

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**NATO's growing shadow over the Asia Pacific**

In Context: The Asia-Pacific is turning out to be a major theatre of big-power rivalry.

China's statement on "NATO-like" alliances

- ✓ China's Defence Minister recently at the Shangri-La Dialogue stated that, "Forging "NATO-like" alliances would plunge the region into a "whirlpool of disputes and conflicts".
 - According to him, "Today's Asia-Pacific needs open and inclusive cooperation, not buddying up into small cliques,".
- ✓ China was targeting the Australia, UK, and US (AUKUS) security pact as well as the Quad, of which India is a member along with Australia, Japan and the US.

NATO's expansion in Asia-Pacific region**✓ NATO Plus:**

- This statement also comes in the wake of a US House Select Committee recommending the inclusion of India in NATO Plus, a security arrangement that currently includes NATO and five aligned nations—Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan and Israel.

✓ NATO's liaison office in Japan:

- In what is going to be the first of its kind in the Asia-Pacific region ("Indo-Pacific" in American lingo), a NATO liaison office will open in Tokyo next year.
- Recently, Britain and Japan signed a new strategic partnership and agreed to "deepen" collaboration between NATO and Tokyo.
 - During the Shangri-La summit, the British Defence Secretary said having such an office in Japan is "in the interests of NATO".

✓ NATO's partners in the Asia-Pacific region:

- In addition, NATO plans to further strengthen collaboration with its four major partners in the Asia-Pacific region—Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea.
 - The alliance will formulate an Individually Tailored Partnership Program with all four countries—an upgrade to a higher form of partnership.

✓ QUAD as a "NATO-like" alliance:

- One of the recent reports argues that the Quad needs more muscle to live up to its potential and for that, the group should focus on a security agenda, especially maritime security, to serve as a deterrent to China.
 - The purpose is to make the Quad "capable of providing mutual support in crisis or conflict situations, even if its members are not aligned on policy or directly involved in combined operations."

China's dominance in the region**✓ Chinese supremacy:**

- Beijing has territorial disputes with Japan, Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam.
- India is on a permanent border standoff with China, having fought a full-scale war in 1962 and being embroiled in several territorial disputes over the years.

✓ Dominance display:

- Growing Chinese muscularity in the SCS is visible in the following ways:
 - Increased patrolling and live-fire exercising by Chinese naval vessels;
 - Renaming of SCS features; and
 - Building of runways, bunkers, and habitation for possible long-term stationing of personnel on the atolls claimed by China.
- Chinese exploration and drilling vessels compete aggressively with those of other littoral countries in the disputed waters.

✓ China's New Maritime Law for the South China Sea:

- In a bid to regulate foreign ships, China notified new maritime rules warranting vessels to report their information while passing through what China sees as its "territorial waters".
 - Operators of submarines, nuclear vessels, ships carrying radioactive materials and ships carrying bulk oil, chemicals, liquefied gas and other toxic and harmful substances are required to report their detailed information upon their visits to Chinese territorial waters".

India's position**✓ India's refusal for NATO Plus:**

- According to the Select Committee, including India in NATO Plus "would build upon the US and India's close partnership to strengthen global security and deter the aggression of the CCP across the Indo-Pacific region."

- “Winning the strategic competition with the Chinese Communist Party and ensuring the security of Taiwan demands the United States strengthen ties to our allies and security partners, including India,” says the report.
 - India as a defence for Taiwan:
 - Interestingly, India is being called up to the defence of Taiwan, with which New Delhi has no formal diplomatic relations.
 - Nor does Taiwan appear anywhere in India’s defence calculations.
 - Refusal:
 - India has, however, brushed aside the idea, with External Affairs Minister saying that the “NATO template does not apply to India.”
- ✓ **India’s “strategic autonomy”:**
 - A NATO overreach to the Asia-Pacific will pose a major challenge to New Delhi’s much-touted “strategic autonomy”.
 - The push to transform Quad into a security alliance focusing on China will also have the same effect.

Way ahead

- ✓ **QUAD’s limited role:**
 - Although accused by Beijing of being an anti-China coalition, the Quad has hitherto refrained from deepening cooperation in the security realm.
 - It has limited itself to contributing to global health as a provider of vaccines, working on climate change, building infrastructure, and cooperating in space.
- ✓ **India’s balancing act:**
 - Having moved on from its traditional non-alignment, New Delhi now boasts of “multi-alignment” as its new foreign policy mantra.
 - So far, India has done an impressive job of maintaining its balancing act.
 - Although, an extended war over Ukraine may lead India and the Asia-Pacific nations to bear the brunt of increasing big-power rivalry in the region.

Government policies

Draft Livestock and Livestock Products Bill

In Context: The Union government has withdrawn the proposed draft of the Live-stock and Live-stock Product (Importation and Exportation) Bill, 2023.

