CLAT 2026

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G.K. & CURRENT AFFAIRS MARATHON

LIVE YouTube

13TH, 14TH, 19TH AND 20TH

9 PM - 12 AM

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WHO Global Pandemic Treaty

AC

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Why in the News?

- After over three years of negotiations and 13 rounds of meetings, member states of the WHO (excluding the United States) finalized a draft of a legally binding pandemic treaty.
- It is only the second legally binding treaty in WHO history (first was the 2003 Framework Convention on Tobacco Control).

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Why Was a Pandemic Treaty Needed?

COVID-19 Pandemic revealed:

Inequitable vaccine distribution, lack of coordination, and failure of rich countries to support poorer nations.

Research Findings

A 2022 study in Nature said over 1 million lives could have been saved with equitable vaccine access.

Independent Panel Assessment

The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (2021) blamed poor strategies, inequality, and lack of global coordination for turning COVID-19 into a catastrophe.

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Goal of the Treaty

> Prevent future pandemics from causing the same human, social, and economic devastation.

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What Does the Pandemic Treaty Contain?

Pathogen Access & Benefit Sharing

Framework for sharing scientific data and ensuring equitable distribution of medical resources

Technology Transfer

Mechanisms to share knowledge and manufacturing capabilities globally

Conditions on Publicly Funded Research

Requirements to ensure equitable access to publicly funded medical innovations

1. Pathogen Access & Benefit Sharing (PABS)

Access to Data

Pharma companies will get access to scientific data (pathogen samples, genomic sequences).

In Return

They must:

WHO Allocation

Allocate 10% of vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics to WHO.

Affordable Pricing

Another 10% to be sold at affordable prices.

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2. Technology Transfer

Promote Exchange

Member states must promote and incentivize technology exchange

Support Manufacturing

Help manufacturers in developing countries produce their own vaccines and medicines

Global Capacity

Build worldwide capability to respond to future pandemics

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How Strong Is the Treaty?

- Legally binding.
- Aims to ensure equitable distribution of pandemic resources.
- Promotes technology access and shared responsibility.

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Limitations:

No Enforcement Power for WHO

Cannot order lockdowns, vaccine mandates, or border closures.

No Global Compliance Mechanism

In a repeat of vaccine hoarding, WHO cannot enforce fairness.

Private Sector Concerns

Pharma companies worry about IP rights, legal uncertainty.

Clause 24.3: WHO cannot direct or interfere in domestic laws or policies.

Pharma companies may hesitate to invest in high-risk R&D without stronger IP protections.

Additional Limitations

Unclear PABS (Pathogen Access And Benefit Sharing) Framework

No details yet on how the benefit-sharing system will function in real-time.

Absence of the US

US withdrew after Trump's re-election and move to exit WHO.

As the world's top producer of vaccines and diagnostics, the US absence is a major setback.

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Why Crimea Matters to Russia

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Why in the News?

Trump's Statement

Former US President Donald Trump has stated in an interview that "Crimea will stay with Russia," potentially reversing the US's long-standing position that views Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea as illegal.

Reignited Debates

This has reignited debates on:

- Why Crimea is so important to Russia.
- What implications a US recognition of Crimea as Russian territory might have on Ukraine, international law, and global politics.

What is Crimea?

Geographic Location

A peninsula in the Black Sea, connected to southern Ukraine.

Current Status

Annexed by Russia in 2014, after a controversial referendum.

Historical Context

Previously part of Soviet Russia until 1954, then transferred to Soviet Ukraine.

Demographics

Has a Russian-speaking majority.


NORWEGIAN SEA
NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN
NORTH SEA
BALTIC SEA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
BAY OF BISCAY
BLACK SEA
CASPIAN SEA
SEA OF AZOF
ADRIATIC SEA
ICELAND
REYKYAVIK
NORWAY
SWEDEN
FINLAND
RUSSIA
IRELAND
DUBLIN
UNITED KINGDOM
LONDON
DENMARK
COPENHAGEN
ESTONIA
LATVIA
LITHUANIA
BELARUS
NETHERLANDS
AMSTERDAM
BELGIUM
BRUSSELS
LUXEMBOURG
GERMANY
POLAND
CZECH REPUBLIC
SLOVAKIA
AUSTRIA
SWITZERLAND
HUNGARY
UKRAINE
MOLDOVA
ROMANIA
BULGARIA
FRANCE
SPAIN
PORTUGAL
ANDORRA
MONACO
ITALY
SLOVENIA
CROATIA
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
SERBIA
MONTENEGRO
KOSOVO
ALBANIA
GREECE
TURKEY
GEORGIA
ARMENIA
AZERBAIJAN
KAZAKHSTAN
IRAN
SYRIA
IRAQ
CYPRUS
LEBANON
ISRAEL
JORDAN
SAUDI ARABIA
MOROCCO
ALGERIA
TUNISIA
MALTA
Hammerfest
Tromsø
Murmansk
Arkhangelsk
Kiruna
Luleå
Oulu/ Uleåborg
Umeå
Trondheim
Bergen
Stavanger
OSLO
STOCKHOLM
Gävle
Tampere/ Tammerfors
HELSINKI
Turku/ Åbo
Saint Petersburg
TALLIN
Tartu
RIGA
Daugavpils
Kaunas
VILNIUS
Kaliningrad
Gdańsk
Hrodna
MINSK
Vitebsk
Smolensk
MOSCOW
Nizhny Novgorod
Kazan
Samara
Saratov
Volgograd
Voronezh
Homiel
Chernihiv
Kharkiv
Zhytomyr
KIEV
Lviv
Vinnytsia
Rostov-on-Don
Krasnodar
Makhachkala
Mykolaiv
Odessa
Tiraspol
CHIŞINĂU
Iaşi
Chernivtsi
Crimea
Sevastopol
TIBLISI
YEREVAN
Aberdeen
Glasgow
Edinburgh
Belfast
Cork
Liverpool
Leeds
Manchester
Birmingham
Cardiff
Aarhus
Malmo
Hamburg
Bremen
AMSTERDAM
Rotterdam
BERLIN
Poznań
WARSAW
Łódź
Wrocław
Brest
Antwerp
Essen
Cologne
Leipzig
Frankfurt
Kraków
PRAGUE
Brno
Košice
VIENNA
BRATISLAVA
Debrecen
BUDAPEST
Cluj-Napoca
Timişoara
Szeged
Novi Sad
Maribor
Graz
Munich
Stuttgart
Strasbourg
PARIS
Nantes
Bordeaux
Lyon
Toulouse
Marseille
Nice
Milan
Venice
Genoa
Turin
Florence
SAN MARINO
BERN
VADUZ
LJUBLJANA
ZAGREB
Banja Luka
SARAJEVO
Split
BELGRADE
PRISTINA
SOFIA
Plovdiv
SKOPJE
TIRANA
Durres
PODGORICA
Thessaloniki
BUCHAREST
Constanta
Varna
ISTANBUL
ANKARA
Patras
ATHENS
Crete
Heraklion
Palermo
Sicily
Naples
Sardinia
Cagliari
Corsica
Balearic Is
Valencia
Barcelona
Zaragoza
Bilbao
A Coruña
Porto
LISBON
Sevilla
Málaga
Toledo
MADRID
GIBRALTAR (UK)
CEUTA (E)
MELILLA (E)
ALGIERS
TUNIS
RABAT
BAGHDAD
BEIRUT
DAMASCUS
NIKOSIA
Onega
Lodoga
Rybinsk
Peipus
Vänern
Vättern
Dniepr
Don
Volga
Kuybyshev
Kremenchuk
Dniester
Oder
Elbe
Weser
Rhine
Danube
Tagus

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What Was the Crimean War?

The **Crimean War** was a major military conflict fought from **1853 to 1856**, primarily between

- **Russia VS**
- An alliance of **Britain, France, the Ottoman Empire, and Sardinia (Italy)**

The war was mostly fought in the **Crimean Peninsula** (modern-day Ukraine, annexed by Russia in 2014).

Main Causes of the War

Decline of the Ottoman Empire

The "Sick Man of Europe" was weakening, and Russia sought to expand into its territories.

Religious Disputes in Holy Lands (Palestine)

Russia claimed to protect Orthodox Christians.

France claimed to protect Catholics.

Strategic Interests in the Crimean War

Control Over the Black Sea & Trade Routes

Russia wanted access to the Mediterranean via warm-water ports (through the Bosporus and Dardanelles straits).

Geopolitical Rivalry

Britain and France feared Russian expansion threatening their colonial routes (especially British access to India via Suez).

Key Battles and Locations

Siege of Sevastopol (1854–55)

Most significant, long and bloody.

Battle of Balaclava

Famous for the "Charge of the Light Brigade."

