

INTERNATIONAL RELATION

❖ **Cold Peace between India and Pakistan**

❖ **CONTEXT:** In recent years, there is now a certain 'cold peace' between India and Pakistan relations.

• **India-Pakistan relations have entered an age of minimalism:**

- There is very little bilateral contact today, even fewer expectations of a bilateral breakthrough.
- And yet, there is a certain 'cold peace' between the traditional rivals — on the Line of Control, inside Kashmir and in the verbal exchanges between the two sides.

• **Relations till now:**

- India-Pakistan relations of the kind we have been used to over several decades now - characterised by intense engagement, high value terror attacks, Indian responses, a breakdown of talks, and eventual resumption of talks; rinse and repeat.

❖ **Bilateral Relations between India-Pakistan**

- **Attempts for engagement:** India has made a number of attempts to build normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan. The External Affairs Minister's (EAM) also took the initiative to propose a Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue in December 2015.

• **Trade and Commerce:**

✓ **Bilateral trade:**

- **2020-2021:** The total bilateral trade between India and Pakistan was USD 329 million in 2020-2021.

- **2021-2022:** This has gone up to USD 514 million in 2021-2022, as per the ministry of commerce, with **Indian exports outnumbering imports from Pakistan.**

Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status: India had accorded MFN status to Pakistan in 1996. A Pakistan cabinet decision of November 02, 2011 to reciprocate remains unimplemented

- ✓ **Humanitarian:** In 2017, India suggested to Pakistan to revive the mechanism of the Joint Judicial Committee which looks into humanitarian issues of fishermen and prisoners in each other's custody.

- ✓ **Cultural:** The visit to religious shrines between India and Pakistan is governed by the Bilateral Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines signed between India and Pakistan in 1974.

- **Kartarpur Corridor:** Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor in 2019 on the occasion of the 550th birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and flagged-off the first group of pilgrims to Gurudwara Kartarpur Sahib.

❖ **Major Issues between both the countries**

- India's relations with Pakistan are the most complex of its ties with its neighbours.

- **Terrorism:** Terrorism emanating from territories under Pakistan's control remains a core concern in bilateral relations.

- **Pulwama cross-border terror attack:** In a heinous and despicable act of cross border terror attack on the convey of Indian security forces in Pulwama, Jammu & Kashmir in 2019, 40 security personnel were martyred

• **On J&K:**

- **India's revocation of the special status of J&K:** The relations between the two countries have remained strained for years now and took a turn for the worse in August 2019 when India revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

- **Pakistan's stand:** In 2019, Pakistan announced unilateral measures, including the downgrading of diplomatic relations, suspension of bilateral trade and review of bilateral agreements with India.

- India has urged Pakistan to review its unilateral actions in respect of relations with India so that normal channels of diplomatic communications are preserved.

• **Pakistan's ambitions and Demands:**

- It aims to change the status quo in Jammu and Kashmir with a **three-pronged strategy:**

- ✓ Violent destabilization of Kashmir while raising human rights concerns in global forums,
- ✓ Reopening the Kashmir question that India believed was settled after the 1971 war, and
- ✓ Leveraging global nuclear concerns to force Indian concessions on Kashmir.

❖ **Possible reasons cited for the 'cold peace' between the Nations**

- **Historical legacy:** The relationship is the history of missed opportunities, failed attempts at conflict resolution, political inability to resolve conflicts and the lack of political will on either side.

- **Hate & populism:** For all the talk about conflict resolution, there is no easy way to resolve their complicated conflicts.

- Resolving the bilateral conflict resolution may get harder due to rising populism fuelled by online hate.

- **No conflict resolutions till now:** None of the key bilateral conflicts between the countries has been resolved since the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960.

- So, the traditional logic in India that it should first settle its conflicts with Pakistan and then move on to addressing the bigger challenges may not be applicable.

- **Defending Kashmir:** There is now a certain confidence in India today that it does not need to talk to Pakistan to ensure peace inside Kashmir.
- There is growing confidence in India about its capability to defend Kashmir against Pakistani aggression or terror attacks.
- **Other geopolitical challenges:** Both sides today are preoccupied with other geopolitical challenges — Pakistan with the Taliban-led Afghanistan, and India with an aggressive China on its borders.
- ❖ **Way Ahead**
- The frequent acknowledgement by both countries that they have much to gain from trade and connectivity in economic areas has taken a back seat to **revival of tensions, the shadow of unresolved disputes and geopolitical considerations** by both sides.
- Although issues between Pakistan and India are long-standing, **progress is possible.**
- Leaders on both sides of the border need to develop a **national consensus in support of the peace process and bring all stakeholders** including the core constituencies, media and opposition parties on board.

