which tracks transfer of funds to states for Centrally sponsored schemes and utilization of funds by central agencies.
 - The SNA provides information about what the state has spent, and Centre releases send the money only when it sees it getting utilized.
 - The dashboard is designed and developed by RBI.
- Select the correct statement/s using the codes given below
- 1 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 2 only**
6. Tiangong space station recently seen in news is belongs to which country
- Japan
 - Taiwan
 - China**
 - South Korea

7. Which of the following is the nodal Ministry and the Central authority for seeking and providing Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs) in criminal law matters in India?
- Ministry of Home Affairs**
 - Ministry of External Affairs
 - Ministry of Law and Social Justice
 - None of the above
8. Consider the followings
- Ex-Desert Knight 21 exercise: It is a bilateral air exercise to be held between Indian Air Force and the French air and Space Force.
 - Indra Dhanush: India and Australia. The main aim of the exercise is to practice Defensive Counter Air combat and Offensive Counter Air Combat
 - Exercise Pitch Black: It is a joint air force exercise between the Indian Air Force and the Royal Air Force of the United Kingdom
 - AUSINDEX: Bilateral naval exercise between the Indian Navy and the Australian Navy. Both countries hold bilateral army exercises named AUSTRAHIND.
 - Aviaindra: India and Russia joint air exercise.
 - Nomadic Elephant: India and Mongolia joint exercise.
- How many of the above pairs are correctly matched
- Only 2 pairs
 - Only 3 pairs
 - Only 4 pairs**
 - Only 1 pair
9. The digital divide over access to justice, managing the docket explosion, listing important judgments of each of its 18 judges to remembering staff who succumbed to Covid-19, which of the following High Court has brought out a one-of-a-kind annual report of its performance in 2021?
- Odisha High court**
 - Delhi High court
 - Madras High court
 - Bombay High court
10. Consider the following countries
- UAE
 - Bahrain
 - Saudi Arabia
 - Oman
 - Qatar and Kuwait
- Which of the above country/es is/are included in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)?
- 2,3 and 5 only
 - 1,3,4, and 5 only
 - 1,3,and 4 only
 - All of the above**