Battle of Inkerman

Major Allied victory.

Outcome of the War

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Treaty of Paris (1856)

Ended the war.

Black Sea Neutralization

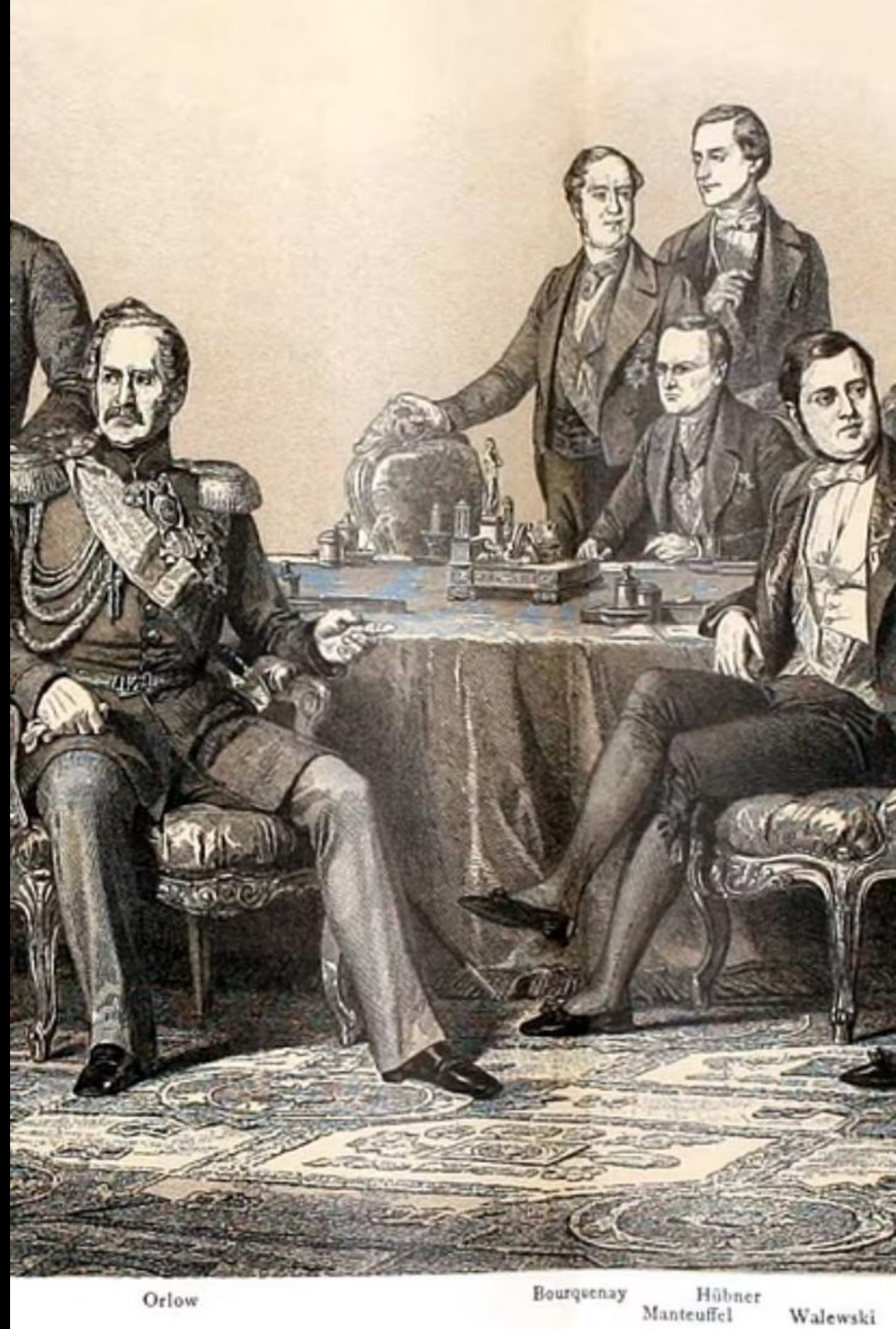
Black Sea was **neutralized** – no warships allowed.

Religious Protections

Russia gave up claims to protect Orthodox Christians in Ottoman lands.

Russian Influence

Russia's influence in Eastern Europe was **curtailed**.



Significance of the Crimean War

Redefined Balance of Power in Europe

First major war in Europe since the Napoleonic Wars.

Diplomatic Shifts

Britain and France fought **on the side of the Ottomans**—rare collaboration.

Decline of Russian Prestige

Russia's military weaknesses were exposed.

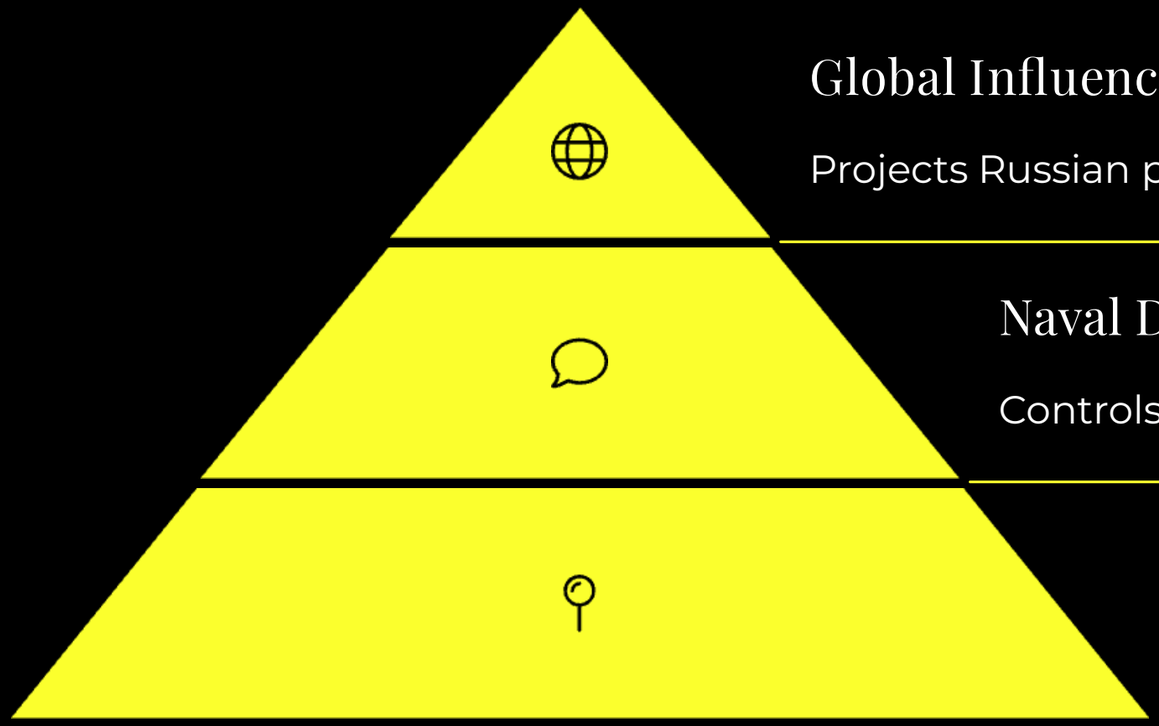
Nursing Revolution

Florence Nightingale emerged as a key figure, revolutionizing battlefield healthcare.

Modern Warfare

Use of railways, telegraphs, and trench warfare began here.

