

EXAM Asset

CHANAKYA WEEKLY BOOSTER

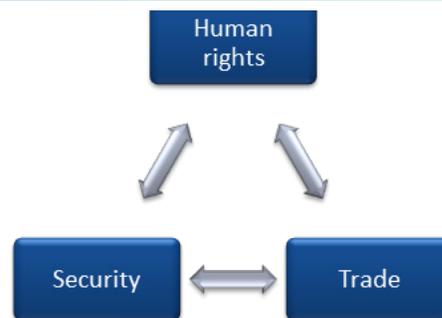
Current affairs &
Newspaper Analysis



Sources : The Hindu, Indian Express, Economics times, PIB, PRS, RSTV, LSTV, AIR, Yojana, Kurukshetra, Down to Earth etc.

TAIWAN CAUGHT BETWEEN U.S. AND CHINA

- The recent visit of United States House Speaker and senior Democratic Party politician Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan bristles china.
- The trip was the highest-level visit from the U.S. to Taiwan in 25 years. China, which had publicly warned the U.S. against going ahead with it, saying it would violate commitments under the 'One China Policy'.
- Reason of Visit :According to report the visit has three main focused area :
- Ms. Pelosi said that "America's determination is to preserve democracy in Taiwan .
- Taiwan has welcomed this rare high-level visit as a boost to its global standing, although the White House and U.S. military were far from enthusiastic about the visit, expecting repercussions on relations with China.



CHINA OPPOSE THE VISIT

- China has seen it as an attempt by the U.S. to change the status quo as far as its 'One China Policy' is concerned.
- In Beijing's view, Ms. Pelosi's visit is the latest of a number of moves, going back to the previous Trump administration, aimed at "hollowing out" and redefining the 'One China Policy'. Hence, the robust response from China.

DOES THE VISIT VIOLATE THE 'ONE CHINA POLICY'

- The joint communique that established diplomatic relations between the U.S. and China in 1979 declared that "the United States of America recognises the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal Government of China".
- Since the establishment of relations with China, the U.S. no longer has formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan under the 'One China Policy'.

- Within this context, the very first paragraph of the communique adds, “the people of the United States will maintain cultural, commercial, and other unofficial relations with the people of Taiwan.”
- China has seen Ms. Pelosi’s visit as a political one and thus as a violation of this communique, which it has described as the very foundations of the relationship.

RELEVANCE OF TAIWAN

For USA :

- Taiwan anchors a chain of islands which includes a list of US-friendly territories that the US is planning to use as a place of leverage for countering China’s expansionist plans.
- The United States does not have official diplomatic ties with Taiwan but is bound by US law (Taiwan Relations Act, 1979) to provide the island with the means to defend itself.
- It is by far the largest arms dealer for Taiwan and follows a ‘strategic ambiguity’ policy.

For China :

- China and Taiwan’s economies are inextricably linked. China is Taiwan’s biggest export partner, with an export value of 515 billion dollars from 2017 to 2022, more than double the US, which was the next biggest partner.
- Taiwan is much closer to mainland China than the other islands, and has been claimed by Beijing since Nationalists were driven there during the Chinese revolution in 1949.
- Some have seen Russia’s invasion of Ukraine as a potential catalyst for a China-Taiwan conflict.

- First Island Chain : The First Island Chain comprises the Kuril Islands, the Japanese Archipelago, Ryukyu Islands, Taiwan, northwest Philippines and ending at Borneo.
- This chain is also the first line of defence and serves as the maritime boundaries between the East China Sea and the Philippine Sea and the South China Sea and the Sulu Sea.
- In this chain are located the Bashi Channel and the Miyako Strait which are critical chokepoints for China.
- China’s maritime strategy, or the “Island Chain Strategy,” is a geographical security concept crafted by the United States in the 1940s to deter China and the Soviet Union’s maritime ambitions.

INDIA’S STAND ON TAIWAN

- Since 1949, India has accepted the One China policy that accepts Taiwan and Tibet as part of China.
- However, India uses the policy to make a diplomatic point, i.e., if India believes in “One China” policy, China should also believe in a “One India” policy.
- Even though India has stopped mentioning its adherence to One China policy in joint statements and official documents since 2010, its engagement with Taiwan is still restricted due to the framework of ties with China.



WORKINGS OF THE SUPREME COURT COLLEGIUM

Context :

- The Chief Justice of India (CJI) N.V. Ramana's tenure is drawing to an end in a few days.
- The collegium, as a united front, was able to recommend numerous judicial appointments and scripted history by getting nine Supreme Court judges appointed in one go. Of the nine, Justice B.V. Nagarathna, is in line to be the first woman CJI in 2027.

