

## A. Regions/Conflict zones in news

### 1) Israel- Palestine issue

- The United States has unveiled a **Middle East peace plan**.
- The US had also recognised Israeli sovereignty over the **Golan Heights**
- The US had moved the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem
- **Two-state solution** is a proposed framework for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by establishing two states, Israel for the Jewish people and Palestine for the Palestinian people
- Both Israel and the Palestinian Authority claim Jerusalem as their capital
- The **Balfour Declaration** issued by the British government in 1917 during the First World War announcing support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people"
- The **Oslo Accord** is a peace treaty signed in 1993 between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)
- Israel is in Western Asia, bordering the **Mediterranean Sea**, Red Sea, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and Egypt.



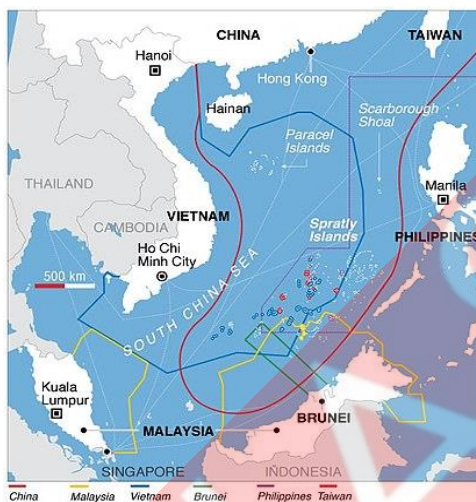
### 2) Libyan crisis

- The ongoing civil war started in 2014.
- Libya became split between two administrations and began the military offensive.
- Tobruk-based **'House of Representatives** and Tripoli-based **Government of National Accord** (GNA)
- **UN** recognizes GNA as the legitimate government of Libya.
- It lies in the **Maghreb region** in North Africa, bordered by the Mediterranean Sea, Egypt, Sudan, Chad, Niger, Algeria, and Tunisia.



### 3) South China Sea

- It is a semi enclosed sea. It links Indian ocean with Pacific Ocean
- It encompasses an area from the Singapore and **Malacca Straits** to the Strait of Taiwan
- **"Nine-dash line"**- demarcation line used by china to show the extent of its claim
- China is involved in numerous territorial and maritime disputes with countries in SCS
- **Natuna Islands** is disputed between Indonesia and China
- **Spratly Island** is also claimed by Vietnam, Philippines, Taiwan, Brunei and Malaysia
- **Paracel Island** is completely under Chinese control but disputed with Vietnam
- **Scarborough Shoal** is claimed by Philippines and China



### 4) Chagos Islands

- It is in the **Indian Ocean**
- The sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago is disputed between the **United Kingdom and Mauritius**
- It is home to US military base of **Diego Garcia** under lease from the UK since 1960s
- **ICJ** delivered an advisory opinion that UK should relinquish the archipelago and give it to Mauritius



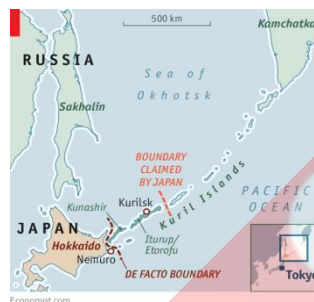
### 5) South Sudan

- **Juba** is the capital of South Sudan
- The 2018 peace deal signed in South Sudan between the majority ethnic **Nuer and Dinka** communities
- **Khartoum** the capital of Sudan



## 6) Kuril Islands

- Disputed between **Russia** and **Japan**
- The Kuriles islands spanning from Japan's Hokkaido to Russia's Kamchatka



## B. Groups/communities in news

- 1) **Houthi group** is an armed movement in Yemen
- 2) **Hezbollah group** is a Shia militant group based in Lebanon
- 3) **Hamas** is a Palestinian fundamentalist militant organization.
- 4) **Uyghurs** are Turkic minority ethnic people and living primarily in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in Northwest China
- 5) **Huaorani** people are indigenous tribes in Ecuador
- 6) **Kurds** are ethno-linguistic group native to a mountainous region of Western Asia known as Kurdistan, which spans southeastern Turkey, northwestern Iran, northern Iraq, and northern Syria
- 7) **Rohingyas** are majorly Muslims and reside in Rakhine state of Myanmar. Described by the United Nations in 2013 as one of the most persecuted minorities in the world, the Rohingya population is denied citizenship under the 1982 Myanmar nationality law. ARSA (Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army) is a Rohingya insurgent group active in northern Rakhine State
- 8) **Ahmadiyyas**, Zikris, Baha'i, Kalasha and Shia sects are religiously persecuted minorities of Pakistan