Strategic Importance of Crimea



Global Influence

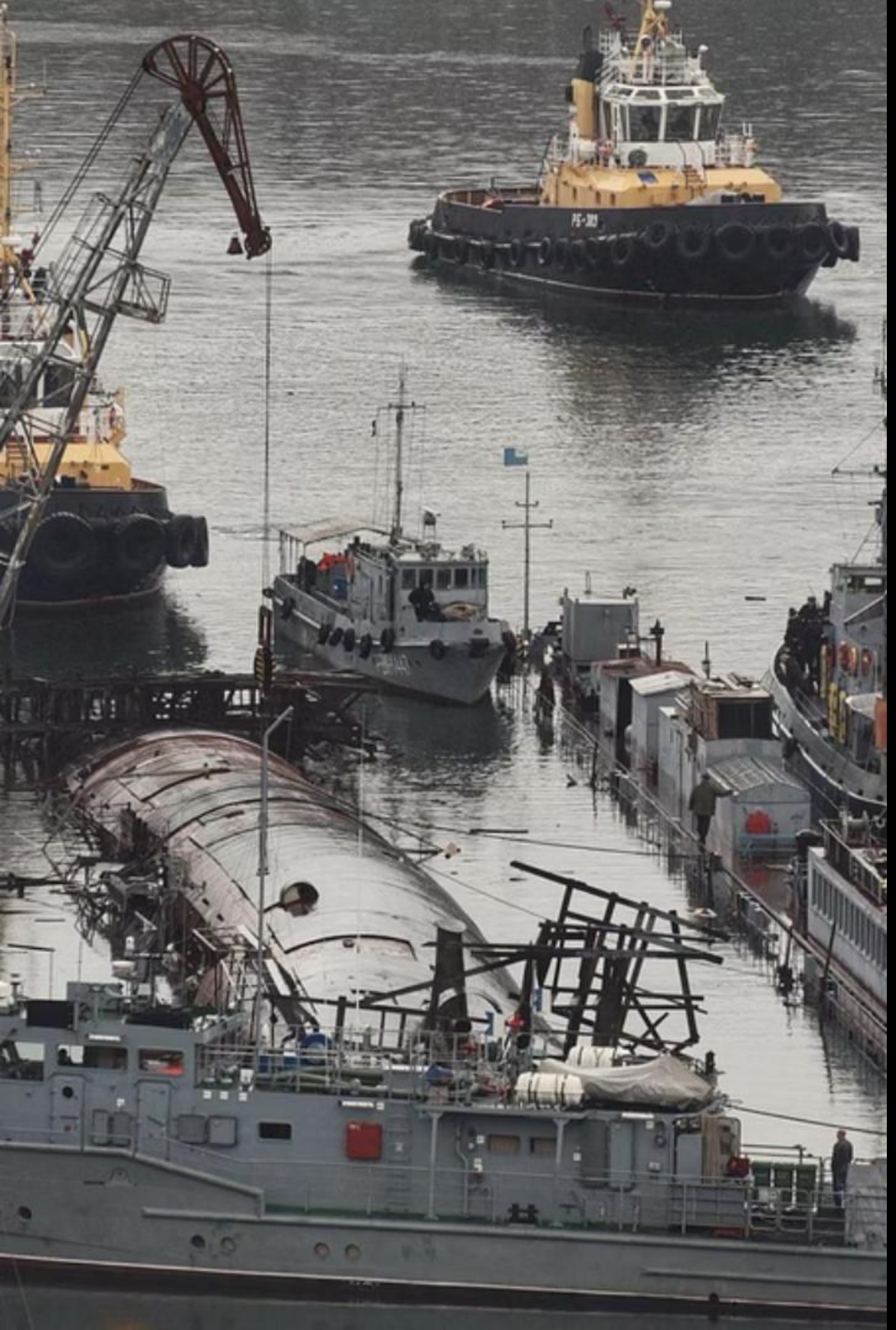
Projects Russian power beyond its borders

Naval Dominance

Controls Black Sea maritime activity

Geographic Position

Strategic location between Europe and Asia



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1. Geography & Naval Power

Warm Water Access

It provides access to warm water ports.

Winter Limitations

Russia's coastline is mostly icebound in winter.

Year-Round Naval Operations

Ports in Crimea (especially Sevastopol) provide year-round naval access to the Mediterranean and Atlantic.

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2. Sevastopol – Naval Headquarters

Black Sea Fleet Base

Sevastopol is the base of Russia's Black Sea Fleet.

Superior Port Facilities

Has deep-water ports (unlike Russia's Sochi or Novorossiysk).

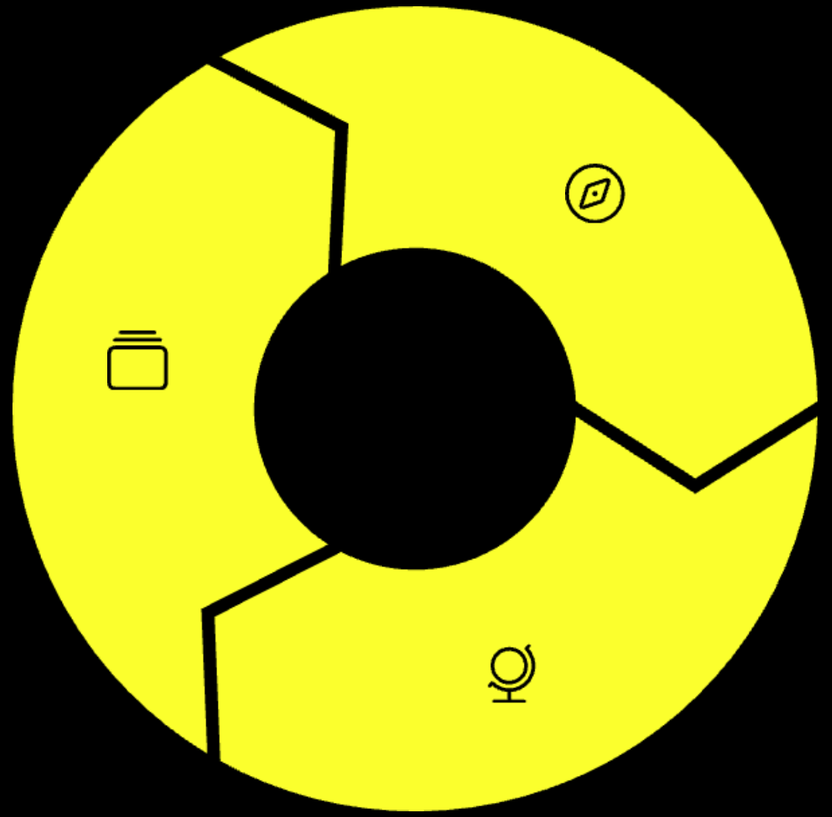
Power Projection

Central to projecting Russian naval power in the Black Sea, Mediterranean, and Middle East.

3. Warm Water Ports Quest

Historical Goal

Russia's long-standing foreign policy goal is access to ice-free warm water ports.



Strategic Necessity

Crimea helps fulfill this by bypassing Russia's cold northern coasts.

Global Reach

Enables year-round naval operations in multiple regions.

Political and Military Motivations

Military Security

Post-Soviet lease allowed Russia to use Sevastopol.

!

Euromaidan Concerns

After Ukraine's 2014 Euromaidan Revolution, Russia feared losing this strategic base.

Preemptive Action

Russia's annexation aimed to secure control before a potentially hostile Ukrainian government could evict it.

2. NATO Concerns

Ukraine's Western Pivot

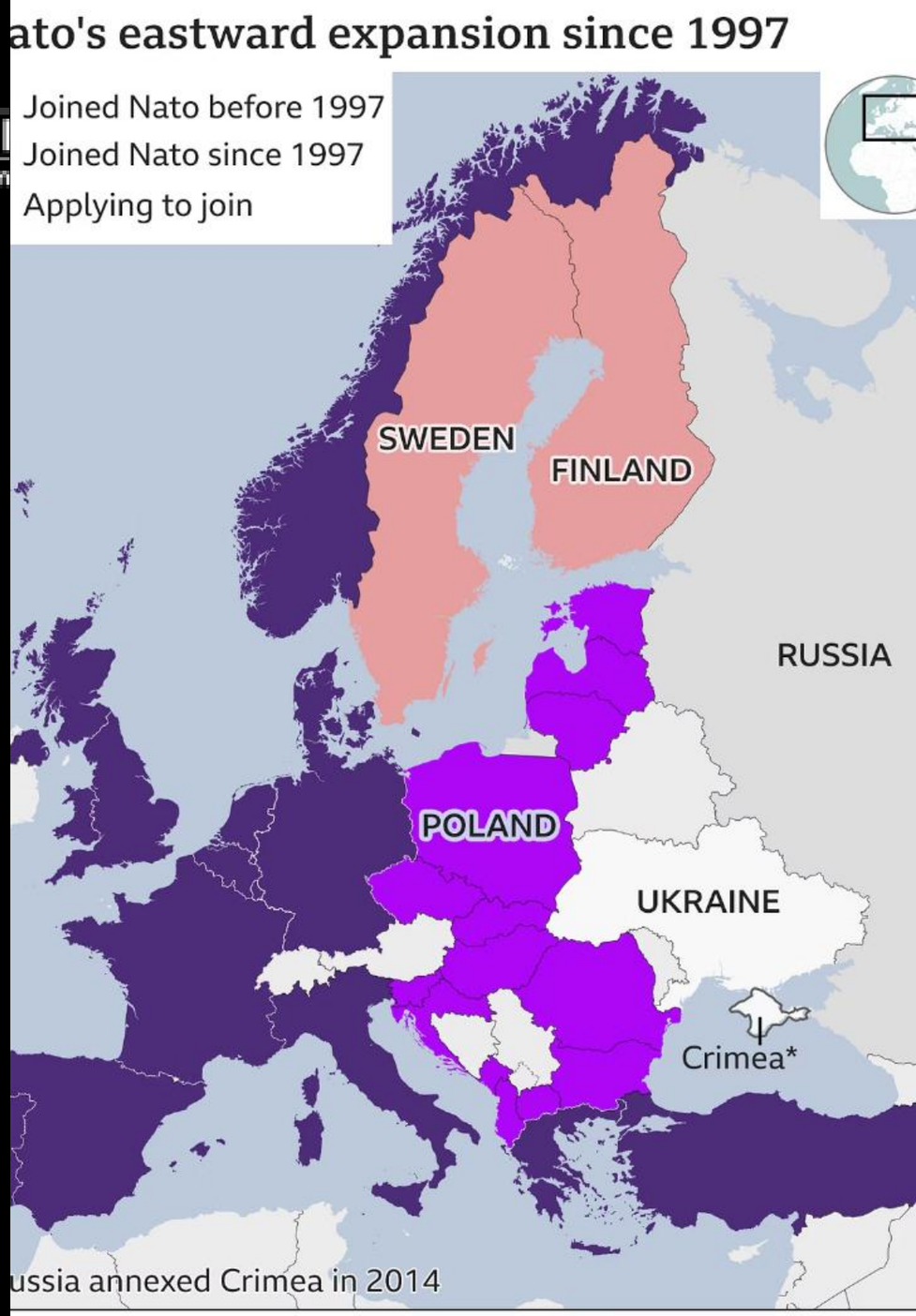
Ukraine was moving closer to the EU and NATO.