COLLEGIUM SYSTEM:

- The collegium system was born out of years of friction between the judiciary and the executive.
- The hostility was further accentuated by instances of court-packing (the practice of changing the composition of judges in a court), mass transfer of high court judges and two supersessions to the office of the CJI in the 1970s.
- The Third Judges cases saw the evolution of the collegium system. In the First Judges case, the court held that the consultation with the CJI should be "full and effective".
- The Second Judges case introduced the collegium system in 1993. It ruled that the CJI would have to consult a collegium of his two senior-most judges in the apex court on judicial appointments. The court held that such a "collective opinion" of the collegium would have primacy over the government.
- It was the Third Judges case in 1998, which was a Presidential reference, that expanded the judicial collegium to its present composition of the CJI and four of his senior-most judges.

WORKING MECHANISM :

- The collegium of the CJI and four senior-most judges of the Supreme Court make recommendations for appointments to the apex court and High Courts.
- The collegium can veto the government if the names are sent back by the latter for reconsideration.
- The basic tenet behind the collegium system is that the judiciary should have primacy over the government in matters of appointments and transfers in order to remain independent. However, over time, the collegium system has attracted criticism, even from within the judicial institution, for its lack of transparency. It has even been accused of nepotism.

- **About NJAC:** The National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) is a constitutional body proposed to replace the present Collegium system of appointing judges.
- Structure: It will consist of six people — the Chief Justice of India, the two most senior judges of the Supreme Court, the Law Minister, and two 'eminent persons'. These eminent persons are to be nominated for a three-year term by a committee consisting of the Chief Justice, the Prime Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, and are not eligible for re-nomination.
- The NJAC was established by amending the Constitution [Constitution (Ninety-Ninth Amendment) Act, 2014] passed by the Lok Sabha on August 13, 2014 and by the Rajya Sabha on August 14 2014.
- The Supreme Court held the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act and the 99th Constitutional Amendment Null and void as it violates the basic structure.

PROCEDURE OF APPOINTMENT :

IN CASE OF CHIEF JUSTICE

- The CJI and the judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by the President under clause (2) of Article 124 of the Constitution.
- The appointment to the office of the CJI should be of the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court considered fit to hold the office.
- The Union Law Minister would, at an “appropriate time”, seek the recommendation of the outgoing CJI on his successor. Once the CJI recommends, the Law Minister forwards the communication to the Prime Minister who would advise the President on the appointment.

IN CASE OF OTHER JUDGES

- In the case of an appointment of a Supreme Court judge, when a vacancy is expected to arise in the apex court, the collegium would recommend a candidate to the Union Law Minister.
- The CJI would also ascertain the views of the senior-most judges in the Supreme Court, who hail from the High Court from where the person recommended comes from.
- The opinions of each member of the Collegium and other judges consulted should be made in writing and form part of the file on the candidate sent to the government.
- If the CJI had consulted non-judges, he should make a memorandum containing the substance of consultation, which would also be part of the file.
- After the receipt of the Collegium recommendation, the Law Minister would forward it to the Prime Minister, who would advise the President in the matter of appointment.

HAS THE INCREASE IN JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS LOWERED PENDENCY IN THE

- The increase in the number of judges has not guaranteed lower pendency of cases in the apex court over the years.
- The number of pending cases has risen to 71,411 as on August 1, 2022 from a little over 55,000 in 2017.
- This is despite the fact that the sanctioned judicial strength of the court was increased to 34 judges in August 2019. A steady rise in arrears regardless of the periodic increase in judicial strength has been a constant phenomenon since 1950.
- In 1950, the Supreme Court had eight judges and a pendency of 100-plus cases.
- A decade later, in 1960, the judges' strength in the Supreme Court grew to 14 while pendency rose to 3,247.
- In 1978, the number of apex court judges was 18 and pendency had crossed the 14,000-mark.
- In 1986, there were 26 judges in the Supreme Court while pendency increased to 27,881.
- In 2009, the number of judges in the Supreme Court reached 31 though pendency went beyond 50,000.
- In 2014, the number of judges remained 31 but pendency had burgeoned to over 64,000.
- In 2020 and 2021, the pandemic added to the pendency rate in the apex court.
- The year 2020 ended with a backlog of 64,426 cases and 2021 with 69,855 cases.

