

The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE

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Edition: International Table of Contents

Page 01 Syllabus : GS 2 : International Relations	India, China worked hard to save G-20: Jaishankar
Page 05 Syllabus : GS 1 & 2 : Indian Society & Indian	Concept of sexual equality must be part of syllabus : SC
Page 05 Syllabus : Prelims Fact	A record 6.5 lakh Olive Ridley turtles reach Odisha beach for mass nesting
Page 06 Syllabus : GS 2 : Indian Polity	Converting court case backlogs into treasure troves
In News	Andaman Sea
Page 06 : Editorial Analysis: Syllabus : GS 2 : International Relations	The U.S. visit, viewed through industry's business lens

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External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi during the G-20 Foreign Ministers' meeting in Johannesburg.

- ➔ He highlighted that both nations have worked to maintain the G-20's significance despite global polarization.

Discussions on Bilateral Relations

- ➔ The meeting addressed regional and global issues, including the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
- ➔ Previous discussions on border peace were reviewed, building on past diplomatic engagements between the two countries.
- ➔ Maintaining peace and stability along the border was highlighted as a key objective for future talks.

Key Areas of Cooperation

- ➔ Talks included topics such as resuming the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage, trans-border river management, ightconnectivity, and easing travel restrictions.
- ➔ Strengthening economic and infrastructure collaboration was also discussed.

Global Concerns and Multilateralism

- ➔ The importance of protecting multilateral organizations from global divisions was highlighted.
- ➔ It was emphasized that international cooperation should be more transparent and inclusive rather than serving the interests of a few.
- ➔ The need for "plurilateralism" was stressed to address global issues effectively.

India, China worked hard to save G-20: Jaishankar

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

India and China have "worked hard to preserve" the G-20 organisation, said External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Friday during talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of the G-20 Foreign Ministers' meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa.

In the half-hour-long meeting where they discussed bilateral developments, including the situation on the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Mr. Jaishankar pointed out that both countries are "members of the G-20, SCO and BRICS", and had discussed "regional and global" issues.

"We should recognise that in a polarised global situation, our two countries have worked hard to preserve and protect the G-20 as an institution. This in itself testifies to the importance of international cooperation," Mr. Jaishankar told Mr. Wang in his opening remarks of the India-China meeting.

Going forward

Mr. Jaishankar said that he hoped to take forward talks on bilateral issues, including the "management of peace and tranquillity in the border areas" as had been discussed by National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri who have visited Beijing in recent months for talks.

"Such gatherings have provided an opportunity for our interaction even when our ties were going through a difficult phase," Mr. Jaishankar said, in a reference to the bilateral tensions over the deadly Galwan clashes in 2020, and



Looking ahead: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Johannesburg. PTI

China's aggression along the LAC, in a significant indicator the government is putting the tensions in the past tense.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said that the two leaders "reviewed developments in a bilateral relationship since their last meeting in November" on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Brazil. They specifically discussed the resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage, trans-border river talks, flight connectivity, and facilitation of travel.

The references to the multilateral organisations by Mr. Jaishankar were also pointed, given U.S. President Donald Trump's recent attack on the BRICS grouping of emerging economies, saying it was "dead", as well as U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio's boycott of the G-20 meeting in South Africa.

Mr. Jaishankar has also met leaders of other BRICS founder members, including South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Brazilian Foreign Minister Mauro Viera in Johannesburg.

While South Africa is hosting the G-20 summit later this year, Brazil will host the BRICS summit, both of which Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to attend.

"As G-20 members, we also must recognise that multilateralism itself lies deeply damaged," Mr. Jaishankar said at the G-20, referring to the United Nations. "More 'plurilateralism' is required to plug global deficits. International cooperation itself must be less opaque or unilateral. And the global agenda cannot be narrowed down to the interests of a few," he added.

Next year's G-20 summit is due to be hosted by the U.S., and recent comments by the U.S. leadership have cast doubts over the organisation's future.

Among other meetings with his counterparts, Mr. Jaishankar also took part at the India-Australia-France trilateral meeting in Johannesburg at the Foreign Minister level. "Our three countries have shared interests in the Indo-Pacific and the potential to strengthen each other's position," he wrote on X.

Engagements with Other Nations

- Discussions were also held with leaders from other BRICS countries and key international partners.
- The importance of collaboration in the Indo-Pacific region was reaffirmed in trilateral talks with strategic partners.