Russian Security Fears

Russia feared NATO ships in Sevastopol, which would shift the balance of power in the Black Sea.

Strategic Response

Annexation prevented potential NATO presence in Crimea.



3. Crimean Canal

85%

Water Dependency

Russia relies on the North Crimean Canal (in Ukrainian territory) for 85% of Crimea's water supply.

2014

Water Crisis

Ukraine had shut the canal post-2014.

2022

Military Action

Russia invaded southern Ukraine (Kherson) in 2022 partly to regain canal control.

International Law & Recognition Issues

1 **Legal Status**

Crimea's annexation is widely considered illegal under international law.

2 **Sovereignty Concerns**

Recognizing Crimea as part of Russia would undermine Ukraine's sovereignty.

3 **Dangerous Precedent**

Recognizing Crimea as part of Russia would encourage future border changes by force.

4 **UN Charter Violation**

Recognizing Crimea as part of Russia would violate the UN Charter and principles of territorial integrity.

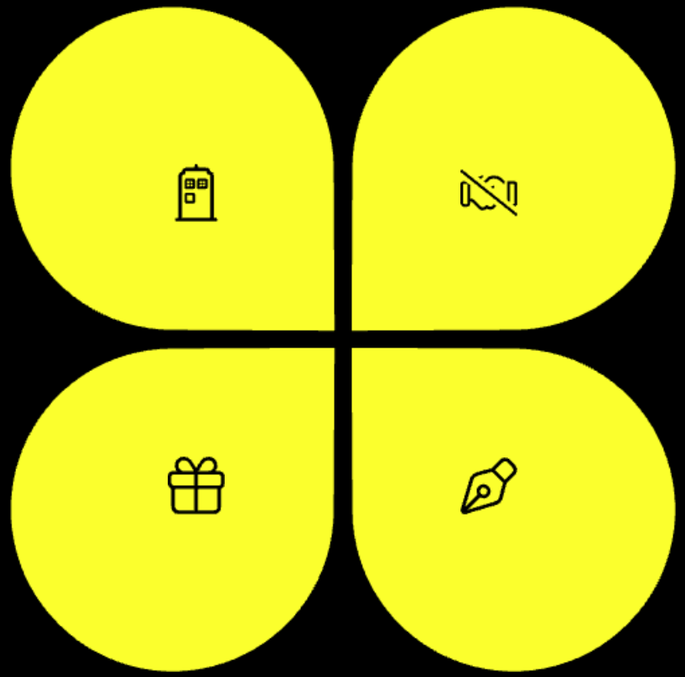
Donald Trump's Statement – Implications

Policy Shift

Seen as a potential U-turn in US foreign policy.

Russian Legitimacy

Could legitimize Russian occupation.



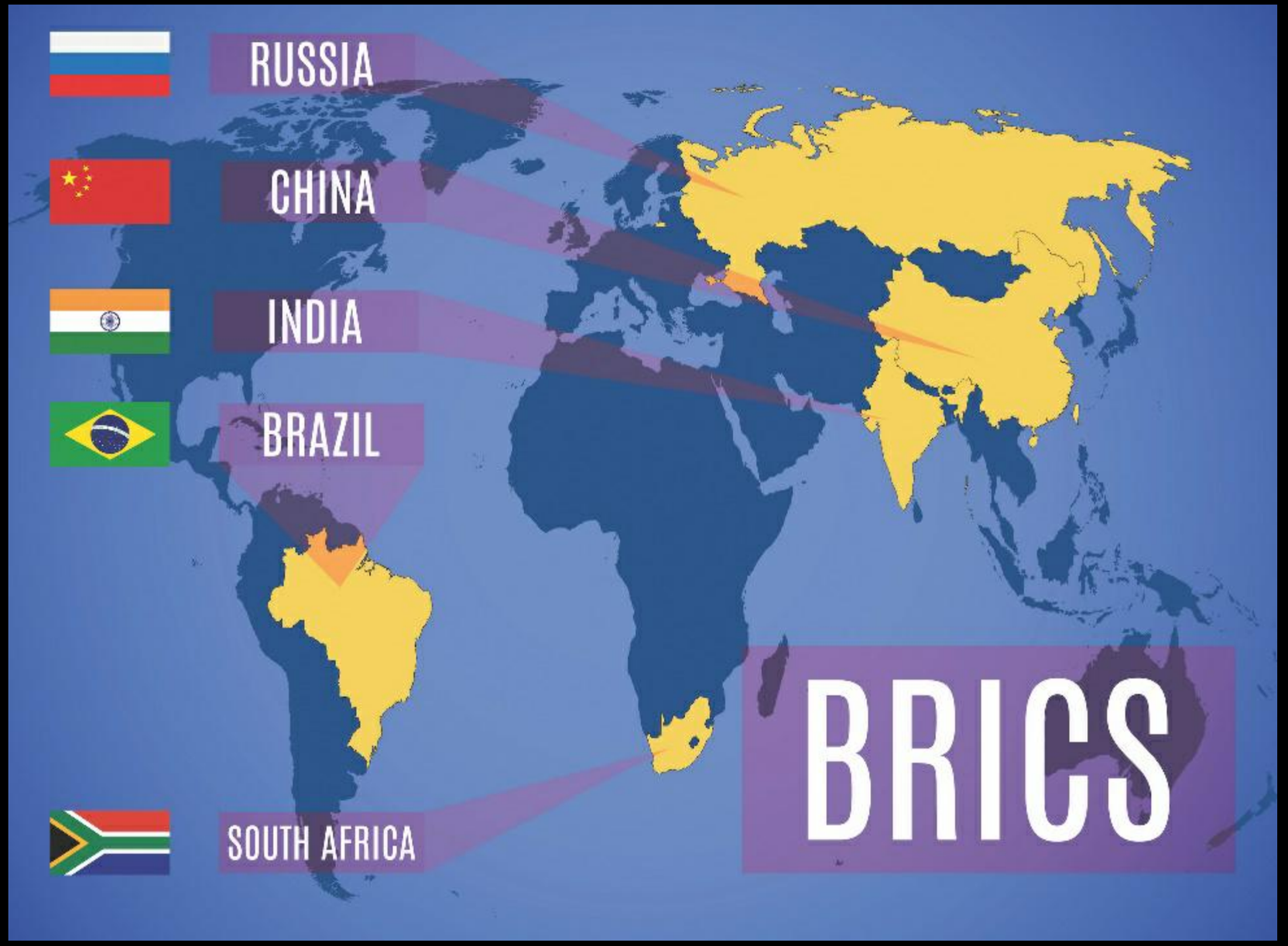
Diplomatic Concession

Could be interpreted as a "gift" to Russia.

Ukrainian Impact

Could undermine diplomatic support for Ukraine.

BRICS



BRICS – Introduction & Evolution

BRICS = Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa

Origin:

- Term "BRIC" coined (2001, Goldman Sachs).
- First BRIC Foreign Ministers' meeting: 2006 (UNGA, New York).
- First BRIC Summit: 2009, Yekaterinburg (Russia).
- South Africa admitted: 2010 → BRICS (from 2011).

Nature: Intergovernmental grouping representing major emerging economies of Global South.

Global Weight:

- ~42% world population
- ~30% world GDP (PPP share even higher)
- Major influence in energy, commodities, development finance.