About

- ✓ The Bill is meant to replace the Live-stock Importation Act, 1898, and the Live-stock (Amendment) Act, 2001.
- ✓ The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD), which comes under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, prepared the draft of the Live-stock and Live-stock Products (Importation and Exportation) Bill-2023.
- ✓ It frames guidelines for the import and export of live animals, which has raised concerns among animal lovers.

❖ **Salient Provisions**

The bill is different from the existing law in three key aspects:

- ✓ It allows export of live animals,
- ✓ It widens the scope of animal import-export (including cats and dogs among ‘live-stock’), and
- ✓ Takes away some powers of state governments to regulate this area.

Regulation of live-stock export:

- ✓ The earlier law regulates only importation of live-stock, while the proposed draft Bill has provisions to regulate live-stock exports also.
- ✓ The proposed Bill provides the government the power to make arrangements for promotion and development of exports of live-stock and live-stock products.

Expanded definition of live-stock:

- ✓ The proposed draft of the Live-stock and Live-stock Product (importation and Exportation) Bill, 2023 has expanded the definition of live-stock to include feline and canines as well.
- ✓ Live-stocks and live-stock products as “commodity”:
- ✓ Besides, the Centre has defined the live-stocks and live-stock products as commodities in the proposed draft Bill.

Need of the law

- ✓ The present law that regulates import of live-stock is 125 years old.

- ✓ “The Live-stock Importation Act, 1898, being the pre-constitutional/pre-independence Central Act, a need has been felt to align it with the contemporary requirements and prevailing circumstances related to sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures, and its extant Allocation of Business Rules, 1961.

Criticisms/Reasons for withdrawal

- ✓ Spoiling the gene pool of native animals: Activists say that this will open floodgates for unregulated, large scale import and export of animals and also spoil the gene pool of native animals.
- ✓ Disease risk: A large number of native animals are being exported to climates that are not conducive to them. This bill, if enacted, may also increase the disease risk.
- ✓ Promotion of cruelties on animals: Animal rights organisations have said that the draft Bill will open a “Pandora’s Box” of cruelties on animals.
- ✓ In 2022-23, India exported \$5.11 million worth of live animals, the bulk of which was sheep and goats.
- ✓ Most of these animals are exported during festivals to West Asian countries.

Livestock Sector

- ✓ It is an important subsector of agriculture in the Indian economy. It grew at a CAGR of 8.15 per cent during 2014-15 to 2019-20 (at constant prices).
- ✓ Livestock plays an important role in the Indian economy. About 20.5 million people depend upon livestock for their livelihood. Livestock contributed 16% to the income of small farm households as against an average of 14% for all rural households.
- ✓ Dairy is the single-largest agri commodity in India. It contributes 5% to the national economy and employs 80 million dairy farmers directly

PRELIM FACTS

1. Global Gender Gap Index

In context: Recently, the World Economic Forum (WEF) released its annual Gender Gap Report 2023.

About Global Gender Gap Index

- ✓ The Global Gender Gap Index annually benchmarks the current state and evolution of gender parity across four key dimensions
 - I. Economic Participation and Opportunity,
 - II. Educational Attainment,
 - III. Health and Survival, and
 - IV. Political Empowerment.
- ✓ It is the longest-standing index tracking the progress of numerous countries’ efforts toward closing these gaps over time since its inception in 2006.
- ✓ The goal of the report is to offer a consistent annual metric for the assessment of progress over time.
- ✓ The index and the analysis focus on benchmarking parity between women and men across countries and regions.

Major Highlights 2023 report

- ✓ **Global Scenario:** The global gender gap score in 2023 for all 146 countries included in this edition stands at 68.4% closed.
- ✓ According to the Index, no country has yet achieved full gender parity, although the top nine countries (Iceland, Norway, Finland, New Zealand, Sweden, Germany, Nicaragua, Namibia, and Lithuania) have closed at least 80% of their gap.

Position of India

- ✓ India was ranked 127 out of 146 countries in terms of gender parity — an improvement of eight places from 2022.
- ✓ India was ranked 135 in the report’s 2022 edition.
- ✓ The country had attained parity in enrolment across all levels of education.
- ✓ India had closed 64.3% of the overall gender gap.
- ✓ However, it underlined that India had reached only 36.7 % parity on economic participation and opportunity.
- ✓ In India, while there had been an uptick in parity in wages and income, the share of women in senior positions and technical roles had dropped slightly since the last edition.
- ✓ On political empowerment, India has registered 25.3% parity, with women representing 15.1% of parliamentarians — the highest for the country since the inaugural report in 2006.
- ✓ For India, the 1.9 percentage point improvement in the sex ratio at birth had driven up parity after more than a decade of slow progress.