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques :Beyond bilateral concerns, how do India-China engagements in multilateral forums like the G-20, BRICS,and SCO shape global governance? Analyze. **(150 Words /10 marks)**



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► The Supreme Court has urged the government to include gender equality, moral values, and respectful behavior towards women in school education.

Concept of sexual equality must be part of syllabus: SC

Moral and ethical training, etiquette must be made part of the school syllabus, Justice Nagarathna tells Union government, judge says parents must stop discrimination between daughter and son

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday told the Centre that the concept of sexual equality and moral and ethical training of how men should behave with women respectfully must become a part of school syllabus.

“Moral and ethical training, etiquette must be made part of the school syllabus. There must be a module to inculcate this in schools at a very early age for children... Now, schools do not have moral education. Certain schools have it, but the class is usually cancelled and some other subjects are taken,” Justice B.V. Nagarathna, heading a Bench comprising Justice S.C. Sharma, observed.

Justice Nagarathna said equality between daughters and sons must start at home. But, instead, discrimination starts at home with the parents.

“Parents are more focused on restraining their daughters and not their sons. The word ‘discrimi-



Parents are more focused on restraining their daughters and not their sons. The word ‘discrimination’ must go from our vocabulary

B.V. NAGARATHNA
Supreme Court judge

nation’ must go from our vocabulary,” the judge said.

The court was hearing a writ petition filed by petitioner-in-person and senior advocate Aabad Ponda, who said the root cause for the surge in rape cases and incidents of crimes against women was the lack of education at the basic level about equality among the sexes.

‘Tremendous strain’

“Fifty per cent of our population, women, are living under tremendous strain and insecurity. There is a rise in the misogynistic and barbaric attitude towards women. Education must start at the smallest level to change the attitude towards women,” Mr. Ponda submitted.

Justice Nagarathna agreed that many social circles still believed that a woman neither belonged to her parents’ home nor the in-laws’ home after marriage.

Awareness that a woman was independent, her own person, and commanded respect and equal treatment in society must be inculcated in society, the judge noted.

Justice Nagarathna said environmental science started being taught in schools as a subject on the orders of the Supreme Court. Likewise, moral education must become a part of the school syllabus.

The court ordered the government to place on record any measures taken by it so far to include the concept of sexual equality

in school syllabus.

Mr. Ponda’s plea also recommended using advertisements and the visual media for conveying zero tolerance to rape.

“Awareness of the stringent laws against rape must be advertised in cinema halls and in the media. There is no point if the person knows about these laws after he is sentenced to 20 years or is about to be hung to death,” Mr. Ponda argued. He said knee-jerk reactions like making punishments harsher after a gruesome crime was hardly a solution.

Efforts to bridge the gap

The petition said efforts have to be made to bridge the gap between the law and the understanding and dissemination of the law to the public.

“The need of identifying the real cause of this crime is the first requirement. Once this is done, the next step would be to try to find measures to revolutionise the male mindset in the country amongst a large portion of the populace and instill in them the fear of the law,” it said.

Supreme Court Emphasizes Gender Equality Education in Schools

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Daily News Analysis

- ➔ The court stressed that early moral training is essential to change societal attitudes.
- ➔ A judge noted that many schools either do not have moral education classes or cancel them for other subjects.

Gender Equality Must Start at Home

- ➔ The court highlighted that discrimination begins within families.
- ➔ Parents often focus on restraining their daughters rather than educating their sons about respectful behavior.
- ➔ The concept of gender discrimination must be eliminated from society to ensure equality.

Lack of Basic Education on Gender Equality

- ➔ A petitioner argued that the increase in crimes against women is due to the lack of gender equality education at an early stage.
- ➔ The petitioner emphasized that 50% of the population, consisting of women, live in constant insecurity due to increasing crimes.
- ➔ The court agreed that education is the key to changing attitudes towards women in society.

Women's Independence and Social Awareness

- ➔ The court observed that many communities still believe that a woman neither belongs to her parents' home nor her in-laws' home after marriage.
- ➔ It stressed the need to recognize that a woman is an independent individual who deserves equal respect and rights.
- ➔ Awareness about women's autonomy and their equal role in society must be taught from an early age.

Legal Awareness and the Role of Media

- ➔ The petitioner suggested that awareness about stringent laws against crimes like rape must be promoted in media and public spaces.
- ➔ It was argued that people often realize the seriousness of these laws only after facing severe punishments.
- ➔ Public awareness campaigns in cinema halls and media platforms can help spread knowledge about strict legal consequences for crimes against women.