BRICS – CURRENT MEMBERS (Post-Expansion 2024–25)

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As of 6 January 2025, BRICS has 11 members:

Brazil
Founding

Russia
Founding

India
Founding

China
Founding

South Africa
Joined 2010

Egypt
Full member (1 Jan 2024)

Ethiopia
Full member (1 Jan 2024)

Iran
Full member (1 Jan 2024)

UAE
Full member (1 Jan 2024)

Saudi Arabia
Accepted invitation, final confirmation follows domestic process; noted by summits.

Indonesia
Joined 6 Jan 2025 (latest full member)

BRICS+ Expansion – Background

- Johannesburg Summit (2023) initiated historic expansion, inviting: Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Argentina.
- Effective admission: 1 January 2024 (except Argentina, which declined).
- Second wave: Indonesia accepted membership on 6 Jan 2025.

Expansion aims:

- Strengthen Global South voice
- Diversify energy producers & consumers
- Counterbalance Western-led blocs
- Expand BRICS outreach (BRICS+ platform)

BRICS – Important Institutions

1 NDB (New Development Bank)

- Established: 2014 (Fortaleza Summit)
- Headquarters: Shanghai, China
- Current President: Dilma Rousseff (Brazil)
- **Purpose:** Infrastructure & sustainable development financing in emerging economies.

2 CRA (Contingent Reserve Arrangement)

- Pool of currency reserves for financial stability.
- Size: $100 billion.

3 BRICS Business Council & Think-Tank Council

- Promote business integration & policy consultation.

BRICS – Major Focus Areas

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Trade & Investment

Trade & investment cooperation

Energy Security

Energy security (oil, gas, renewables)

Local Currencies

Use of local currencies in trade

Global Governance Reform

Reform of global governance (UNSC, IMF, World Bank)

Digital Infrastructure

Digital public infrastructure (DPI) collaboration

Food Security

Food security & supply chain resilience

Technology & Innovation

Science, tech, health, AI, cyber norms

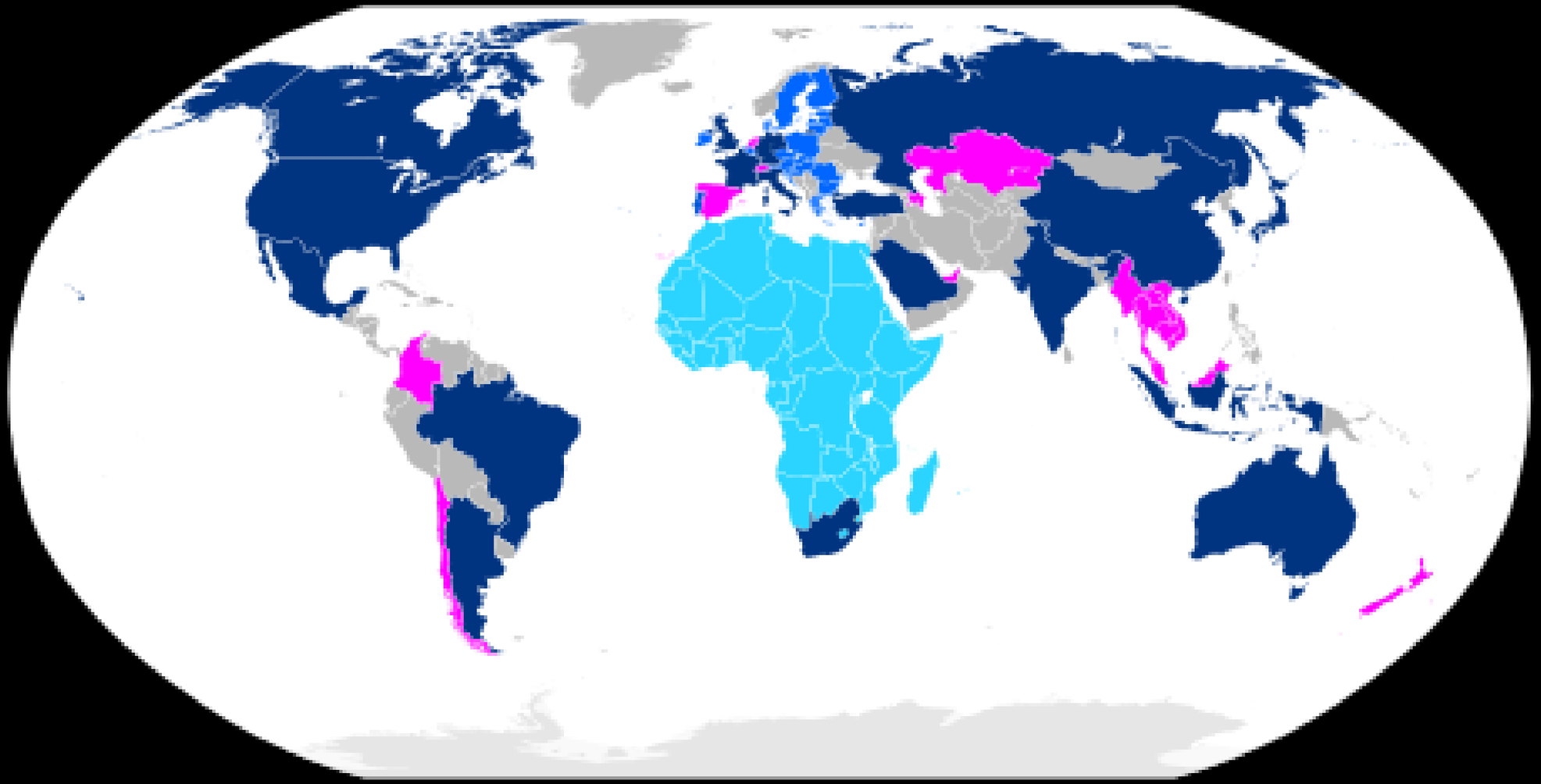
BRICS – India-Specific Points

- Founding member (2009).
- India hosted BRICS Summit: 2012, 2016, 2021 (virtual).

Indian priorities:

- Counter-terrorism cooperation
- Reformed multilateralism
- Digital financial technologies (UPI, DPI)
- Health & pharma supply chains
- Startups/MSME collaboration

G20



G20 – Introduction

The Group of Twenty (G20) is the world's premier forum for international economic cooperation.

Members = 19 countries + European Union.

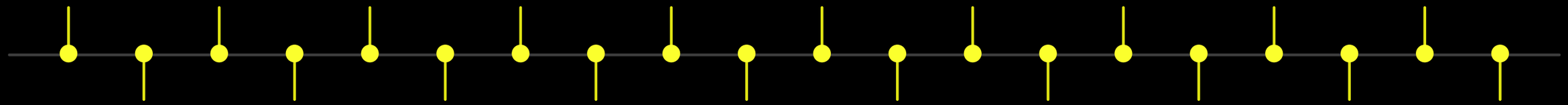
Founded: 1999 (Finance Ministers' Group); Leaders' Summit since 2008.

Composition includes world's major advanced + emerging economies.

G20 – Full Membership List

19 Countries + EU:

Argentina, Brazil, China, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, USA



Australia, Canada, France, India, Italy, South Korea, Russia, South Africa, UK, European Union

(African Union invited as a permanent member in 2023)

G20 – India's Role & Presidency Highlights

India hosted G20 Summit 2023 (New Delhi).

Major outcomes:

- Delhi Declaration (Consensus Achieved)
- Inclusion of African Union
- Global Biofuel Alliance
- Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) Framework
- India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)

How G20 Works

Presidency rotates annually.

Three tracks:

Finance Track

(Ministers & Central Bank Governors)

Sherpa Track

(policy coordination)

Engagement Groups

(B20, T20, S20, W20, Y20, C20, etc.)

Decisions are non-binding but carry major global influence.

G20 – Why It Matters

Represents:

~80%
of world GDP

~75%
of global trade

~60%
of world population

G20 Summits often produce frameworks on:

- Global economy
- Climate finance
- Energy transition
- Digital governance
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SCO

Introduction to SCO

Full Name: Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

Founded: 2001, Shanghai (transitioned from "Shanghai Five" – 1996)

Nature: Eurasian political, economic and security organisation

Founding Members: China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan

Primary Focus Areas:

- Regional security & counter-terrorism
- Political cooperation & multilateral diplomacy
- Economic, cultural & connectivity cooperation

Geographical Span: Covers nearly 3/5 of Eurasia and over 40% of world population

Current Membership (2025)

As of Sept–Nov 2025, SCO has 10 full members:

1. China
2. Russia
3. India
4. Pakistan
5. Kazakhstan
6. Kyrgyzstan
7. Tajikistan
8. Uzbekistan

9. Iran

joined 2023

10. Belarus

joined 2024

Note: Belarus became the newest member; Iran completed admission formalities in 2023.