PRELIMS

1. Mangrove Alliance for Climate (MAC)

- ❖ **CONTEXT:** Calling for integration of mangroves conservation with the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) programmes for carbon sequestering, India joined the Mangrove Alliance for Climate (MAC) at COP 27, Egypt.

- India is among the first five countries to join the MAC, at the 27th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP27) at Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt.
- The others are Australia, Japan, Spain, and Sri Lanka.
- The move is in line with India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5- 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent, through additional forest and tree cover by 2030.

❖ **Mangrove status**

- Mangroves are distributed in the tropical and sub-tropical region of the world and are found in 123 countries.
- According to the State of the World's Mangroves report 2022, from 2010 to 2020, the human-driven loss represents 62 per cent of total losses of over 600 square kilometres or 60,000 hectares.
- Global mangrove extent in 2020 was 147,359 km². South Asia comprises 6.4 per cent of the global mangroves cover.
- India accounts for over 50 per cent of total mangrove cover in South Asia.
- The most extensive area of mangroves is found in Southeast Asia, with Indonesia alone comprising a fifth of global total. Together, Indonesia, Brazil, Australia, Mexico, and Nigeria host almost half the world's mangroves, according to the State of the World's Mangroves report.
- At a planetary scale, mangroves are ahead of the curve. Some 42 per cent (61,287 km²) of all the world's remaining mangroves fall within protected areas recognised by the IUCN.
- According to the Forest Survey report 2021 released in January 2022, mangroves cover in the country is 4,992 km², which is 0.15 per cent of the country's total geographical area. An increase of 17 km² in mangroves cover has been observed as compared to the previous assessment of 2019.
- The top three states showing an increase in mangroves cover are Odisha (8 km²), Maharashtra (4 km²), and Karnataka (3 km²).

❖ **Importance of Mangrove**

- Mangroves are among the most carbon-rich forests in the tropics. They account for 3% of carbon sequestered by the world's tropical forests.
- This tidal forest serves as a nursery ground for several organisms, protects coastal erosion, sequesters carbon, and provides the livelihood for millions of people, besides it harbours an array of faunal elements in its habitat.
- Mangrove forests can absorb four-five times more carbon emissions than landed tropical forests, creating new carbon sinks from mangrove afforestation and reducing emissions from mangrove deforestation are two feasible ways for countries to meet their NDC targets and achieve carbon neutrality.
- Mangroves can also act as a buffer for ocean acidification and act as a sink for microplastics.
- Due to a large amount of carbon stored in mangroves, it is crucial to conserve the current areas in order to prevent potential CO₂ emissions.
- Mangroves are the economic foundations of many tropical coastal regions. To sustain the blue economy, it is imperative to ensure the sustainability of coastal habitats, particularly mangroves for tropical nations, at the local, regional, and international levels.

- They are the best option to fight against climate change consequences like sea levels rise and increasing frequency of natural calamities like cyclones and storm surges.

❖ **India's role**

- India can contribute to the global knowledge base due to its extensive experience in mangrove restoration, studies on ecosystem valuation, and carbon sequestration.
- One of the largest remaining areas of mangroves in the world, the Sundarbans supports an exceptional level of biodiversity in both the terrestrial and marine environments, including significant populations of a range of flora and plant species; species of wildlife wide range of fauna, including the Bengal Tiger and other threatened species such as the estuarine crocodile and the Indian python.
- There is significant increase observed in mangroves cover in India in its Andamans region; Sundarbans region; and in the Gujarat region.

2. **Utah Salt Flats**

❖ **CONTEXT: The glistening white salt of the world famous Bonneville Salt Flats is shrinking near the Utah-Nevada line.**

- The Bonneville Salt Flat is found west of the Great Salt Lake, in Western Utah.
- Both the Bonneville Salt Flats and the Great Salt Lake are remnants of the prehistoric lake - Lake Bonneville.
- The Salt Flat stretching over 30,000 acres, is located near the Utah-Nevada border.
- The salt surface contains potassium, magnesium lithium and sodium chloride (common table salt).
- Environment - The vegetation is sparse owing to the salty soil.
- Ponds and marshy areas can be found in spots near the edges of the flats and they provide critical habitat for plants and animals.

❖ **Threats**

- The salt flat is growing thinner and the overall footprint has shrunk to about half of its peak size in 1994.
- Racing - The salt flat is perfectly flat and has a thick crust of salty soil.
- The crust keeps tires cool at high speeds and provides an ideal surface for racing.
- Bonneville Speedway is a part of the salt lake used as motor race ground.
- Potash, a potassium-based salt is extracted from the salt lakebed.
- The briny water in the aquifer below the flats is depleting faster due to potash mining.
- The landscape relies on the seasonal flood to maintain its size and footprint.
- Failure in seasonal flooding leads to recede or leaves behind an unstable layer of salt.