Need for Systematic Educational Reform

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Daily News Analysis

- The court noted that environmental science was introduced in schools following a Supreme Court order and suggested a similar approach for moral education.
- The petition emphasized that reactive measures, such as increasing punishments after a crime, are not enough.
- Instead, proactive education and awareness are necessary to change the male mindset and instill respect for women.

Bridging the Gap Between Law and Society

- The petition highlighted the gap between legal provisions and societal attitudes.
- Identifying the root cause of gender-based crimes is crucial for effective solutions.
- The goal is to educate young minds, instill fear of law among potential offenders, and promote long-term gender equality.

Gender Equality In India:

Need for Gender Equality Education in Schools

- **Early Awareness:** Teaching children about respect and equality from a young age helps shape their mindset.
- **Preventing Crimes:** Educating boys about proper behavior towards women can reduce gender-based violence.
- **Breaking Stereotypes:** Helps eliminate gender discrimination that starts at home and extends to society.
- **Legal Awareness:** Ensures people understand laws against crimes like harassment and rape.
- **Women's Safety:** Promotes a safer environment by fostering respectful attitudes.
- **Long-Term Social Change:** Creates a generation that values gender equality.
- **Government Responsibility:** Authorities must ensure policies supporting gender education are implemented effectively.

Challenges in Implementing Gender Equality Education Lack of Priority:

- Moral education is often ignored in favor of academic subjects.
- **Parental Influence:** Deep-rooted biases at home may hinder positive change.
- **Resistance to Change:** Some sections of society oppose discussions on gender roles and equality.
- **Limited Awareness:** Teachers may not be adequately trained to handle gender-sensitive topics.
- **Policy Gaps:** No mandatory nationwide curriculum for moral education exists.

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- ➡ **Resource Constraints:** Schools, especially in rural areas, may lack the funds to implement such programs.
- ➡ **Media Influence:** Negative portrayals of gender roles in media can counteract educational efforts

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques : Discuss the role of education in promoting gender equality and preventing crimes against women. How can school curricula be reformed to inculcate moral and ethical values from an early age? **(150 Words /10 marks)**



A record 6.5 lakh Olive Ridley turtles have arrived at Rushikulya beach in Odisha's Ganjam district for mass nesting after a gap of two years.

A record 6.5 lakh Olive Ridley turtles reach Odisha beach for mass nesting

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

Wildlife enthusiasts are thrilled as a record 6.5 lakh Olive Ridley turtles have arrived at the Rushikulya beach in Ganjam district of Odisha for mass nesting after a gap of two years.

"During 2023-24 and 2024-25, only sporadic nestings were noticed along Rushikulya. The last major congregation was recorded in 2022-23," Prem Kumar Jha, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), said. "It is heartening to note that 6.5 lakh turtles have congregated at Rushikulya beach to lay eggs this year. This has so far been the highest number of turtles arriving along Rushikulya beach," he said.

"Following the usual pattern, the mass congre-



Mass congregation: Olive Ridley turtles are seen at the Rushikulya beach in Ganjam district of Odisha. BISWARANJAN ROUT

gation of Olive Ridley turtles at the Gahirmatha mass nesting site along Odisha's Kendrapara coast typically occurs about a week after nesting begins at Rushikulya. We hope Gahirmatha will witness a similar congregation this year as well," Mr. Jha said.

Coast Guard help

The Indian Coast Guard said its patrolling vessels were regularly monitoring

the protected areas to prevent human interference - either from seaward poaching or leisure activities. The Coast Guard, in coordination with the fisheries and forest departments, is conducting 'Operation Olivia' from November 1 last year to protect the turtles. It will continue till May 31. "The operation has yielded positive results," the agency said.

Analysis of the news:

- ➔ In the previous two years (2023-24 and 2024-25), only sporadic nesting was observed at the site, with the last major nesting event recorded in 2022-23.
- ➔ This is the highest number of turtles ever recorded at Rushikulya beach.
- ➔ Mass nesting at Gahirmatha in Odisha's Kendrapara district is expected to begin soon, following the usual pattern.

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- The Indian Coast Guard is patrolling the area to prevent human interference through seaward poaching or leisure activities.
- 'Operation Olivia', conducted from November 1 to May 31, is helping protect Olive Ridley turtles, showing positive results.