GREAT BARRIER REEF'S RECOVERY AND

Context :

- According to the annual long-term monitoring report by the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) , the highest levels of coral cover, within the past 36 years, has been recorded in the northern and central parts of Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

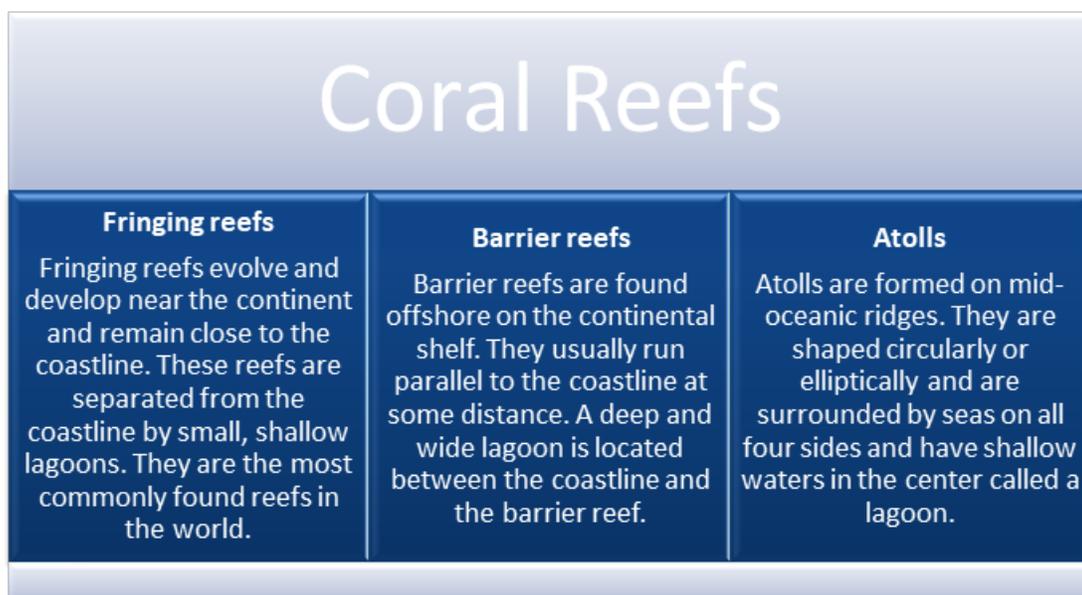
CORAL REEFS :

- Corals are marine invertebrates or animals which do not possess a spine. They are the largest living structures on the planet.
- Each coral is called a polyp and thousands of such polyps live together to form a colony, which grow when polyps multiply to make copies of themselves.

Types :

CORALS ARE OF TWO TYPES :

- **Hard corals** extract calcium carbonate from seawater to build hard, white coral exoskeletons. Hard corals are in a way the engineers of reef ecosystems and measuring the extent of hard coral is a widely-accepted metric for measuring the condition of coral reefs.
- **Soft corals** attach themselves to such skeletons and older skeletons built by their ancestors. Soft corals also add their own skeletons to the hard structure over the years. These growing multiplying structures gradually form coral reefs.



ABOUT GREAT BARRIER REEF :

- Australia's Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest reef system stretching across 2,300 km and having nearly 3,000 individual reefs.
- It hosts 400 different types of coral, gives shelter to 1,500 species of fish and 4,000 types of mollusc.
- Coral reefs support over 25% of marine biodiversity even as they take up only 1% of the seafloor. The marine life supported by reefs further fuels global fishing industries.
- Besides, coral reef systems generate \$2.7 trillion in annual economic value through goods and service trade and tourism.
- In Australia, the Barrier Reef, in pre-COVID times, generated \$4.6 billion annually through tourism and employed over 60,000 people including divers and guides.

ABOUT THE REPORT :

- The current report surveyed 87 reefs in the GBR between August 2021 and May 2022.
- The report states that reef systems are resilient and capable of recovering after disturbances such as accumulated heat stress, cyclones, predatory attacks and so on, provided the frequency of such disturbances is low.
- Coral cover is measured by determining the increase in the cover of hard corals. The hard coral cover in northern GBR had reached 36% while that in the central region had reached 33%.
- Meanwhile, coral cover levels declined in the southern region from 38% in 2021 to 34% in 2022.
- The record levels of recovery, the report showed, were fuelled largely by increases in the fast-growing Acropora corals, which are a dominant type in the GBR.
- Also, behind the recent recovery in parts of the reef, are the low levels of acute stressors in the past 12 months — no tropical cyclones, lesser heat stress in 2020 and 2022 as opposed to 2016 and 2017, and a decrease in COTs outbreaks.

THREATS AND CONCERN :

- Besides predatory attacks and tropical cyclones, scientists say that the biggest threat to the health of the reef is climate change-induced heat stress, resulting in coral bleaching.