2. Kalasa Banduri Project

In context: The Kalasa Banduri project in Karnataka is stuck again.



About Kalasa-Banduri project

- ✓ The Kalasa-Banduri project aims to divert water from Mahadaya to satisfy the drinking water needs of the Belagavi, Dharwad, Bagalkot and Gadag districts in Karnataka.
- ✓ As per the plans, barrages are to be built on Kalasa and Banduri streams — tributaries of Mahadaya — and water diverted towards Karnataka’s parched districts.
- ✓ Though the project was first proposed in the early 1980s, it has remained on paper owing to a dispute between Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra.

Issues

- ✓ The impacts of such development projects are adverse, especially when it comes to natural resources and the need to share them between different states/territories
- ✓ Goa and Maharashtra governments issued a joint statement saying that they will put up a united fight against Karnataka in connection with the water diversion project.

The tribunal action

- ✓ In November 2010, the UPA government at the Centre had set up a tribunal to settle disputes between Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra.
- ✓ In 2018, the tribunal awarded 13.42 TMC water from Mahadaya river basin to Karnataka, 1.33 TMC to Maharashtra and 24 TMC to Goa.
- ✓ The same was notified by the Union Government in February 2020.

Revised proposal

- ✓ The Karnataka government submitted a revised proposal to the National Wildlife Board and MoEF in connection with the Mahadaya project, The government sought permission to divert 26.92 hectares of forest land for non-forest purposes.

Conclusion

- ✓ Transboundary water agreements must be sufficiently robust to address rising environmental and climatic factors as well as changes in society and population.
- ✓ Proper planning, growth, and management are essential to meet the current and future water needs and to respond to a possible water shortage

3. Anna Bhagya Scheme

In context: The ruling Congress and the Opposition BJP hit the streets in Bengaluru holding demonstrations over the implementation of the former’s poll promises, mainly the Anna Bhagya scheme.

About Anna Bhagya Scheme

- ✓ Under the Anna Bhagya scheme, Karnataka plans to enhance free rice given per person in the BPL card from the current 5 kg to 10 kg.
- ✓ The total supply of 10 kg is estimated to cost the exchequer ₹1,840 crore monthly and ₹110,092 crores annually.
- ✓ **Challenges in implementation:** The Karnataka government is facing an uphill battle in implementing the Anna Bhagya scheme owing to the unavailability of the required amount of rice after the Food Corporation of India (FCI) stopped the sale of rice to state governments

✓ **Future outlook:** Now, the Punjab government has come forward to supply the rice.

4. **INDUS-X.**

In Context: India and the U.S. are exploring the possibility of co-producing jet engines, long-range artillery, and infantry vehicles with the upcoming launch of INDUS-X.

What is INDUS-X?

- ✓ It is a major upcoming initiative under the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET), with the aim to promote partnerships and collaboration between the defence innovation ecosystems of both countries.
- ✓ India-United States Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS X) was launched at an event in Washington DC, USA on 21 June 2023. The INDUS X event was co-organised by Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), Ministry of Defence, and US Department of Defence (DoD) and hosted by US-India Business Council (USIBC).
- ✓ INDUS-X is focused on advancing high-tech cooperation and exploring opportunities for joint research, development, and production in the defence sector.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. Mahatma Gandhi found in salt a powerful symbol that could unite the nation". Discuss.

Introduction: The perceptible demoralisation within the anti-imperialist movement post the abrupt withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation movement was overcome with the revival of mass agitation against the British rule in India when Indian National Congress launched Civil disobedience movement under the leadership of Gandhiji. Congress authorised Gandhi in the Lahore session of 1929 to launch a Civil Disobedience Movement. Gandhi devised an effective formula to launch the nationwide Civil Disobedience Movement.

Background of the salt agitation:

On 31 January 1930, he sent a letter to Viceroy Irwin stating eleven demands. Some of these were of general interest; others were specific demands of different classes, from industrialists to peasants. The idea was to make the demands wide-ranging so that all classes within Indian society could identify with them and everyone could be brought together in a united campaign.