Olive Ridley Turtles

- **Conservation Status:** Listed as Vulnerable under the IUCN Red List.
- **Legal Protection:** Protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- **Habitat:** Found in warm tropical waters of the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans.
- **Mass Nesting (Arribada):** Known for synchronous mass nesting at sites like Rushikulya, Gahirmatha, and Devi River (Odisha).
- **Threats:** Poaching, shing net entanglement, habitat destruction, and climate change.
- **Reproductive Cycle:** Females lay 100-150 eggs per clutch, with hatching occurring in 45-60 days.
- **International Protection:** Covered under CITES Appendix I and CMS (Convention on Migratory Species).

India's judicial system faces a massive backlog of cases, with nearly 6 crore pending in lower courts alone.

- ➔ Mediation, a faster and cost-effective alternative, is emerging as a viable solution to ease the burden, improve efficiency, and ensure timely justice.

Converting court case backlogs into treasure troves

Every Chief Justice of India coming into office has the spectre of the legal system's backlog haunting him or her, as does every senior and concerned member of the higher judiciary. It is an ever present phenomenon – currently, the Supreme Court of India has 82,000 cases, the High Courts over 62 lakh, and the lower courts close to five crore. Nearly 50 lakh cases have been pending for more than 10 years.

It is an adversarial system

It is not that our judges are not hard working or efficient; the great majority of them are. But we are a country with a vast population that is used to thinking that the court will resolve disputes with whoever it may be – neighbour, shareholder, supplier, government, *et al.* We have one of the lowest judge to population ratios – 21 judges for every million citizens. And we rely on the adversarial system which means that virtually every case sees multiple interim applications during its passage, and plural appeals after the first passage is crossed. We also have shortages of infrastructure and capacity, in terms of brick and mortar, and finance and human resources. Just keeping the judiciary going on functional mode is a Herculean task – so daunting by itself that reform and restructure, while certainly the subject of well meaning and some well-thought-out initiatives, rarely gain the prominence and push to make for system game-changing.

Data governance is one field where sensible classification will avoid repetitive engagement and make for quicker disposal. Appointing retired judges to serve in ad hoc capacity does help to ameliorate the situation to a limited extent. Wider perspective solutions would require a focus on large swathes of litigation, for example, landlord tenant disputes and cheque bouncing cases, to see whether tweaking the law can make it less than advantageous to have the matter taken to court. Compensatory or even punitive costs are commonly used abroad to deter frivolous or



Sriram Panchu

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unnecessary litigation. We use them rarely since we prize access to justice and want to avoid roadblocks.

The elephant in the room is of course the government. Being a player in nearly half the disputes coming to court, reform will be stunted unless it learns to litigate less and becomes more amenable to settlement options. There is hope on this latter score, but for now, we move to another possibility for reform.

This is the gigantic backlog, the enormous waiting room, with its cavernous vaults and storage shelves and racks bursting with the claims for redress and justice of millions of citizens and causes. Long stay here is by itself denial of justice. Sometimes when the case is dusted for delivery to the judge's table, the cause is forgotten or less crucial, or the original proponents are in another world, hopefully a litigation free one. But it is this spectre of unfinished business, a too obvious sign of failure of delivery, that haunts judges. There is nothing good about the backlog.

The pitch for mediation

But there may be. Unlikely as this may sound at first, this may be yet another instance of a problem masking a solution. Let us consider the process of mediation. Nascent and fledgling in the 1990s, mediation started to make its mark in 2005 in India, primarily as an adjunct of the court sector. Lawyer led and judge guided, it provided the opportunity for disputants to sit with a trained neutral, in an atmosphere of confidentiality, with no one imposing a result; just a bit of guidance and nudging to make the parties come up with options for a practical, fair and mutually acceptable solution. A focus on long-term interests, some legal realism and a dose of the rather grim alternatives to settlement propel the shift from attacking the other to jointly attacking the problem. The cases come from a swathe of civil and commercial, personal and property, and matrimonial and mercantile disputes.

The results are encouraging. So too is the

ready adoption by the Bar of this alternative (now christened as appropriate) method of dispute resolution, as witnessed by the thousands of willing mediators. It has now to move to full-fledged professional avenues, drawing in better usage from business, government and other disputants, and in the process, providing gainful remuneration to practitioners of this new vocation. But certainly, mediation has caught on in the judicial system, and there is hardly any judge who does not speak of its merits and how it is the way of the future.