Coral bleaching : It refers to loss of algae from the corals resulting into the white colour which is indicative of death of corals.

- When corals exposed to conditions like heat stress, pollution, or high levels of ocean acidity, the zooxanthellae start producing reactive oxygen species not beneficial to the corals.
- So, the corals kick out the colour-giving algae from their polyps, exposing their pale white exoskeleton and leading to coral starvation as corals cannot produce their own food.
- Bleached corals can survive depending on the levels of bleaching and the recovery of sea temperatures to normal levels. Severe bleaching and prolonged stress in the external environment can lead to coral death.

MASS BLEACHING :

- **The first mass bleaching event occurred in 1998 when the El Niño weather pattern caused sea surfaces to heat, causing 8% of the world's coral to die.**
- **The second event took place in 2002. But the longest and most damaging bleaching event took place from 2014 to 2017.**
- **Mass bleaching then occurred again in 2020, followed by earlier this year. According to the Australian government's scientists, 91% of the reefs it had surveyed in March were affected by bleaching.**

Corals in India :

- The mainland coast of India has two widely separated areas containing reefs:
- Gulf of Kutch and Mannar: The Gulf of Kutch in the north west, has some of the most northerly reefs in the world. Palk Bay and the Gulf of Mannar with numerous fringing reefs around small islands in the south east also have coral reefs.
- Coral Islands: Important offshore island groups of India with extensive reef growth include the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal and the Lakshadweep group of Islands in the Arabian sea. The Andaman and Nicobar islands have fringing reefs (reefs that grow close to the shore and extend out into the sea like a submerged platform) and a 320 km long barrier reef on the west coast. The Lakshadweep Islands are made up of atolls (a roughly circular ring of reefs surrounding a lagoon).
- Other regions: There are patches of reef in the intertidal areas of the central west coast of the country. Coral patches have been recorded in the intertidal regions of Ratnagiri, Malvan and Redi, south of Bombay and at the Gaveshana Bank of Mangalore. Hermatypic corals are found along the shore in the Kerala coast and in Tamilnadu.

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CEASEFIRE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

CONTEXT :

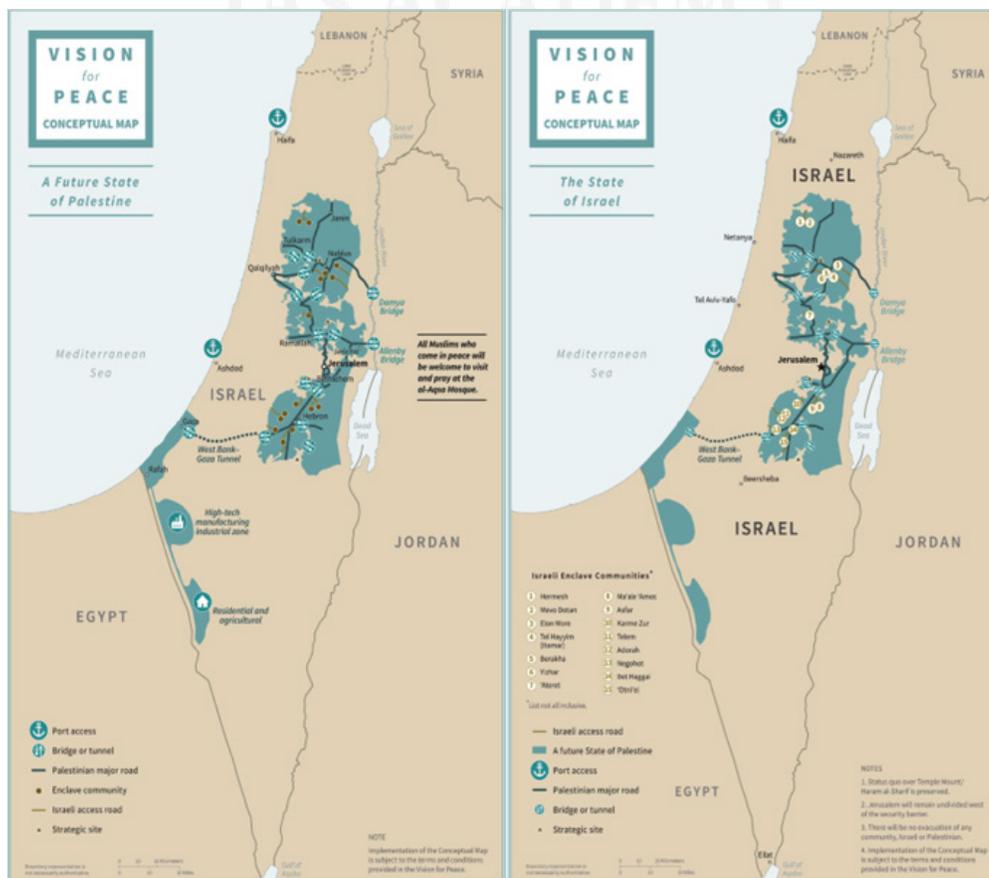
- Recently, a ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian militants took effect in a bid to end nearly three days of violence that killed dozens of Palestinians and disrupted the lives of hundreds of thousands of Israelis in Gaza.

