

## FOREIGN RELATION

#### **Indo-Australia Relations**

In context: The 8th India-Australia Defence Policy Talks (DPT) was held at Canberra in Australia.

- ✓ The discussions focused on identifying ways to strengthen partnership in co-development and coproduction of defence equipment.
- ✓ Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to fully implement the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
- ✓ The Indian side highlighted the potential of the Indian defence industry with capacity and capability to cooperate with Australian Armed forces in its shipbuilding and maintenance plans.
- ✓ The 8th DPT reviewed the outcomes of maiden 2+2 conducted in 2021. Both sides agreed for early finalization of the hydrography agreement.

# **About Indo-Australia Relations:**



# **Historical Perspective**

- ✓ The historical ties between India and Australia started immediately following European settlement in Australia from 1788.
- ✓ All trade to and fro from the penal colony of New South Wales was controlled by the British East India Company through Kolkata.
- India and Australia established diplomatic relations in the pre-Independence period, with the establishment of India Trade Office in Sydney in 1941.
- The end of the Cold War and simultaneously India's decision to launch major economic reforms in 1991 provided the first positive move towards development of closer ties between the two nations.
  - <u>Strategic Relationship:</u> Australia and India upgraded bilateral relationship from 'Strategic Partnership' in 2009 to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) in 2020.

# **Quad Leaders' Summit:**

- The first-ever Quad Leaders' Virtual Summit held in 2021 saw the participation of Prime Ministers of India, Australia, Japan and President of USA.
- ✓ The subsequent quad summits were held in Washington D.C in 2021 (in-person), in Tokyo in 2022 and again at in Hiroshima in 2023.

#### **Bilateral Economic and Trade Relationship**

✓ As part of its efforts to develop strong economic relationship with India, the Australian Government commissioned the India Economic Strategy to 2035 to define a pathway for Australia to unlock opportunities offered by Indian Economic growth.

#### The India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement ("IndAus ECTA"):

- ✓ Under this the Indian IT companies will not be double taxed with effect from the financial year 2023-24. India-Australia Joint Ministerial Commission: India-Australia Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC):
- ✓ It was established in 1989 to enable interaction at a government and business level on a range of trade and investment related issues.
- ✓ The 18th India-Australia Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) was held on 11 March 2023 in New Delhi. Bilateral Trade:
- ✓ India is 9th largest trading partner of Australia.
- ✓ During 2021, Bilateral trade in goods and services with India was US\$ 31.1 billion, with exports of goods and services worth US\$ 12.5 billion and imports of goods and services worth US\$ 18.6 billion.
- ✓ India's merchandise exports to Australia grew 135% between 2019 and 2021.
- ✓ India's main exports to Australia are:
- refined petroleum,



- medicaments (incl. veterinary),
- pearls & gems,
- jewellery,
- made-up textile articles
- India's major imports are:
- confidential items of trade,
- copper ores & concentrates,
- natural gas,
- non-ferrous waste & scrap,
- ferrous waste & scrap and
- education related services.

#### **Civil Nuclear Cooperation**

- A Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement between the two countries was signed in September 2014.
- The Australian Parliament passed the "Civil Nuclear Transfer to India Bill 2016" in 2016 which allows that Uranium mining companies in Australia to fulfil contracts to supply Australian uranium to India for civil use.
- Exports would not be hindered by domestic legal action challenging the consistency of the safeguards applied by the IAEA in India and Australia's international non-proliferation obligations.
- also ensures that any future bilateral trade in other nuclear-related material or items for civil use will also be protected.

#### **Defence Cooperation**

- The first-ever Bilateral Maritime Exercise, AUSINDEX 15, was conducted in Visakhapatnam and the Bay of Bengal in 2015.
- An Australian Naval ship HMAS Larrakia participated in 'MILAN' Naval exercise in Andaman & Nicobar Islands in March 2018.
- In 2018, Indian Air Force participated for the first time in the Exercise Pitch Black in Australia.
- Navies of India, Australia, Japan and the USA also participated in Exercise Malabar.
- INS Satpura participated at the multinational Exercise KAKADU in Darwin in 2022.
- India-Australia Joint Military Exercise AUSTRAHIND 2022 was held in Rajasthan in 2022 between Indian Army and the Australian Army,. Cod

#### **Indian** Community in Australia

- The Indian community in Australia continues to grow in importance, with the population of about 9.76,000 (Census 2021). EXC
- After England, India is the second largest migrant group in Australia (2021).
- India is one of the top sources of skilled immigrants to Australia.
- The number of Indian students continue to grow with more than 89,766 students presently studying in Australian universities.