Getting it to work

So, to get to the point, finally. For the judge the backlog is a burden. For the mediator, it is a treasure trove. In front of us, or rather hidden in courtly dungeons, are the hundreds of cases which just have to be assigned to mediators to handle. And the mediators are there in sufficient numbers and backed by years of experience. All it needs is a simple system of primary identification of these cases, asking parties to choose their mediator or assigning them a trained and experienced one, and ensuring that a reasonable fee is paid for the service. When you compare the cost of mediating a case, for the system and for the parties, it is a fraction of litigating that case. You do not need vast logistical and administrative infrastructure, and you are saved multiple hearings spread over indeterminable time spans. Most cases in mediation take just a handful of sessions; complex ones take more but this is nothing when compared to the boxes of litigative papers to deal with and the swallowing up of calendars. And when it works, the results achieved in mediation outweigh by far anything you can get in litigation – not just a practical solution which both parties accept, but often a restoration of relationships.

So, perhaps it is time we take the keys, rechristen our chamber of horrors as the birthing place for mediations, and apply the principle by which mediators live and work – turning the problem into the opportunity for solution.

The legal system's haunting backlog is a problem with a solution – India needs to look at mediation

Backlog in the Legal System

- ➔ The legal system in India has a massive backlog of cases.
- ➔ The Supreme Court has 82,000 cases pending, High Courts have over 62 lakh cases, and lower courts have nearly 6 crores cases.
- ➔ Around 50 lakh cases have been pending for more than 10 years.

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Challenges in the System

- Judges in India are hardworking and efficient, but the vast population leads to a high number of cases.
- The judge-to-population ratio is low, with only 21 judges per million citizens.
- The adversarial legal system results in multiple interim applications and appeals, prolonging cases.
- There are shortages in infrastructure, finances, and human resources, making reforms difficult.

Possible Solutions

- Data governance can improve classification and avoid repetitive litigation.
- Retired judges can be appointed in an ad hoc capacity to help clear pending cases.
- Reforming specific litigation areas like landlord-tenant disputes and cheque bouncing cases can reduce unnecessary cases.
- Imposing compensatory or punitive costs can deter frivolous litigation, a practice commonly used in other countries.
- The government is involved in nearly half of the disputes, so reducing its litigation can help ease the backlog.

Impact of the Backlog

- The backlog creates a long waiting period, leading to denial of justice.
- Many cases lose relevance over time, and the original complainants may no longer be alive.
- The backlog symbolizes failure in the legal system, affecting the judiciary.

Mediation as a Solution

- Mediation gained prominence in 2005 in India as a court-supported process.
- It involves a neutral mediator guiding both parties to a fair solution without imposing a decision.
- It is used in various disputes like civil, commercial, matrimonial, and property cases.
- Mediation has been welcomed by the legal community, with thousands of trained mediators available.

How Mediation Can Help Reduce Backlog

- Mediation transforms backlog into an opportunity by resolving cases outside the court.
- Cases can be assigned to trained mediators, reducing the burden on judges.
- Mediation is faster and cheaper than litigation, requiring only a few sessions.

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➡ Unlike litigation, it often restores relationships and provides a mutually accepted solution.

Conclusion

- ➡ The legal backlog is a major issue, but mediation offers a practical solution.
- ➡ By integrating mediation into the system, courts can reduce delays and improve justice delivery.
- ➡ The backlog should be seen as a resource for mediation, helping turn legal problems into solutions

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques :Discuss the role of education in promoting gender equality and preventing crimes against women. How can school curricula be reformed to inculcate moral and ethical values from an early age? **(150 Words /10 marks)**



In News : Andaman Sea

An earthquake of magnitude 5.2 struck the Andaman Sea recently.