## C. International development/Issues in news

### 1) Refugee crisis

- According to UN, a refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so.
- India **does not** have a separate statute for refugees, and until now has been dealing with refugees on a case-by-case basis.
- India is **not** a signatory to the **1951 Convention on Refugees** or the **1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees**.
- The **First** Global Refugee Forum (GRF) was held in Geneva, Switzerland, hosted jointly by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the Government of Switzerland.
- More than two-thirds of all refugees come from **5 countries**: Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar and Somalia.

- **Gambia** approached the ICJ on the ground that **Myanmar** has violated the 1961 **Genocide Convention**.
- ICJ held that the Rohingya are a “protected group within the meaning of the Genocide Convention”
- The International Fact-Finding Mission (IFFM) sanctioned by the UN Human Rights Council to prepare a report concluded that Myanmar’s security forces had committed violent acts with specific “genocidal intent” against Rohingya
- The **global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration** was adopted in Marrakesh, Morocco at Intergovernmental Conference held under UNGA. it is the first inter-governmental agreement to deal comprehensively with international migration
- The UN also launched **Migration Network** to support the implementation of the compact at country level.
- The **Global Migration Report 2020** has been published by International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
- According to the report, **India** accounts for the highest share as there are 17.5 million Indian migrants living abroad. India is followed by Mexico and China
- **India** is the leading recipient of **remittances**
- The **UN refugee Convention** or The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, or the Geneva Convention of 1951, is a multilateral treaty that defines who a refugee is, and grants certain rights
- **Genocide Convention** or The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was adopted by the UNGA in 1948. India has signed and ratified the convention
- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (**UNHCR**) is a United Nations agency with the mandate to protect refugees

## 2) Afghanistan peace process

- The **US and the Taliban** signed a conditional peace deal which requires that U.S. troops to withdraw from Afghanistan within 14 months so long as the Taliban cooperates with the terms of the agreement.
- The US and its allies conducted war in Afghanistan, code named **Operation Enduring Freedom** and **Operation Freedom's Sentinel**
- The war in Afghanistan is the longest war in US history.
- The UNSC established the **International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)** to assist the Afghan Govt.





- **Moscow format** was introduced in 2017 for consultations among Russia, Afghanistan, China, Pakistan, Iran and India
- **India** for the **first time** participated in it at a “non-official” level, sending two former senior diplomats to attend talks
- **Kunduz** is a city in northern Afghanistan, which serves as the capital of Kunduz Province.
- **Quadrilateral coordination group** involves the U.S., China, Pakistan and Afghanistan
- Afghanistan is bordered by Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, China and India.

### 3) Drug menace in Asia

- India is geographically sandwiched between the Golden Crescent and the Golden Triangle
- These two are the major illicit opium and heroin producing regions of the world
- **Golden Crescent** (overlaps Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan)
- **Golden Triangle** (overlaps Myanmar, Laos and Thailand)

### 4) Greenland issue

- U.S. President Donald Trump proposed the idea of purchasing Greenland
- Greenland is an **autonomous territory of Denmark**
- It is located between the **Arctic and Atlantic Ocean** and physiographically part of the continent of North America

### 5) Brexit

- Britain has officially left the European Union (EU) and has become the **first country** to leave the 28-member bloc.
- Britain voted to leave EU in a **referendum**
- As part of the withdrawal agreement, there will be a **transition period** until December 31<sup>st</sup> 2020, to make the separation process smoother and will be used by the UK and EU to negotiate a new relationship.
- **Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon** gives any EU member state the right to quit unilaterally.
- The **European Union** is an international organization which will now consist of 27 European countries. It governs the common economic, social and security policies of its member states and operates a single market



- The 19 EU countries use the **Euro** as their official currency, however eight EU members namely Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Sweden do not use the euro.
- The **Schengen Area** is an area comprising 26 European states that have officially abolished all passport and all other types of border control at their mutual borders
- The **General Data Protection Regulation** (GDPR) is an EU law on data protection and privacy

#### 6) Nile river sharing issue

- **Egypt, Ethiopia** and **Sudan** have reached a preliminary agreement aimed at clearing the way for the project, called the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
- The project promises to provide much needed electricity for Ethiopia's 70 million people.
- Egypt is concerned that filling the reservoir behind the dam could significantly reduce the amount of Nile water available to Egypt.