# 1. Global ESG Conclave

In context: Recently the Global ESG Conclave 2.0, was held in Dubai.

- It was organized by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM).
- The sessions were aimed to shed light on integrating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors into strategic business decisions and quantifying their impact on financial infrastructure and sustainability.

## About Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)

- ESG is a framework that helps stakeholders understand how an organization is managing risks and opportunities related to environmental, social, and governance criteria.
- Environmental Criteria include direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions, management's stewardship over natural resources, and the firm's overall resiliency against physical climate risks (like climate change, flooding, and fires).
- Social Criteria inspects an organization's management of relationships with its employees, suppliers, customers, stakeholders, and the community at large.
- Corporate Governance considers the organization's management structure, executive compensation, internal controls, and Stakeholder rights.

#### **Evolution of ESG**



- EHS (Environmental, Health, and Safety): As far back as the 1980s, organizations in the United States were considering how to use regulation to manage or reduce pollution produced in the pursuit of economic growth. They sought to also improve employee labor and safety standards.
- Corporate Sustainability: EHS evolved in the 1990s into the Corporate Sustainability movement under which some management teams wanted to focus on reducing their firms environmental impacts beyond the legally mandated reductions.
- Corporate Social Responsibility(CSR): By the early 2000s, the corporate sustainability movement began to integrate ideas around how companies should respond to social issues.
- ESG: Finally by the late 2010s ESG emerged as a much more proactive and comprehensive framework. Relevance of ESG
- Under the Paris Agreement, India has committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2070. Accordingly, corporate entities must integrate ESG principles to safeguard the environment.
- If a business is not conscious about sustainability, its business processes might become redundant in the future, due to legal and regulatory changes.
- ESG adoption will boost corporate growth, enhance the public image, and help companies raise capital at lower costs.
- Compliance by Indian companies with the ESG regulations will be critical if India is to take full advantage of the growing decoupling from China and play a more prominent role in global supply chains and the global marketplace.

#### ENVIRONMENT

#### Samudrayaan Project

In Context: Union Minister of Earth Sciences informed the Lok Sabha about Samudrayaan project. **About the Mission:** 

- Deep Ocean Mission has been launched in 2021 as a Central Sector Scheme of Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- Samudrayaan is a project under the Deep Ocean Mission.
- The Samudrayaan mission is India's first manned ocean mission, with the goal of sending men deep into the ocean in a submersible vehicle for deep-ocean exploration and rare mineral mining.
- Under the Samudrayaan project of Deep Ocean Mission, MATSYA 6000 manned submersible design has been completed so far.
- The 200-crore Samudrayaan Mission will send three people to a depth of 6000 metres in the sea in a manned submersible vehicle called MATSYA 6000 for deep underwater studies. Submarines have a maximum depth of roughly 200 metres.
- Under the Mission, Deep water Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV) namely Ocean Mineral Explorer (OMe 6000) has been deployed for exploration.



Main components of the Deep Sea Mission

# **Development of a manned submersible**

- A manned submersible will be developed to carry three people to a depth of 6,000 metres in the ocean.
- This submersible will have a suite of scientific sensors and tools to help in deep ocean exploration.
- Developed indigenously, MATSYA 6000, the manned submersible will have an endurance of 12 hours of operational period and 96 hours in case of an emergency.
- It will help scientific personnel to observe and understand unexplored deep-sea areas by direct intervention.

## To mine polymetallic nodules

- An integrated mining system will be also developed for mining polymetallic nodules from 6,000 m depth in the central Indian Ocean.
- Polymetallic nodules, also known as manganese nodules, are potato-shaped, largely porous nodules found in abundance carpeting the sea floor of world oceans in deep sea.



- Besides manganese and iron, they contain nickel, copper, cobalt, lead etc., which are of economic and strategic importance.
- Why are polymetallic nodules important for India?
- India has been allotted a site of 75,000 square kilometres in the Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB) by the UN International Sea Bed Authority for exploitation of polymetallic nodules (PMN).
- It is envisaged that 10 per cent of recovery of that large reserve can meet the energy requirement of India for the next 100 years.
- It has been estimated that 380 million metric tonnes of polymetallic nodules are available at the bottom of the seas in the Central Indian Ocean.
- India's Exclusive Economic Zone spreads over 2.2 million square kilometres.

## To study key climate variables

- The second component of the project has to do with developing a suite of observation and models to understand and provide future projections of important climate variables.
- These Ocean Climate Change Advisory Services is meant to support the Blue Economy priority area of coastal tourism.

#### **Explore deep-sea biodiversity**

- Under the Samudrayaan project, technological innovations will be developed to explore and conserve deep-sea biodiversity.
- Studies on sustainable utilisation of deep sea bio-resources will be the main focus.