About Andaman Sea

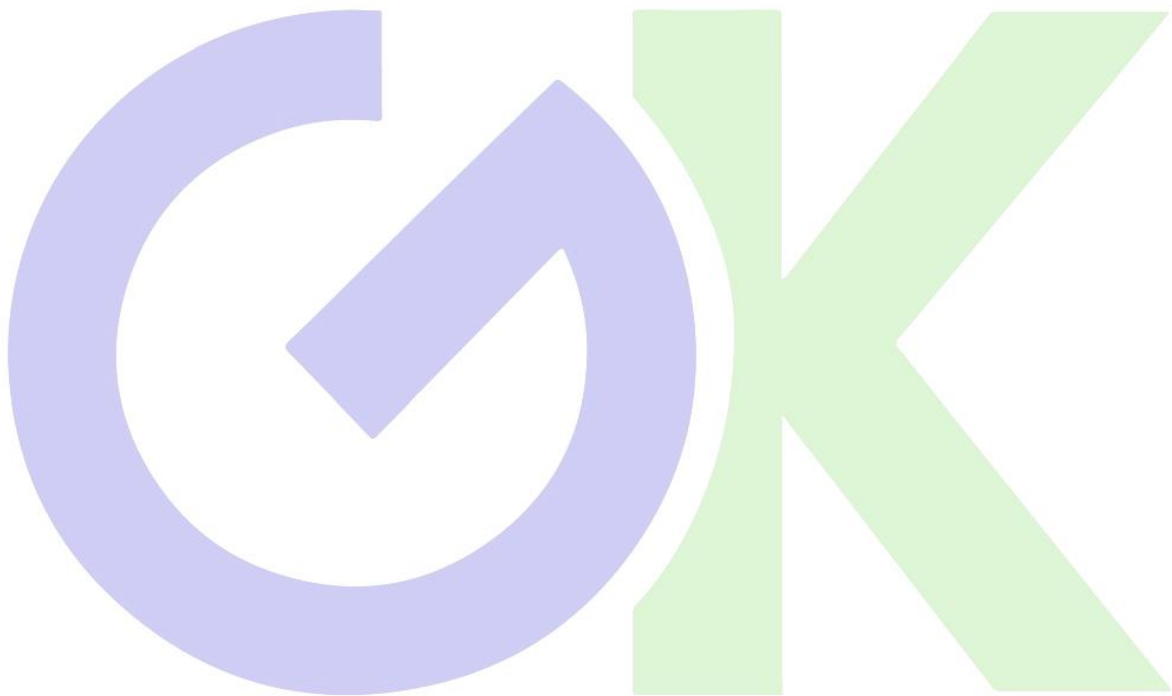
- It is a semi-enclosed marginal sea in the northeastern Indian Ocean.
- It lies between the eastern coast of India and the Malay Peninsula, with Myanmar to the north and the Indonesian island of Sumatra to the south.
- The Bay of Bengal bounds the Andaman Sea to the west and the Strait of Malacca to the east.
- The sea, covering an area of approximately 307,994 square miles, extends about 750 miles in length and 400 miles in width.
- It is a complex geological region with a tectonically active plate boundary.
- It is part of the larger Sunda Plate, which the Indian Plate borders to the northwest and the Australian Plate to the southeast.
- The ongoing tectonic convergence between these plates has resulted in the formation of the Andaman Basin, characterized by undersea ridges, trenches, and faults.
- The most prominent geological feature in the region is the Andaman Trench, which is formed by the subduction of the Indian Plate beneath the Eurasian Plate.

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- This tectonic activity has given rise to numerous earthquakes and volcanic eruptions in the region, making the Andaman Sea seismically active.
- It is home to extensive coral reef systems, seagrass meadows, and mangrove forests, which provide critical habitats for a multitude of marine organisms.
- The Andaman Sea is also an important site for migratory birds, with several key stopover locations along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.



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The U.S. visit, viewed through industry's business lens

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's brief and official working visit to the United States last week was significant in many ways, reiterating the strong bonds between the two nations and igniting a new momentum in the economic relationship. The visit was replete with productive outcomes for industry of both sides, with major announcements across trade, defence, technology and energy.

From the perspective of Indian industry, the initiatives announced are likely to help India itself integrate more deeply into global supply chains, boost its technology and innovation attainments, and drive its participation in the defence industrial sector.

Towards a trade push

First, it is a pivotal decision that there was an initiation of the first phase of a Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) to reduce trade barriers and streamline regulatory processes. Such an agreement would encourage United States companies to invest in India which would include the purposes of plugging India into their supply chains. The \$500 billion trade target by 2030 is ambitious but possible, potentially with sectoral sub-targets and easier cross-border procedures.

Several measures have already been taken to address tariffs on both sides. The mention of exporting industrial goods from the U.S. to India and labour-intensive products from India to the U.S. as well as agricultural products highlights that exports from both sides would be encouraged. This is supported by the intention to encourage greenfield investments, including by Indian companies in the U.S.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) had endorsed this target in its report in 2020, and believes that sectors such as IT, pharma, garments and textiles, among several others, would gain from the joint commitment to Mission 500.

While the U.S. market is already relatively open to Indian exports, a well-structured BTA would be mutually beneficial, particularly if it facilitates



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The Prime Minister's brief visit and the announcements made will add momentum to the India-U.S. economic relationship

greater U.S. investment and technology transfers to India.