Expansion Timeline

1. **1996** — Shanghai Five (China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan)
2. **2001** — SCO formally established; Uzbekistan added
3. **2017** — India & Pakistan admitted as full members
4. **2023** — Iran admitted as 9th member
5. **2024** — Belarus admitted as 10th member

SCO Organizational Structure

SCO Heads of State Council (HSC)

Highest decision-making body

Heads of Government Council (HGC)

Approves budgets & economic programs

SCO Secretariat

Beijing

RATS (Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure)

Tashkent, Uzbekistan

SCO Secretary-General (2025)

Nurlan Yermekbayev (Kazakhstan)

RATS Executive Director (2025)

Ularbek Sharsheev (Kyrgyzstan)

SCO Council of Foreign Ministers: Policy implementation

Key Areas of Cooperation

1. Security Cooperation

- Counter-terrorism
- Anti-extremism
- Anti-separatism

2. Economic Collaboration

- Trade facilitation
- Connectivity projects
- SCO Development Strategy (2025–2035)

3. Cultural & People-to-People Ties

Building bridges across nations

4. Health, Education, Technology & Youth

Cooperation for the future

RATS (Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure)

Full Name:

Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure

Established:

2004

Headquarters:

Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Mandate:

Sharing intelligence, joint counter-terror exercises, monitoring extremist networks

Observers & Dialogue Partners (2025)

Observer States

Afghanistan	Mongolia

Dialogue Partners

Armenia	Azerbaijan
Cambodia	Nepal
Sri Lanka	Saudi Arabia
Qatar	Egypt

Others as per rotation/updates

SCO Summit 2025 (Tianjin)

India-China Thaw

Date & Venue: 25th SCO Heads of State Summit, 31 Aug - 1 Sept 2025, Tianjin, China.

Modi-Xi Meeting: On the sidelines of the summit, PM Narendra Modi met with President Xi Jinping — their first face-to-face since 2024.

Key Outcomes of Meeting

- Both leaders said India and China are "partners, not rivals".
- They reaffirmed that border issues "must not define the overall relationship".
- Agreed on resuming direct flights, pilgrimage (Kailash Mansarovar Yatra) and revisiting border stability.

Strategic Implication:

The thaw indicates a recalibration of India–China ties amid global trade shifts and multilateral realignments (including U.S. tariffs on India and China's push for Global South cooperation).

India & the SCO

India joined:

2017 (with Pakistan)

Hosted Council Meeting:

- Hosted SCO Summit 2023 (Goa – Foreign Ministers)
- Hosted Defense Ministers' & Home Ministers' Meetings (2023)

India's concerns:

- BRI-related discussions
- Terror networks in Central/South Asia

India's Priorities:

- Counter-terrorism
- Trade connectivity (Chabahar, INSTC)
- Respect for sovereignty & territorial integrity
- Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) cooperation

Static Facts

Founded

2001

Headquarters

SCO Secretariat – Beijing

RATS HQ

Tashkent

Official Languages

Chinese and Russian

Latest Member:

Belarus (2024)

Members as of 2025:

10

SCO Secretary-General (2025):

Nurlan Yermekbayev

Iran joined:

2023

2025 Summit Host:

China (Tianjin)

RATS Director (2025):

Ularbek Sharsheev

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ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION (APEC)

APEC: Introduction

- **Full Name:** Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
- **Founded:** 1989, Canberra (Australia)
- **Type:** Regional economic forum of Pacific Rim economies
- **Purpose:**
  - Promote free & open trade
  - Regional economic integration
  - Sustainable/innovative growth
  - Supply-chain stability

APEC is non-binding, consensus-based, and cooperative — unlike the EU or WTO.

APEC Membership (2025)

APEC has 21 members ("economies"), not countries:

1. Australia
2. Brunei
3. Canada
4. Chile
5. China
6. Hong Kong
7. Indonesia
1. Japan
2. South Korea
3. Malaysia
4. Mexico
5. New Zealand
6. Papua New Guinea
7. Peru
1. Philippines
2. Russia
3. Singapore
4. Chinese Taipei (Taiwan)
5. Thailand
6. United States
7. Vietnam

(India is not a member.)

Why APEC Matters (Economic Weight)

60%

of world GDP

50%

of global trade

40%

of world population

Most dynamic region of supply chains, semiconductors, and AI manufacturing

Anchors global trade architecture (even more after U.S. tariff shocks)

U.S. Tariff Shock (2024–25) & Impact on APEC

U.S. imposed steep tariff escalations on:

- Chinese electric vehicles, solar, batteries
- Some AI hardware and semiconductor-linked goods
- Select Indian, Indonesian, Mexican commodities in 2025

Ripple effects in APEC:

Supply Chain Shifts

Supply chains shifting to ASEAN states (Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand)

China's Strategy

China pushing dual-circulation strategy inside APEC

Friend-Shoring

Mexico, Vietnam, Philippines benefitting from "friend-shoring"

Regional Blocs

Rise of regional trade blocs: CPTPP, RCEP tightening coordination

APEC 2024–25 meetings heavily focused on trade fragmentation & reshoring.

Major issues:

01

Tech Bifurcation

Semiconductor & AI technology bifurcation

02

Supply Chain Frameworks

U.S. tariff shock → new supply chain frameworks

03

Digital Trade

Digital trade frameworks

04

Climate Financing

Climate financing for Asia-Pacific

South Korea pushed APEC Semiconductor Cooperation Agenda.

APEC + Semiconductor & AI Realignment

APEC now central to global semiconductor strategy:

- Taiwan, Japan, South Korea = top three chip hubs
- U.S. CHIPS Act reshoring influences APEC supply partners
- China accelerating chip self-sufficiency → impacts trade rules

AI compute supply chains heavily dependent on:

1	2	3
Taiwan (TSMC)	Japan	Malaysia & Vietnam
Leading chip fabrication	Materials, photolithography	Assembly, testing

APEC discussions now include GPU scarcity, AI access, tech export controls.

APEC & Regional Trade Architecture

APEC connects with major agreements:

RCEP

(Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) — includes China, ASEAN, Japan, Korea, Australia, NZ

CPTPP

(Trans-Pacific Partnership) — includes Japan, Canada, Australia, Singapore etc.

IPEF

(Indo-Pacific Economic Framework) — U.S.-led initiative

ASEAN-led frameworks

Regional cooperation initiatives

APEC acts as the umbrella dialogue forum that links all these.

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India & APEC (Why India Is Not a Member)

India is not a member because:

- APEC requires trade openness, while India maintains higher average tariffs
- Service-sector dominated Indian economy differs structurally
- Membership freeze after 1998

However, geopolitical pressure is pushing for:

Potential APEC expansion debate (2025)

India being considered because of:

- Large market
- Digital public infrastructure leadership
- Strategic Indo-Pacific role

No membership yet

APEC Secretariat & Structure

APEC Secretariat

Singapore

Executive Director (2025)

Rotating annually — Korea holds the 2025 host year

APEC's Key Groups:

- Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM)
- APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting
- Ministerial Conferences
- **Committees:**
  - Trade & Investment
  - Economic policy
  - Digital Economy Steering Group

High-Value Facts

- **Founded:** 1989
- **Members:** 21 economies (not countries)
- **India:** Not a member
- **HQ:** Singapore
- **Features:** non-binding, consensus-based
- **2024 Host:** Peru
- **2025 Host:** South Korea

Major 2025 debates:

- Tariff wars reshaping supply chains
- Semiconductor/AI decoupling
- Digital trade rules
- Indo-Pacific power balance shifting

APEC is central to new US–China trade and tech confrontation

ASEAN

ASEAN

Introduction

ASEAN

Full Name: Association of Southeast Asian Nations

Founded: 8 August 1967 (Bangkok Declaration)

Founding Members: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand

Nature: Regional political, economic & security organisation

Guiding Principles & Vision

Guiding Principles

ASEAN Way (consensus, non-interference, gradualism)

ASEAN Centrality in Indo-Pacific architecture

Vision

ASEAN Community Vision 2025 → moving toward Vision 2045 (under discussion)

Current Membership (2025)

As of October 2025, ASEAN has 11 member states:

1. Indonesia
2. Malaysia
3. Philippines
4. Singapore
5. Thailand

Member States Continued

1. Brunei Darussalam
2. Vietnam
3. Laos
4. Myanmar
5. Cambodia
6. Timor-Leste

   Formally admitted as the 11th member (2025)

Important - Timor-Leste's accession (2025) is the first expansion in decades and a very likely exam question.