#### Multi-metal hydrothermal sulphides:

The fourth component has to do with exploring multi-metal hydrothermal sulphides mineralisation along the Indian Ocean mid-oceanic ridges.

#### **Desalination Plant:**

- The fifth will focus on developing an offshore Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) powered desalination plant which will work with tidal energy.
- Marine Station for Ocean Biology:
- Lastly, under the project, the ministry will establish an advanced Marine Station for Ocean Biology.

- India has a 7,517 km long coastline, which is home to nine coastal states and 1,382 islands.

  Its three sides are surrounded by the oceans and around 30 cent of the petion? areas and coastal regions play a major factor in the country's economy.
- The mission will also boost the Central government's vision of 'New India' that highlights the Blue Economy as one of the ten key aspects of growth.
- Entities involved in Samudrayaan
- Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO),
- IITM,
- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)

#### PRELIM FACTS

#### Silvopasture systems

In context: In light of the global deterioration of natural resources and forests, silvopasture systems offer a relevant solution to deforestation trends.



# About Silvopasture system:

- It is an ancient and proven practice that harmoniously integrates trees, forage and livestock on the same
- Advantages: This system buffer against temperature and wind extremes, providing a favourable living environment for livestock.
- Carbon sinks: The trees on silvopasture lands act as natural carbon sinks, sequestering significantly five-10 times more carbon then pastures without trees, all while maintaining or enhancing productivity.
- Nutrient cycling: The extensive root systems of trees within silvopasture plots contribute to nutrient cycling, improved soil stability and quality, while effectively combating erosion.



- ✓ Also, this system combine trees and livestock on the same land, silvopasture can play a vital role in reversing the negative trend of deforestation for pasture land.
- ✓ It also regulates local climatic conditions, buffering against temperature and wind extremes, providing a favourable living environment for livestock.
- ✓ Soil infiltration rates in silvopasture systems surpass those of open pastures, enhancing water storage potential.

#### What is Nutrient cycling?

- ✓ The nutrient cycle is a system where energy and matter are transferred between living organisms and non-living parts of the environment.
- ✓ This occurs as animals and plants consume nutrients found in the soil, and these nutrients are then released back into the environment via death and decomposition.
- ✓ In forest environments, there is an exchange of nutrient elements such as hydrogen, nitrogen and oxygen among the soil, plants and animals living within the environment.

## 2. UK-India Young Professionals Scheme

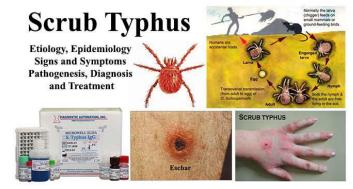
**In context:** The British Government recently announced the opening of the second ballot of the Young Professional Scheme for Indian citizens.

#### **About Young Professionals Scheme:**

- ✓ It was conceived as part of an India-U.K. Migration and Mobility MoU signed in May 2021 and was announced in November at the G20 summit in Bali.
- ✓ It was formally launched in February 2023.
- ✓ It will permit up to 3,000 of their degree-holding citizens aged between 18 and 30 to live and work in each other's countries for two years.
- ✓ This scheme makes India the first visa-national country to benefit from the scheme.
- ✓ Features of India Young Professionals Scheme visa:
- It allows Indian citizens between 18 and 30 years old to live and work in the UK for up to 2 years.
- It will enable candidates to enter the UK at any time while their visa is valid and leave and return anytime during their stay.
- A person must be selected in the India Young Professionals Scheme ballot before they can apply for a Young Professionals Scheme visa.
- To be eligible for the India Young Professionals Scheme visa, You have to be an Indian national aged between 18 and 30 years. You must have a bachelor's degree or above. You must have 2,530 pounds in savings. You must not have any children under the age of 18 who live with you or whom you are financially supporting.
- In case the applicant is issued a visa, they must enter the UK within six months of the date on which the visa was issued. Once in the UK, the applicant can:
- Study-for certain degree programs, such as post-graduation or research in sensitive subjects in the UK, an additional certificate under the Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) needs to be applied before starting the course or research.
- Work in most jobs.
- Be self-employed and set up a company as long as your premises are rented, your equipment is not worth more than £5,000 and you do not have any employees.

#### 3. SCRUB TYPHUS

In Context: The Kerala State Health Department has issued an alert against scrub typhus.



#### **About Scrub typhus**

✓ Scrub typhus is a bacterial infection caused by Orientia tsutsugamushi, which is transmitted by the bite of infected chiggers (larval mites).