3. **Mother Tongue Survey of India**

❖ **CONTEXT: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has completed the Mother Tongue Survey of India (MTSI) with field videography of the country's 576 languages.**

❖ **What is the MTSI?**

- The Mother Tongue Survey of India is a project that "surveys the mother tongues, which are returned consistently across two and more Census decades". It also documents the linguistic features of the selected languages.
- The NIC and the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) will be documenting and preserving the linguistic data of the surveyed mother tongues in audio-video files.
- Video-graphed speech data of Mother Tongues will also be uploaded on the NIC survey for archiving purposes.

❖ **How many "mother tongues" does India have, and what is spoken the most?**

- As per an analysis of 2011 linguistic census data in 2018, more than 19,500 languages or dialects are spoken in India as mother tongues.
- According to the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India the category "mother tongue" is a designation provided by the respondent, but it need not be identical with the actual linguistic medium. After subjecting the 19,569 returns to linguistic scrutiny, edit and rationalisation, they were grouped into 121 mother tongues.
- According to the 2011 linguistic census, Hindi is the most widely spoken mother tongue, with 52.8 crore people or 43.6 per cent of the population declaring it as the mother tongue.
- The next highest is Bengali, mother tongue for 9.7 crore individuals, and accounting for 8 per cent of the population.

❖ **Where does the mother tongue feature in the education of children?**

- The new National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for the foundational stages of education, launched by Education Ministry recently, has recommended that mother tongue should be the primary medium of instruction in schools for children up to eight years of age.

- While the focus on mother tongue as the medium of instruction, especially for primary schooling, has been a feature of education policies for years, the latest push for the use of mother tongue has come after repeated policy articulations.
- The new NCF, which deals with pre-school and classes I-II, emphasises the virtues of the mother tongue as the primary medium of instruction, by the time children join pre-school, they acquire significant competence in the “home language”.
- “Since children learn concepts most rapidly and deeply in their home language, the primary medium of instruction would optimally be the child’s home language/ mother tongue/ familiar language in the Foundational Stage.
- ❖ **What is the status of the population census?**
- The forthcoming decennial population census will be the 16th since the first exercise was conducted in 1872. It will be the eighth census since independence.
- The census was supposed to take place in 2021, but was postponed due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. To ensure efficient processing and quick release of data, the Home Ministry has adopted some new initiatives, which include digital data processing and the use of geospatial technology.
- According to the report, pre-census mapping activities like preparation and updation of maps that show administrative units will be carried out. Census results will be disseminated via web-based interactive maps.
- Jurisdictional changes that occurred in the country after Census 2011 till 31.12.2019 have been updated in the geo-referenced database and more than 6 lakh maps (district/sub-district/village level) have been prepared and uploaded for census functionaries.
- 4. **PM Modi unveils G20 logo**
- ❖ **CONTEXT: Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently unveiled the logo, theme and website of India’s G20 presidency. The logo bears a lotus and the message of ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam — One Earth, One Family, One Future’.**
- India will assume the presidency of the powerful G20 grouping from the current chair, Indonesia, on December 1, and hold the post for a year (Dec 2022 to Dec 2023). The G20 Leaders’ Summit at the level of Heads of State/Government is scheduled to be held on September 9 and 10, 2023 in New Delhi.
- ❖ **Significance of the G20 logo**
- According to the PM the logo is not just a symbol, but a message and a resolve. The logo reflects our idea of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the whole earth is a family), because of which India has always believed in global harmony. “The lotus flower symbolises our Puranic heritage, our aashta (belief) and boddhikta (intellectualism).
- ❖ **What is G20?**
- The G20 was formed in 1999 in the backdrop of the financial crisis of the late 1990s that hit East Asia and Southeast Asia in particular.
- Its aim was to secure global financial stability by involving middle-income countries.
- Its prominent members are: Australia, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the UK, the US, and the EU. Spain is invited as a permanent guest.
- G20 is the premier forum for international economic cooperation representing around 85 per cent of the global GDP, over 75 per cent of the global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population. During the course of its G20 Presidency, India will be holding about 200 meetings in 32 different sectors in multiple locations across India.
- The G20 Summit to be held in 2023, would be one of the highest profile international gatherings to be hosted by India.
- The presidency of the G20 rotates every year among members, and the country holding the presidency, together with the previous and next presidency-holder, forms the ‘Troika’ to ensure continuity of the G20 agenda.
- During India’s presidency, India, Indonesia and Brazil will form the troika. This would be the first time when the troika would consist of three developing countries and emerging economies.
- ❖ **How does the G20 work?**
- The G20 has no permanent secretariat. The agenda and work are coordinated by representatives of the G20 countries, known as ‘Sherpas’, who work together with the finance ministers and governors of the central banks. India has announced that ex-NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant would be the G20 Sherpa after Piyush Goyal.
- On the advice of the G7 Finance Ministers, the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors began holding meetings to discuss the response to the global financial crisis that occurred. Since 1999, an annual meeting of finance ministers has taken place.