ASEAN Headquarters & Structure

Headquarters

Jakarta, Indonesia

Key Bodies

- ASEAN Summit (Heads of State)
- ASEAN Coordinating Council
- ASEAN Ministerial Meetings
- ASEAN Secretariat (SG-led)
- Committee of Permanent Representatives
- ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR)

ASEAN Community Pillars

ASEAN Political-Security Community

(APSC)

ASEAN Economic Community

(AEC)

ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community

(ASCC)

Strategic Frameworks & Concerns

Supports Indo-Pacific frameworks based on:

- Openness
- Inclusivity
- Rule-based order
- Maritime security

Major security concerns:

- South China Sea disputes
- Myanmar crisis
- Economic fragmentation due to global tariff shocks
- Supply chain realignment

Economic Significance

Overview

Combined GDP: ~US$3.6 trillion (2025 estimates)

Fastest-growing regional market after South Asia

Key Features

- Manufacturing powerhouses (Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia)
- Semiconductor assembly hubs
- Major digital economy growth (Singapore, Indonesia)

ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) reduces tariffs among members

ASEAN is part of RCEP — largest FTA in the world

ASEAN 2024–2025 Major Developments

Timor-Leste joins ASEAN (2025)

major milestone

ASEAN Strategic Plan 2025–2030 initiated

Strengthens economic integration

Boosts digital trade, financial connectivity

Enhances supply chain resilience

Recent Developments Continued

New alignment due to tariff wars (2024–25):

- Vietnam, Malaysia, Philippines gaining from "China+1"
- ASEAN strengthening role in regional semiconductor supply

Myanmar issue:

ASEAN Five Point Consensus continues; limited progress

Climate & energy:

- ASEAN Green Connectivity Initiative launched
- Renewable energy corridors discussed (2025)

India–ASEAN: Overview

- India's engagement began with Look East Policy (1992)
- Deepened via Act East Policy (2014–present)
- ASEAN is central pillar of India's Indo-Pacific vision

India sees ASEAN as:

- Strategic partner
- Economic opportunity hub
- Maritime security collaborator
- Cultural & civilisational neighbour (historic links)

India–ASEAN Strategic Partnerships

1

Sectoral Dialogue Partner

since 1992

2

Dialogue Partner

since 1996

3

Summit-level Partner

since 2002

4

Strategic Partner

since 2012

5

Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP)

discussions underway post-2023

Institutional Engagement:

- EAS, ARF, ADMM+ (Defence Ministers)
- India–ASEAN Summit annually
- India–ASEAN FTA (2009–2010)

India–ASEAN Economic & Trade Engagement

Trade Overview

India–ASEAN Trade (2024–25): > USD 135 billion

India–ASEAN FTA:

- Trade in Goods Agreement (2009)
- Trade in Services & Investment (2014)
- Currently undergoing review to reduce non-tariff barriers

Key Sectors for India

- Pharmaceuticals
- IT–ITeS
- Engineering goods
- Oil & gas
- Agricultural products

ASEAN is India's 4th largest trading partner

Connectivity Projects (India–ASEAN)

India–Myanmar–Thailand Trilateral Highway (IMT Highway)

Stretch: Moreh (India) → Myanmar → Mae Sot (Thailand)

Extension planned to Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos

Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP)

Connects Kolkata → Sittwe Port → Paletwa → India's Northeast

Enhances India–Southeast Asia maritime–inland connectivity

Connectivity Projects Continued

ASEAN–India Maritime Transport Agreement (AIMTA)

Negotiations ongoing

India's Northeast as a gateway

Act East focuses on integrating NE states with ASEAN markets

India–ASEAN Defence & Security Cooperation

Platforms:

- ADMM+ (ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus)
- India–ASEAN Maritime Exercises (AIME)
- Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC–IOR)

Areas of engagement:

→ Counter-terrorism

→ Maritime domain awareness (MDA)

→ Humanitarian assistance & disaster relief (HADR)

→ Freedom of navigation & rules-based Indo-Pacific

India supports ASEAN's centrality & unity, especially amid China–U.S. rivalry

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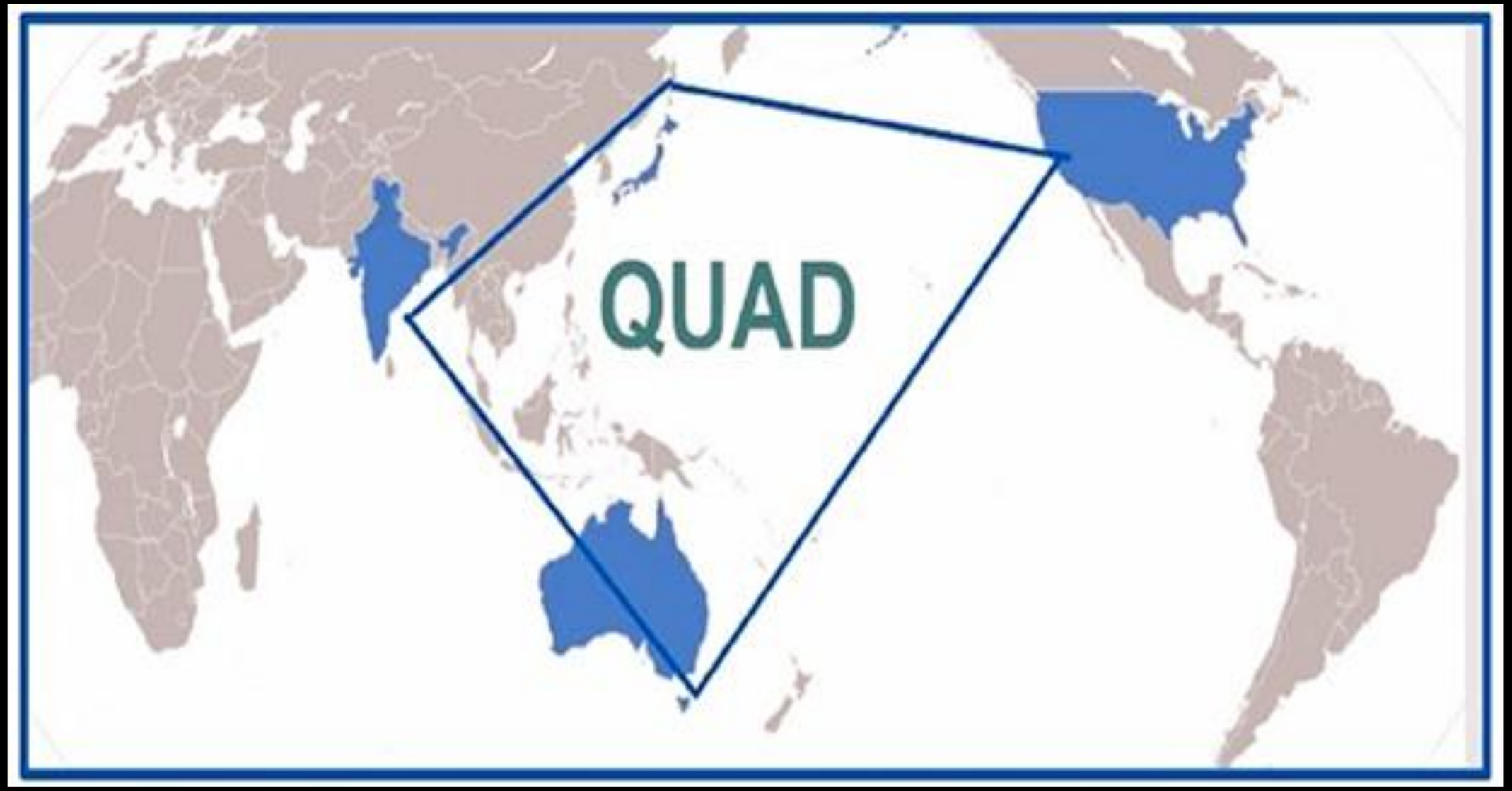
Cultural & People-to-People Ties

- Buddhist & Indic civilisational links across Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, Indonesia, Laos
- Annual India–ASEAN Youth Summit
- Scholarships & cultural exchanges
- Indian diaspora in Singapore, Malaysia, Myanmar significant for ties
- Yoga, Ayurveda, cinema strengthening soft power links

Important Facts

- **Founded:** 1967, Bangkok Declaration
- **Headquarters:** Jakarta, Indonesia
- **Members:** 11 (including Timor-Leste, 2025)
- **Key frameworks:** AEC, APSC, ASCC
- **India–ASEAN FTA:** 2009 (goods), 2014 (services)
- **India's Policies:** Look East (1992), Act East (2014)
- **Connectivity Projects:** IMT Highway, Kaladan project
- **ASEAN-led Platforms:** EAS, ARF, ADMM+
- **ASEAN Community Vision 2025** expanding toward 2045

QUAD



QUAD: Introduction

Full Name: Quadrilateral Security Dialogue

Members: India, United States, Japan, Australia

Nature: Informal strategic dialogue + minilateral cooperation platform

Core Objective: Ensure a free, open, inclusive, rules-based Indo-Pacific

Focus Areas:

Maritime Security	Critical & Emerging Technologies	Supply Chain Resilience
Health & Pandemic Preparedness	Climate Action	Infrastructure & Connectivity

Evolution of QUAD

1. **2004**
   India, US, Japan, Australia coordinated Tsunami relief → operational cooperation begins
2. **2007**
   QUAD formally proposed; initial meeting in Manila
3. **2008–2017**
   Dormant phase (Australia withdrew due to China concerns)
4. **2017**
   QUAD revived at ASEAN Summit, Manila
5. **2021**
   First Leaders' Summit (virtual)
6. **2022–2025**
   QUAD becomes a central pillar of Indo-Pacific strategy

Key point: QUAD is not a military alliance, but a strategic coordination platform.