- The most stirring and unique was the demand to abolish the salt tax. It was a brilliantly conceived plan though a few could grasp its significance when it was announced.
- Salt was something consumed by the rich and the poor alike, and it was one of the most essential items of food. The tax on salt and the government monopoly over its production, Mahatma Gandhi declared, revealed the most oppressive face of British rule. Gandhi said, "the tax constitutes, the most inhuman poll tax the ingenuity of man can devise."
- The proposal of making the issue of salt central to launching a mass Civil Disobedience Movement proved quite decisive. The salt tax was concrete and universal grievance of the rural poor, the salt laws had no socially divisive implications.
- The breaking of the salt law by Gandhi meant a rejection of the government's claim on the allegiance of the people.
- In coastal areas, illegal manufacture of salt could also provide the people with a small income which was no less significant.
- The Dandi March and the widespread violation of the salt laws over large areas of the country subsequently demonstrated the tremendous power of a non-violent mass struggle.
- While Gandhi was marching to Dandi, his comrades took up the far more difficult task of the organization, fund collection, and touring towns and villages to spread the nationalistic message among the people.
- Defiance of the salt laws started all over the country. The Satyagrahis held salt marches in Assam, Bengal, Madras, Sindh, Orissa and at many other places.
 - ✓ In Tamil Nadu, C. Rajagopalchari led a march from Tiruchirapally to Vedaranniyam.
 - ✓ In Malabar, K. Kelappan led a march from Calicut to Poyannur.
 - ✓ Gopabandhu Choudhury led the first batch of his Satyagra from Cuttack to Inchudi in Balasore sea-coast in Orissa.
 - ✓ In Assam, Satyagrahis walked from Sylhet to Noakhali (Bengal) to make salt.
 - ✓ In Andhra, a number of Sibirams (camps) came up in different districts as headquarters of Salt Satyagraha.

Conclusion:

The Civil Disobedience Movement, considered as the second major Gandhian mass movement, popularly labelled as the Salt Satyagraha, made a distinct advance in broadening the social reach of the anti-imperialist struggle. Gandhiji was able to gain world attention for the first time. The European and American press widely covered the march. Despite these extraordinary measures, the Salt Tax was not repealed by the British. Nevertheless, this march increased the legitimacy of Gandhiji as a mass leader, as Lord Irwin himself had to sign Irwin pact with him. This gave an immense self-confidence to the people of India. As Indians for the first

time they were treated as equal by the British Government. It would be correct to say that the breaking of Salt was a milestone in India's struggle for independence.

MCQs

1. Considered the following statement regarding the Olympic day 2023.
 1. It celebrated every year on 23 June.
 2. This year theme is #LetsMove
 Which of the following statement is/are correct?
 - a) Only 1
 - b) Only 2
 - c) **Both 1 and 2**
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
2. Considered the following statement regarding Gender Gap Index 2023.
 1. It is released by World Health Organization.
 2. India was ranked 127 out of 146 countries in terms of gender parity an improvement of eight places from 2022.
 Which of the following statement is/are incorrect?
 - a) Only 1
 - b) Only 2
 - c) Both 1 and 2
 - d) **Neither 1 nor 2**
3. Considered the following statement :
 1. Prime minister of India conferred the National Florence Nightingale Awards for the year 2022 and 2023.
 2. The awarded the prestigious award for their dedication, duty and service to the community.
 Which of the following statement is/are correct?
 - a) Only 1
 - b) **Only 2**
 - c) Both 1 and 2
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
4. Considered the following statement:
 1. Sylvester Dacunha the creator of Utterly Butterly campaigns.
 2. It is associated with Amul Company.
 Which of the following statement is/are correct?
 - a) Only 1
 - b) Only 2
 - c) **Both 1 and 2**
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. Considered the following statement regarding INDUS-X
 1. It is in between India and U.S
 2. It is a major upcoming initiative under the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET).
 Which of the following statement is/are correct?
 - a) Only 1
 - b) Only 2
 - c) **Both 1 and 2**
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. Considered the following statement regarding United Nations Public Service Day.
 1. It is celebrated on the 23 June every year.
 2. SDG 16 talk about public institutions.
 Which of the following statement is/are correct?
 - a) Only 1
 - b) Only 2
 - c) **Both 1 and 2**
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
7. Which of the following nations are part of the 'NATO plus five' alliance?
 1. Australia
 2. New Zealand
 3. Japan
 4. Iran
 5. South Korea
 Choose the correct answer using the code given below:
 - a) 1, 2 and 4 only
 - b) 3, 4, and 5 only
 - c) **1, 2, 3, and 5 only**
 - d) 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5
8. With reference to the Grievance Redressal Assessment and Index, consider the following statements:
 1. It was conceptualised and designed by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances.
 2. It provides information related to strengths and areas of improvement regarding grievance redressal mechanisms.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - a) Only 1
 - b) Only 2
 - c) **Both 1 and 2**
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
9. YUVIKA programme recently in news which is related to?
 - a) **Young Scientist Programme.**
 - b) Young Vocational educational programme.
 - c) Young Skill development programme.
 - d) None
10. Considered the following statement regarding Zircon Missile:
 1. It is a manoeuvring anti-ship hypersonic cruise missile
 2. It is developed by Russia.
 3. It's a two-stage missile that uses solid fuel in the first stage and a scramjet motor in the second stage.
 How many pair of statement is/are correct?
 - a) Only 1
 - b) Only 2
 - c) **Only 3**
 - d) None