A technology, defence and energy focus

Second, the U.S.-India Transforming the Relationship Utilizing Strategic Technology (TRUST) underscores the deepening strategic and technological partnership between the two nations and opens further avenues for private sector cooperation with their governments and academia. With a range of sectors identified such as defence, artificial intelligence (AI), semiconductors, quantum computing, biotechnology, energy, and space, TRUST will help foster closer innovation and technology partnerships with U.S. tech giants. Additionally, the INDUS Innovation initiative aims to accelerate research and development in cutting-edge sectors.

India is emerging as a key player in the AI economy and the U.S.-India Roadmap on AI Infrastructure is expected to attract investments in data centres, computing power and AI models. This initiative could enhance funding opportunities for Indian startups in AI and encourage significant investments in areas such as fintech, healthtech, agritech and other developmental solutions, not just for India but also for the Global South.

Third, defence sector initiatives reinforce the India-U.S. strategic partnership through expanded technology transfers, joint production, and industrial collaboration. The launch of a 10-year Framework for the U.S.-India Major Defense Partnership this year signifies a transformative shift in bilateral defence ties. Agreements were reached for the co-production of various systems which can promote indigenous manufacturing, skill development, and economic growth. With a potential for offset clauses, Indian industry can gain hugely from the defence agreements announced during the visit.

Fourth, energy cooperation was another critical area of discussion, with a focus on establishing long-term strategic linkages as India

sought to diversify its energy sources. The leaders underscored the importance of increasing hydrocarbon production to enhance global energy stability and affordability. India's Union Budget 2025-26 commits to collaborating with the private sector on the development of small modular reactors (SMRs), wherein U.S. companies will play a vital role in advancing this capability. Given India's ambitious net-zero targets, the U.S., with its vast natural gas reserves, can serve as a reliable energy supplier, strengthening India's energy security.

Fifth, the two countries have pledged to further the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) through joint infrastructure projects. With both countries entering into plurilateral arrangements in these regions, infrastructure creation could be fast-tracked, with possible spin-offs for the participation of Indian industry in railways, roadways, smart cities and industrial zones. The mention of undersea cables connecting India and the U.S. would give impetus to India's digital economy and services exports as well.

Links in higher education

Sixth, on education, the leaders decided to boost higher education institutional cooperation, which includes setting up of campuses by leading U.S. educational institutions in India. This would bring comfort to Indian students. Legal mobility is expected to be streamlined as well.

Indian industry is committed to working with both governments to maintain this momentum, advocating pro-business policies and ensuring industry feedback in implementation. With collaborative spirit and sustained reform, the benefits of this visit can be fully realised, positioning India's economy on a high-growth trajectory. In sum, Mr. Modi's U.S. visit, viewed through industry's business lens, is more than a diplomatic success. It is a blueprint for India to leverage global partnerships in becoming an economic powerhouse, innovating and prospering in tandem with its strategic ally.

GS Paper 02 International Relations

UPSC Mains Practice Question: Practice Question: How will the recent India-U.S. agreements on trade, technology, and defence impact India's integration into global supply chains and its strategic partnerships? Analyze their potential benefits and challenges. (250 Words /15 marks)

Context :

- Prime Minister Modi's visit to the U.S. reaffirmed the strong ties between the two nations and introduced new momentum in economic cooperation.
- The visit led to major announcements in trade, defence, technology, and energy, benefiting industries in both countries.

Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) and Economic Growth

- The initiation of the first phase of a Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) will reduce trade barriers and simplify regulatory processes.
- This agreement is expected to attract more U.S. companies to invest in India, strengthening economic ties.
- The ambitious \$500 billion trade target by 2030 is achievable through sectoral sub-targets and streamlined cross-border trade.
- Steps have already been taken to address tariff issues, ensuring that India can export labour-intensive goods and agricultural products while importing industrial goods from the U.S.
- Greenfield investments, including by Indian firms in the U.S., will be encouraged, promoting business expansion.
- Sectors like IT, pharmaceuticals, garments, and textiles are expected to benefit significantly from this agreement.

Technological and Strategic Partnerships

- The U.S.-India TRUST (Transforming the Relationship Utilizing Strategic Technology) initiative deepens the strategic and technological partnership between the two countries.
- TRUST focuses on innovation in defence, artificial intelligence (AI), semiconductors, quantum computing, biotechnology, energy, and space.
- The INDUS Innovation initiative aims to boost research and development in emerging technologies.
- India's role in the AI economy is growing, and the U.S.-India Roadmap on AI Infrastructure will encourage investment in AI-driven industries, including fintech, healthtech, and agritech.