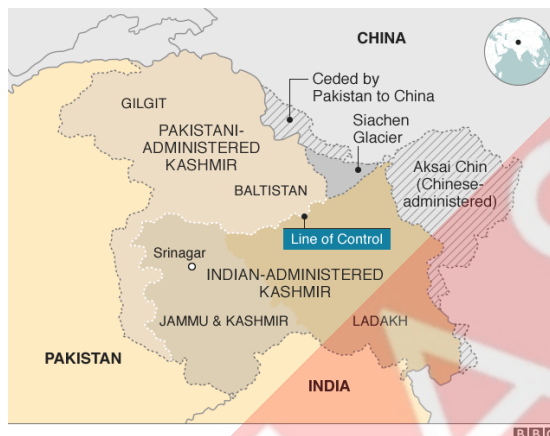


- 7) **'Bougainville'** is the main island of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville of Papua New Guinea. It voted for independence from Papua New Guinea (PNG) through a referendum.
- 8) **'Gilets Jaunes movement/Yellow vests protests'** is a populist, protest movement for economic justice that began in France in October 2018
- 9) **'Aqaba Process'** is an initiative of King Abdullah of Jordan in countering extremism and radicalisation in the Arab world
- 10) **'Christchurch call to action'** is a global pledge to step up efforts to keep internet platforms from being used to spread hate, organise extremist groups and broadcast attacks. It is an initiative by New Zealand and France. India signed the agreement.
- 11) **'Water revolution'** is the pro-democracy demonstrations that have roiled Hong Kong
- 12) **'Makunudhoo'** is the westernmost atoll in Maldives and not far from India, where China is developing an observatory location
- 13) **Operation Vanilla** launched by the Indian Navy to Provide Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief to the flood hit Madagascar
- 14) **Eight West African** countries have agreed to change the name of their common currency to Eco
- 15) **The 2019 Nobel Peace Prize** was awarded to the Prime Minister of **Ethiopia** Abiy Ahmed Ali "for his efforts to resolve the border conflict with neighbouring Eritrea.

## D. Neighbourhood

### 1) Pakistan

- The International Co-operation Review Group (ICRG) of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has recommended that Pakistan be retained on the **Grey List**
- The **FATF** is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 during the G7 Summit in Paris.
- Its Secretariat is at the **OECD** headquarters in **Paris**.
- The objectives of the FATF are to combating money laundering and terror financing
- Countries that are considered safe haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering are put in the **grey list**.
- Countries known as Non-Cooperative are put in the **blacklist**.
- According to FATF rules there is one essential stage between 'Grey' and 'Black' lists, referred to as '**Dark Grey**'
- The **Simla Agreement** was signed between India and Pakistan on 2 July 1972 which set the framework for bilateral resolution of problems between India and Pakistan. It followed from the Bangladesh Liberation war in 1971 that led to the independence of Bangladesh
- The **Article 2(4) of the UN Charter** proscribes any use of force by members against the "territorial integrity or political independence" of a state.
- **Article 51** of the UN Charter recognises the inherent right of every state to use force in self-defence, only "if an armed attack occurs"
- India and Pakistan signed an agreement to operationalise the **Kartarpur corridor** that will facilitate pilgrims from India to visit the **Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib** in Pakistan. The agreement is valid initially for five years
- The corridor is being built to connect **Dera Baba Nanak** in Gurdaspur with **Gurdwara Darbar Sahib** in Kartarpur, the final resting place of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak
- An Indian Army mountaineering expedition team successfully scaled **Mount Kunpeak** in Ladakh Region
- **Mount Kun** is the second highest summit of the Nun-Kun mountain massif in the Eastern Himalayan Range, located near the Suru Valley, on the Kargil-Zaskar road.
- The **Siachen Glacier** is a glacier located in the eastern Karakoram range in the



Himalayas just northeast of the point NJ9842 where the Line of Control between India and Pakistan ends. It is the second-longest in the world's non-polar areas, after Fedchenko Glacier in Tajikistan

- **Sir Creek** is a disputed area between India and Pakistan is a 96-km strip of water disputed between India and Pakistan in the Rann of Kutch marshlands.