- The first G20 Summit took place in 2008 in Washington DC, US. In addition to Summits, the Sherpa meetings (that help in negotiations and building consensus), and other events are also organised throughout the year. Each year, the presidency invites guest countries.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. What are the main bottlenecks in upstream and downstream process of marketing of agricultural products in India?

Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy. Even, with the growth of other sectors, agriculture still continues to play a dominant part in the overall economic scenario of India. Agricultural marketing is mainly a state entitlement with the Central Government providing support under central sector schemes. The upstream process of agricultural marketing includes inputs to agriculture like seeds, machinery, and technology and the downstream process includes the food processing industry.

However, there are still many challenges in upstream and downstream process of agricultural marketing:

- In the upstream process, lack of coverage of reform policies is one of the main hindrances in addressing the issues of agricultural marketing. For example, only some States have adopted the Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing (APLMA) Act fully.
- Contract farming has been taken out of the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) domain, citing conflict of interest and this creates lacunae in the upstream as well as downstream process.
- Another downstream bottleneck is flawed MSP provision which forces the private traders to buy produce at or above MSP or penalizing for not doing so, which can kill the private markets for agricultural produce.
- There should be effective provision of procurement by the State and its agencies with the involvement of local institutions like Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) and producer companies as it effects sourcing activities and purchasing activities in upstream and downstream process.
- Most disappointingly, Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2017 (APLMA, 2017) ignores the vexed issue of the role of Arthiyas (commission agents or CAs) in the APMCs and maintains them as central agents in the system. This effects the whole agricultural marketing process.

However, with some reforms like the removal of entry barriers, involvement of other stakeholders and electronic settlement of sales, the process of marketing of agricultural products can be improved.

Addressing the challenges of the agricultural market is complex, yet doable, as the doubling of farmers' income cannot come without developing a thriving market of agriculture. Hence, it is high time that focus must shift from agricultural production to agricultural marketing.

MCQs

1. Consider the following statements about "Mangroves for the Future (MFF)":
 1. It aims to promote international investment in coastal ecosystem conservation for sustainable development
 2. It is Co-chaired by IUCN and UNDP
 3. India is one of its member countries

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

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

2. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

Proper design and effective implementation of UN-REDD+ Programme can significantly contribute to

1. Protection of biodiversity
2. Resilience of forest ecosystem
3. Poverty reduction

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

3. Which one of the following regions of India has a combination of mangrove forest, evergreen forest and deciduous forest?

- a) North Coastal Andhra Pradesh
- b) South-West Bengal
- c) Southern Saurashtra
- d) Andaman and Nicobar Islands

4. Consider the following statements
1. Linguistic Survey of India (LSI) is a regular research activity in the country since the 6th Five Year Plan.
 2. The above survey has been conducted by ministry of Education.

Choose the correct statement/s using the codes given below

- a) **1 only**
 - b) 2 only
 - c) Both 1 and 2
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. Consider the following statements :
1. 21st February is declared to be the International Mother Language Day by UNICEF.
 2. The demand that Bangla has to be one of the national languages was raised in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan.

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
 - b) **2 only**
 - c) Both 1 and 2
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. Consider the following statements about mangroves in India:
1. Mangroves are more predominant along the eastern coast than on western coast.
 2. According to the latest Forest Survey of India, Odisha is the only state showing an increase in mangroves. cover

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

- a) **1 only**
 - b) 2 only
 - c) Both 1 and 2
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
7. Bonneville Salt Flat often mentioned in news is related to which of the following country?
- a) UK
 - b) **USA**
 - c) Japan
 - d) France
8. With reference to the "G20 Common Framework", consider the following statements:
1. It is an initiative endorsed by the G20 together with the Paris Club.
 2. It is an initiative to support Low Income Countries with unsustainable debt.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
 - b) 2 only
 - c) **Both 1 and 2**
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
9. Consider the following statements with reference to G20
1. The presidency of the G20 rotates every year among members.
 2. Brazil will take the next presidency after India.
 3. Under the India's presidency for the first time troika would consist of three developing countries.

Which of the above statement/s is/are not correct?

- a) 1,2,3
 - b) 1 and 3
 - c) 2 and 3
 - d) **None of the above**
10. With reference to 'DigiYatra' initiative consider the following statements
1. The 'DigiYatra' is a Biometric Enabled Seamless Travel experience (BEST) based on Facial Recognition Technology.
 2. UIDAI will be a pan-India entity and the custodian of the Passenger ID validation process.

Choose the correct statement/s using the codes given below

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