RECENT CONFLICT

- The flare-up was the worst fighting between Israel and Gaza militant groups since Israel and Hamas fought an 11-day war last year.
- The risk of the cross-border fighting turning into a full-fledged war remained as long as no truce was reached.
- Israel-Palestine Conflict

INCEPTION OF CONFLICT:

- The United Nations (UN) proposed an Arab-Jewish partition of Palestine between Palestine and the new state of Israel.
- This partition plan mandated 53 per cent of the land to the Jewish-majority state (Israel) and 47 per cent to the Palestinian-majority state (Palestine).
- This idea didn't receive well by the Arab countries in the Middle East.



FIRST ARAB-ISRAELI WAR:

- Jewish paramilitary groups, however, formed the state of Israel by force in 1948. This prompted a deadly war with its Arab neighbours - Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan in 1948. This was the first Arab-Israeli war.
- Israel won this war and ended up occupying more land than previously envisaged in the 1947 UN partition plan.
- The Palestinians were forced out of their homes when the State of Israel was created in historical Palestine in 1948 (the Palestinians call the events 'Nakba', or catastrophe).
- Twenty-eight of those Palestinian families moved to Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem to settle there.
- Six-Day War of 1967:
 - In 1967, the Arab countries again refused to recognise Israel as a state, which led to another war, known as the Six-Day War.
 - Israel won this war too and occupied even more parts of Palestine.
 - The West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, which houses the holy Old City, came under Israel's control.
 - It also occupied Syrian Golan Heights and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula.
 - By the early 1970s, Jewish agencies started demanding the families leave the land.
- Oslo Accords:
 - It was backed by the United Nations (UN) and signed between the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1993.
 - Under this, a part of the West Bank came under the control of the Palestinian Authority.
- Present Scenario
 - Israel considers whole Jerusalem as its capital and not just a part of it. But Palestinians don't agree with that and rather want it to be their capital of future independent Palestine.
 - Earlier this year, the Central Court in East Jerusalem upheld a decision to evict four Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah in favor of Jewish settlers.
 - Recently, with the start of Ramzan, Israeli police had put up barricades at Damascus Gate which created a problem for Palestinians.
 - Israeli police stormed inside Al-aqsa Mosque leaving a number of people injured. This was done on Jerusalem Day.
 - In retaliation, Hamas, the Islamist militant group that runs Gaza, fired dozens of rockets.
 - The Israelis launched an airstrike on Gaza in response, killing at least 65 Palestinians, including 16 children.
- India's Stand on Israel Palestine Conflict
 - India has remained "steadfast" in its support for Palestinian rights and has consistently voted in favour of Palestine at the United Nations.
 - India had voted in the UN General Assembly that had sharply criticised the United States for recognising Jerusalem as the Israeli capital in 2017.

- **India had voted in favour of another UNGA resolution “deploring the use of excessive, disproportionate and indiscriminate force by Israeli forces against Palestinian civilians” in 2018.**
- **India has consistently voted in favour of those resolutions that promote the two-state solution with a Palestinian claim to East Jerusalem.**
- **Recently, India condemned “all acts of violence” but specifically criticised rocket attacks from Gaza at an emergency closed-door session of the United Nations Security Council.**

Way Ahead

- **Peace based on a "two-state solution" is much needed with the help of international organisations and can only be achieved from Israel-Palestine talks.**
- **Signed in 2020, the Abraham Accords between Israel, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and mediated by the United States, was a significant breakthrough to facilitate cooperation between Arab nations and Israel. Now, it's an urgent need of hour to find a peaceful and sustainable solution for the ongoing conflict.**
- **India has good relations with both Israel and Palestine and is also attached to multilateral principles that can play an “enhanced” role in the search for a solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict.**
- **India should enhance political and diplomatic support to talks, as well as development aid and cooperation for institution building in Palestine.**

- **Abraham Accord :** The Abraham Accords are a joint statement made between Israel, the United States and the United Arab Emirates on August 13, 2020. It also refers to the agreement reached between Israel, Bahrain and the UAE to normalise relations between the three.

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