## 2) Nepal

- India, Nepal opened **South Asia's 1st cross-border oil pipeline**. It will link Indian Oil's terminal in Motihari in north **Bihar** to Nepal Oil Corporation's **Amlekhgunj** depot
- **Sagarmatha Sambaad** is a multi-stakeholder, permanent global dialogue forum initiated by the Government of Nepal. It is scheduled to be held biennially in Nepal. The meet will focus on the threat of climate change
- The Sambaad (dialogue) is named after the world's tallest mountain Sagarmatha (Mount Everest)
- The **Kalapani territory** is an area disputed between India and Nepal, but under Indian administration
- It is marked by the Kalapani river, one of the headwaters of the **Kali River (Sharda River)** in the Himalayas
- The valley of Kalapani, with the **Lipulekh Pass** at the top, forms the Indian route to Kailash–Mansarovar, an ancient pilgrimage site. It is also the traditional trading route to Tibet
- **Pancheswar** is a multi-purpose project conceived under 1996 Mahakali treaty between India and Nepal.

## 3) Bhutan

- Bhutan ends free entry for Indian tourists and decided to levy a daily fee for “regional tourists” from India, the Maldives and Bangladesh, beginning July 2020. The fee, called a **Sustainable Development Fee (SDF)**, is part of the new Tourism policy
- The **Siliguri Corridor**, or **Chicken's Neck**, is a narrow stretch of land located in the West Bengal, that connects India's northeastern states to the rest of India. It borders Nepal, Bangladesh and Kingdom of Bhutan.
- During the 2nd Annual India-Bhutan Development Cooperation Talks India renewed its commitment to support projects under **Bhutan's** ongoing **five-year plan** (2018-23).
- PM Modi inaugurated the **Mangdechhu hydroelectric power** plant. it is a 720 MW run-of-river power project built on the Mangdechhu river in Trongsa Dzongkhag district of central Bhutan. The project is funded by a mix of debt and grant from India.



#### 4) Bangladesh

- The government of Bangladesh has announced the commemoration of **2020-2021 as the Mujib Year** on the occasion of the centennial birth anniversary of the founding leader of the country, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
- Bangladesh is **India's biggest trade partner in South Asia**. Bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh has grown steadily over the last decade.
- India and Bangladesh are members of various regional trade agreements including the Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (**APTA**), **SAARC** Preferential Trade Agreement (**SAPTA**) and the Agreement on South Asian Free Trade Area (**SAFTA**)
- **Four Border Haats**, two each in Tripura (Srinagar and Kamalasagar) and Meghalaya (Kalaichar and Balat), have been established for the benefit of communities living along the border areas of both countries.
- **Agartala-Akhaura rail line** will connect the northeastern region with Bangladesh and will be ready by the end of 2021
- **Rooppur nuclear power plant** is an Indo-Russian collaborative project. It is Bangladesh's first nuclear power plant constructed on the bank of the river Padma.
- India and Bangladesh signed an MoU on the withdrawal of water from the **Feniriver** by India for a drinking water supply scheme for Sabroom town in Tripura.
- The **Teesta River** water sharing issue is a transboundary river water dispute between India and Bangladesh. Teesta flows through West Bengal, Sikkim before meeting the Bay of Bengal through Bangladesh. Another major dispute is the Tipaimukh Hydro-Electric Power Project on the Barak River.
- **Operation Insaniyat** is the humanitarian assistance by India to Bangladesh on account of influx of Rohingya refugees.