# **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

- ✓ It is also known as tsutsugamushi disease or bush typhus.
- ✓ Scrub typhus is endemic in the Asia-Pacific region, where it affects millions of people every year, especially in rural and agricultural areas.

## **Common Symptoms**

✓ Persistent high fever and Severe headaches are commonly experienced by individuals with scrub typhus.

## 4. BYCULLA RAILWAY STATION

**In Context:** UNESCO's Asia Pacific Cultural Heritage award for Byculla Station was presented to Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav.

#### About:

#### **UNESCO Award Recognition**

- ✓ The historic Byculla Railway Station, located in Mumbai received the prestigious UNESCO Asia Pacific Cultural Heritage award.
- The recognition came after the station underwent extensive restoration work, bringing it back to its original glory.
- ✓ The UNESCO award was declared in November of the previous year, highlighting the station's significant contribution to cultural heritage conservation.

#### **Initiators of Restoration Work**

- ✓ The restoration work of the Byculla Railway Station was undertaken by 'I Love Mumbai,' an NGO.
- ✓ Collaborating with the NGO were heritage conservation architect Abha Lamba and Minal Bajaj of Bajaj Trust, both instrumental in partnering with 'I Love Mumbai' for the conservation project

#### **Byculla Railway Station: A Historical Landmark**

- ✓ Oldest Railway Station in India Still in Use
- The Byculla Railway Station holds the distinction of being one of the oldest railway stations in India that is still in operation.
- With a history dating back 169 years, the station stands as a testament to the rich heritage of India's railway system.
- ✓ Grade-I Heritage Structure
- Designated as a Grade-I heritage structure, Byculla Railway Station holds immense architectural and historical value.
- This status emphasizes the importance of preserving the station's original design and features for future generations to appreciate and learn from.
- ✓ Other Heritage Railway Stations in Mumbai
- Alongside Byculla Railway Station, Mumbai boasts several other railway stations of historical significance that are included in the city's heritage list.
- These stations include the iconic Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, Western Railways Headquarters Building (Churchgate), Bandra railway station, and Reay Road railway station, each contributing to the city's cultural heritage.
- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS) also won the highest award of excellence in the UNESCO Asia Pacific awards 2022, for cultural heritage conservation last year, when Byculla railway station was given the recognition.

#### **ANSWER WRITTING**

# Q. As compared to other levels of government, local governments have more importantroles to play in disaster management. Discuss.

**Introduction:** The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments enabled the local governments with the power, authority and resources to function as 'units of self government', though with varying levels of initiative, drive, interest, intensity and diversity of operations in practice. As compared to other levels of the government, the local bodies members have greater role and can play a role of leadership in disaster management at all stages. Right from the preparatory stage up to the handling of the long term development activities for risk reduction, local bodies can lead in several ways.

# Role of Central and State Government in disaster management

- Basic responsibility for rescue, relief and rehabilitation with the State Governments.
- The Central Government supplements the efforts of State Governments by providing financial and logistic support in case of major disasters.
- The logistic support includes deployment of aircrafts and boats, specialist teams of Armed Forces, Central Para Military Forces and personnel of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), arrangements for relief materials & essential commodities including medical stores, restoration of critical infrastructure facilities including communication network and such other assistance asmay be required by the affected States to meet the situation effectively.



#### Role of Panchayat raj Institution (PRI)

- Gram Panchayat can play a pivotal role in disaster management. The impact of disasters on people living in
  vulnerable areas and losses to their property can be minimized by a pro-active role played by PRIs at the
  grassroots level.
- The PRIs can act as catalysts to social mobilization process and tap the traditional wisdom of the local communities to complement the modern practices in disaster mitigation efforts.
- Their close involvement will go a long way in getting people prepared for countering natural disasters as well as involve them in all possible preventive and protective activities so that the impact of the disasters are mitigated and the people are able to save their lives and property.
- Besides PRIs will also provide a base for integration of various concerns of the community with that of the NGOs and Community Based organizations (CBOs) which are engaged in various developmental activities at the grassroots level.
- The disaster management cycle requires massive efforts in all its aspects like prevention, mitigation, response and reconstruction addressing restoration. Thus, the entire preparedness with regard to meeting emergencies like cyclone, flood and drought etc., calls for a constructive role and greater commitment on the part of the PRIs.
- The PRI members can play a role of leadership in Disaster Management at all stages. Right from the preparatory stage up to the handling of the long term development activities for risk reduction, PRI can lead in several ways.