Defence Cooperation and Indigenous Manufacturing

- Defence sector collaboration has strengthened through expanded technology transfers, joint production, and industrial partnerships.

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- A 10-year Framework for the U.S.-India Major Defense Partnership has been launched, marking a significant shift in defence ties.
- Agreements for co-production of defence systems will promote indigenous manufacturing, skill development, and economic growth.
- India stands to benefit significantly from defence agreements, particularly through offset clauses that will support local industries.

Energy Security and Renewable Goals

- Energy cooperation was a key topic, focusing on long-term strategic linkages to diversify India's energy sources.
- Increasing hydrocarbon production will help improve global energy stability and affordability.
- India's Union Budget 2025-26 supports private sector participation in the development of small modular reactors (SMRs), with U.S. companies contributing to this sector.
- As India pursues its net-zero goals, U.S. natural gas reserves can serve as a reliable energy source.

Infrastructure and Digital Connectivity

- The U.S. and India are committed to strengthening the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).
- Joint infrastructure projects will accelerate developments in railways, highways, smart cities, and industrial zones.
- The undersea cable project connecting India and the U.S. will support India's digital economy and services exports.

Higher Education and Student Mobility

- The two nations have agreed to enhance higher education collaboration, allowing U.S. institutions to set up campuses in India.
- This initiative will provide Indian students with better education opportunities while ensuring smoother legal mobility for studies and employment.

Conclusion

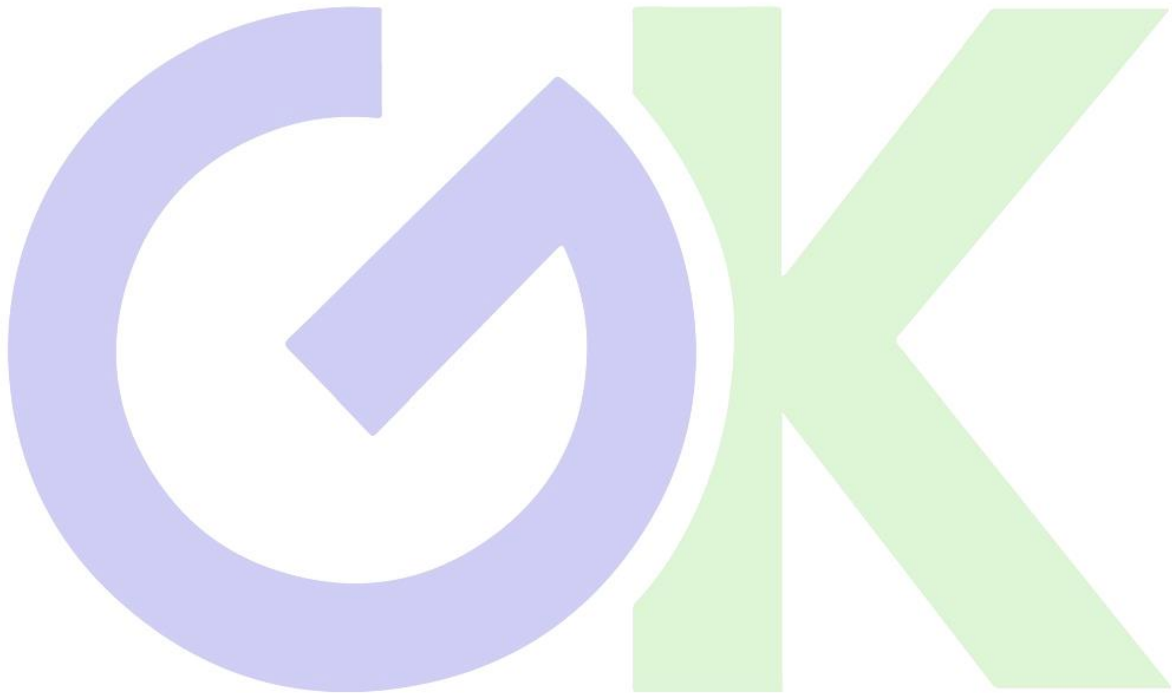
- Indian industry is committed to working with both governments to maintain economic progress and ensure effective implementation of these initiatives. With sustained reforms and pro-business policies, the benefits of this visit can be fully realized.

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- ➡ This visit marks not only a diplomatic success but also a blueprint for India's economic growth, fostering innovation and strengthening India's position in global partnerships.
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