#### 5) China

##### → Chinese strategies

- ◆ The **Belt and Road Initiative** (BRI) is a global development strategy of China, involving infrastructure development and investments.
- ◆ China is developing **Hambantota** Port, in Sri Lanka, **Gwadar** port in Pakistan, and **Kyaukphyu** Port in Myanmar
- ◆ **String of pearls** is a network of Chinese military strategy in the Indian Ocean region
- ◆ China operates a military base in **Djibouti** in the Horn of Africa.
- ◆ **'Sea Gardens 2020'** is a China Pakistan joint military exercise.
- ◆ **"One-China policy"** It is the diplomatic acknowledgement of China's position that there is only one Chinese government. Under the policy, a country recognises and has formal ties with China rather than the island of Taiwan

##### → Disputed regions

- ◆ China's construction of a road in the strategic **Shaksgam** Valley — located

north of the **Siachen Glacier** in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir

- ◆ Soldiers of India and China were engaged in a face-off near **Pangong Tso lake** in eastern Ladakh. It is a trans-boundary wetland
- ◆ **Aksai Chin** is a disputed territory between India and China

#### → Diplomatic efforts

- ◆ India China held their Second **Informal Summit in Mamallapuram, Chennai**. First Informal summit held in **Wuhan** in 2018
- ◆ Mamallapuram, also known as Mahabalipuram, is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. The town was named after **Pallava** king Narasimhavarman I, who was also known as **Mahamalla**.
- ◆ To celebrate the **70th year** of diplomatic relations between the two nations, the year **2020** is designated as the '**Year of India-China Cultural and People to People Exchanges**'.

#### → Economic Relations

- ◆ The bilateral trade between India and China declined by about \$3 billion last year while India's trade deficit continues to be high amounting to \$56.77 billion.
- ◆ Recently the **US surpassed China** to become India's top trading partner.

### 6) Sri Lanka

- **13<sup>th</sup> Amendment** to the constitution for the devolution of power to provinces to achieve reconciliation with the minority Tamil community. 13th Amendment which was a byproduct of the Indo-Sri Lanka accord of 1987. This amendment that led to the creation of provincial councils and made Tamil and Sinhala the official language
- **United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 30/1** of 2015 is about the post-war transitional justice and accountability in Sri Lanka
- **A status of forces agreement (SOFA)** is an agreement between a host country and a foreign nation stationing military forces in that country.
- **Katchatheevu** is an uninhabited island administered by Sri Lanka
- The **Palk Strait** is a strait between the Tamil Nadu state of India and the Jaffna District of the of Sri Lanka
- Sri Lanka conceded the **Hambantota Port** to China on a 99-year lease
- India is developing **Trincomalee port** and oil tank farms, and LNG terminals in near Colombo

### 7) Maldives

- Maldives recently became **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)** Member
- India played a crucial role to facilitate Maldivian **re-joining Commonwealth** of nations

## 8) GCC

- **Gulf Cooperation Council** is a regional intergovernmental political and economic union consisting of all Arab states of the Persian Gulf viz. Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates
- **Gulf of Oman** is a gulf that connects the Arabian Sea with the Strait of Hormuz
- **Strait of Hormuz** provides the only sea passage from the Persian Gulf to the open ocean and is one of the world's most strategically important choke points
- **Iraq is India's top crude oil** supplier in 2019-20, meeting close to one-fourth of the country's oil needs.

## 9) Iran

- USA unilaterally abrogated the **Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA)** in 2018
- JCPOA was signed by **P5+1 countries** (P5 plus **Germany**)
- **E3 countries** are UK, Germany, and France
- Iranian General Qassem Soleimani, head of **Quds Force**, part of Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was assassinated by the USA
- The entire West Asian region, extending from the **Straits of Hormuz to the Suez Canal**, has become unstable because of the US attack
- FATF placed **Iran on its black list** after it failed to comply with international anti-terrorism financing norms
- Iran is a **member** of nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (**NPT**)
- **Chabahar port** located in southeastern Iran, on the Gulf of Oman, is developed by India and provide an alternative for trade between India and Afghanistan
- The **Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict** is the first international treaty that focuses exclusively on the protection of cultural property in armed conflict. Under this the UNESCO is primarily responsible for the dissemination and monitoring of compliance
- The **International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)** is a specialized agency of the United Nations. It changes the principles and techniques of international air navigation and fosters the planning and development of international air transport to ensure safe and orderly growth. Its headquarters is located in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.