#### Role of urban local bodies (ULB)

- Every city is prone to a few hazards like flood, cyclone, water scarcity, epidemics, and earthquake, and fire, chemical and industrial hazards. All over the world rapid urbanization is taking place.
- According to World Bank by the year 2025, 80% of world population will be residing in urban areas. It is projected that more than 50% of the India's population will be urban by 2050. This is most critical situation which calls for empowerment of ULB to deal with the disasters.
- ULB can play crucial role in maintaining of vehicles, sanitary facilities, food, shelter and rest facilities, relief and replacement, personnel and emergency message, contact arrangement and logistic support; Keeping unauthorized persons out of the disaster area in order to prevent looting and decreasing congestion hampering rescue efforts and preventing persons from being injured in the wreckage
- Similarly, they have role to play in coordinating with volunteers; acquiring and allocating unusual resources; dealing with livestock or family pets that had to be left behind; disposing unclaimed valuables and merchandise found in the rubble; disbursing large amounts of donations; etc. However, local bodies in India face certain issues in disaster management such as Poor co-ordination at the local level, lack of early-warning systems, often very slow responses, paucity of trained dedicated clinicians, lack of search and rescue facilities and poor community empowerment are some of the factors, which have been contributing to poor response following disasters in the past.

**Conclusion:** Hence, there is a need to define the role of local bodies in Disaster Management and sensitize local communities through them to develop coping mechanism in preparedness and mitigation measures of disaster to minimize its destructive effect on life and property at local level.

- 1. Considered the following statement regarding Silvopasture systems
  - 1. The trees on silvopasture lands act as natural carbon sinks.
  - 2. It is an ancient and proven practice that harmoniously integrates trees, forage and livestock on the same land.
  - 3. silvopasture systems not offer a relevant solution to deforestation trends.

How many of the above statement is/are correct?

- a) Only 1
- b) Only2
- c) Only 3
- d) None
- 2. Recently 8th India-Australia Defence Policy Talks (DPT) held, Considered the following statement:
  - 1. It was held at Canberra in Australia.

# 2. India is 9th largest trading partner of Australia.

Which of the above statement is/are correct?

- a) Only 1
- b) only 2
- c) both1 and 2
- d) neither 1 nor 2
- **3.** With reference to Bharat Mandalam, consider the following statements:
  - 1. It is the international exhibition –cum convention centre(IEC) complex developed as a national project..
  - 2. it is aims to attract foreign tourists to India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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



- 4. Considered the following statement regarding Scrub typhus
  - 1. It is a bacterial infection caused by Orientia tsutsugamushi.
  - 2. It is transmitted by the bite of infected chiggers (larval mites).

Which of the above statement is/are correct?

- a) Only 1
- b) only 2
- c) both1 and 2
- d) neither 1 nor 2
- 5. Considered the following statement regarding Features of India Young Professionals Scheme visa:
  - 1. It allows Indian citizens between 18 and 30 years old to live and work in the USA for up to 2
  - This scheme makes India the first visanational country to benefit from the scheme.

Which of the above statement is/are Incorrect?

- a) Only 1
- b) only 2
- c) both1 and 2
- d) neither 1 nor 2
- 6. Considered the following statement regarding Samudrayaan mission
  - 1. It has been launched in 2021 as a Central

- c) Only 3
- d) None
- Recently the Global ESG Conclave 2.0, was held in Dubai. Considered the following statement:
  - 1. It was organized by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM).
  - 2. The sessions were aimed to shed light on integrating Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) factors.

Which of the above statement is/are correct?

- a) Only 1
- b) only 2
- c) both1 and 2
- d) neither 1 nor 2
- 8. What is the potential application of hematene nanoflakes as optical limiters?
  - Protecting electronic devices from electromagnetic interference.
  - 2. Enhancing the efficiency of solar cells.
  - 3. Shielding sensitive optical equipment from high laser intensities.
  - 4. Enabling faster data transfer in optical communication.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) Only 1
- Only 2 b)
- c) Only 3
- d) All
- Which of the following statements about the Byculla Railway Station and the UNESCO Asia Pacific Cultural Heritage award is/are incorrect?
  - 1. 1.Byculla Railway Station received the UNESCO Asia Pacific Cultural Heritage award in 2020.
  - 2. 2.The restoration work of Byculla Railway Station was undertaken by the NGO 'I Love Mumbai.' in partnership with heritage conservation architect Abha Lamba and Minal Bajaj of Bajaj Trust.
  - 3. 3.Byculla Railway Station is the oldest railway station in India and holds a Grade-I heritage structure designation.

How many of the above statements is/are incorrect?

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- Only 3 c)
- d) All
- ocean mission,

  How many of the above statement is/are correct?

  a) Only 1
  b) Only 2
  c) Only 2
  c) Only 2 10. Maitree Super Thermal Power Project (STPP) is