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Why QUAD Matters

Geopolitical Context

- Responds to China's maritime expansion in Indo-Pacific
- Protects freedom of navigation in South China Sea + East China Sea
- Builds resilient supply chains to counter export dependence
- Coordinates on technologies restricted under export controls

Helps maintain balance in Indo-Pacific amid:

- U.S.–China rivalry
- Taiwan Strait tensions
- Militarisation of South China Sea
- Global tariff realignments (2024–25)

QUAD 2024–2025 Latest Developments

QUAD meetings in 2024–25 emphasised:

- Critical Minerals Security Partnerships
- AI collaboration & compute-sharing architecture
- Semiconductor supply chain diversification
- QUAD Maritime Domain Awareness system modernization

QUAD strengthened its alignment after the U.S. tariff shock (2024–25) disrupted Asia-Pacific supply chains

Discussions on QUAD Infrastructure Standards for safe digital corridors across Indo-Pacific

QUAD Working Groups (2025)

01

Critical & Emerging Technologies WG

02

Climate Change & Green Energy WG

03

Cybersecurity & Digital Standards WG

04

Maritime Security WG

05

Health Security & Pandemics WG

06

Space Cooperation WG

07

Infrastructure Connectivity & Supply Chains WG

These working groups create concrete deliverables, unlike symbolic alliances.

QUAD & Critical Technologies

QUAD focuses on:

- Semiconductors & chip manufacturing
- 5G/6G telecom standards
- AI governance
- Quantum computing collaboration
- Secure supply chains for defence electronics

New initiative (2025): QUAD Semiconductor Supply Chain Map

Japan, India, US, Australia coordinating to reduce dependence on China for chip packaging & rare earth elements

QUAD & Critical Minerals

Major 2025 Updates

Launched QUAD Critical Minerals Initiative – 2025

Objective: Secure supply of Lithium, Cobalt, Nickel, Graphite, Rare Earths

India's Role:

- Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL) exploring Lithium in Argentina & Australia
- Coordination on REE refining with Japan & Australia

Why important?

EV batteries

Semiconductors

Renewable energy

Defence manufacturing

QUAD & Maritime Security

QUAD is at the center of Indo-Pacific maritime cooperation

Key Components:

- Freedom of Navigation
- UNCLOS-based rules
- Counter-piracy operations
- HADR (Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief)
- Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) network

Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA): Shares real-time satellite-based maritime tracking with Indo-Pacific partners

QUAD & Space Cooperation

Joint monitoring of:

- Climate patterns
- Maritime traffic
- Disasters

Satellite data sharing for:

- Agriculture
- Climate resilience
- Early warning systems

India contributes through ISRO's expertise in low-cost Earth observation missions

QUAD Infrastructure & Connectivity

QUAD is developing quality infrastructure standards as an alternative to the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI)

Focus on:

- Digital corridors
- Secure fibre-optic cables
- AI-enabled transport management
- Green ports & logistics

QUAD members coordinate at G7, IPEF, and Indo-Pacific frameworks to counter debt-heavy infrastructure models

India's Strategic Role in QUAD

India is the only QUAD member with land border friction with China, making QUAD central to its security doctrine

India contributes significantly to:

- Maritime cooperation
- Space data & satellite systems
- Critical tech research
- Indo-Pacific diplomatic architecture

QUAD strengthens India's Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)

India's Benefits from QUAD

1

Defence & Security

- Enhanced MDA
- Interoperability with partners
- Indo-Pacific maritime balance

2

Economic Gains

- Diversified supply chains (chips, electronics, solar modules)
- Access to advanced technology ecosystems

3

Geopolitical Leverage

- Counterbalance to China in IOR and LAC
- Participation in new strategic-lateral diplomacy

4

Technology Transfer

- Clean hydrogen, AI, cybersecurity collaborations

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NATO: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

A comprehensive overview of NATO's structure, mission, and recent developments in 2025

Belgium 1949	Canada 1949	Denmark 1949	France 1949	Iceland 1949	Italy 1949	Luxembourg 1949	Netherlands 1949
Norway 1949	Portugal 1949	United Kingdom 1949	United States 1949	Greece 1952	Turkey 1952	Germany 1955	Spain 1982
Czech Republic 1999	Hungary 1999	Poland 1999	Bulgaria 2004	Estonia 2004	Latvia 2004	Lithuania 2004	Romania 2004
Slovakia 2004	Slovenia 2004	Albania 2009	Croatia 2009	Montenegro 2017	North Macedonia 2020	Finland 2023	Sweden 2024

Introduction & Purpose

NATO Alliance Foundation

NATO is a political and military alliance established under the North Atlantic Treaty (Washington Treaty) signed on **4 April 1949**.

Headquarters Location

Headquarters: **Brussels, Belgium**.

Core Objective

Core objective: **Collective defence** — "an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all" (Article 5).

Current Main Tasks

NATO's main tasks today: deterrence & defence, crisis prevention & management, cooperative security.

Membership & Structure

As of 2025, NATO has **32 member countries**.

North Atlantic Council (NAC)

The principal political decision-making body

Military Committee

Senior military authority

Allied Commands

Allied Command Operations (ACO) & Allied Command Transformation (ACT)

Secretary-General (2025): **Mark Rutte (Netherlands)** — new SG as of Jan 2025.

Membership enlargement: **Open Door Policy** remains; aspiring members include **Ukraine, Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina**.

Recent Summit & Key Decisions (2025 The Hague)

The 2025 NATO Summit was held in **The Hague, Netherlands**, on **24-25 June 2025**.

Major outcome

Allies committed to raise defence and security-related spending to **5% of GDP by 2035**, with a review in 2029.

Reaffirmed commitment

"Ironclad" commitment to Article 5 and support for Ukraine's security-contribution.

Strategic Context & Threat Environment

Response to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine; NATO has placed Russia as the long-term strategic threat.

China's Influence

Rising concerns about China's global military and economic influence; NATO adapting to 360-degree threats (including Indo-Pacific).

Defence Industrial Base

Defence industrial base, supply-chain resilience, and emerging technologies (cyber, space, AI) now high priorities.

Defence Spending & Capability Targets

Prior benchmark

2% of GDP on defence; many members exceeded this, but still capability gaps remained.

New target (2025)

5% of GDP by 2035 — split into **3.5%** for "core defence" and **1.5%** for defence-related activities (cyber, infrastructure, resilience).

Capability targets updated June 2025 — emphasised readiness, deterrence, industrial base, munitions.

Enlargement & Partners

NATO's **Open Door Policy**: allows European democracies meeting criteria to join.

Ukraine's Path

Ukraine declared its **"irreversible path"** to membership; Baltic & Eastern flank support remains strong.

Partner Frameworks

Partner countries & frameworks: e.g., Indo-Pacific partners such as **Japan, Australia, New Zealand** have closer ties through "NATO-Indo-Pacific" statements.

NATO & the Indo-Pacific

For the first time, at the 2025 Summit, NATO engaged in a formal NATO-Indo-Pacific Partners meeting, including **Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea**.

Widening Geographic Scope

Moving beyond Euro-Atlantic to include strategic partnerships in Indo-Pacific region

Shifting Global Security Order

Trans-regional cooperation on shared challenges

Ukraine & NATO Support

NATO established a dedicated command: **NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU)**, headquartered in **Wiesbaden, Germany**.

Purpose

Coordinate security assistance, training, logistics for Ukrainian Armed Forces.

Membership Push

Strong Eastern flank push for Ukraine's membership despite some U.S. ambivalence.

Important Facts

Founded: 4 April 1949 (Washington Treaty)

Number of members: 32 (2025)

Headquarters: Brussels, Belgium

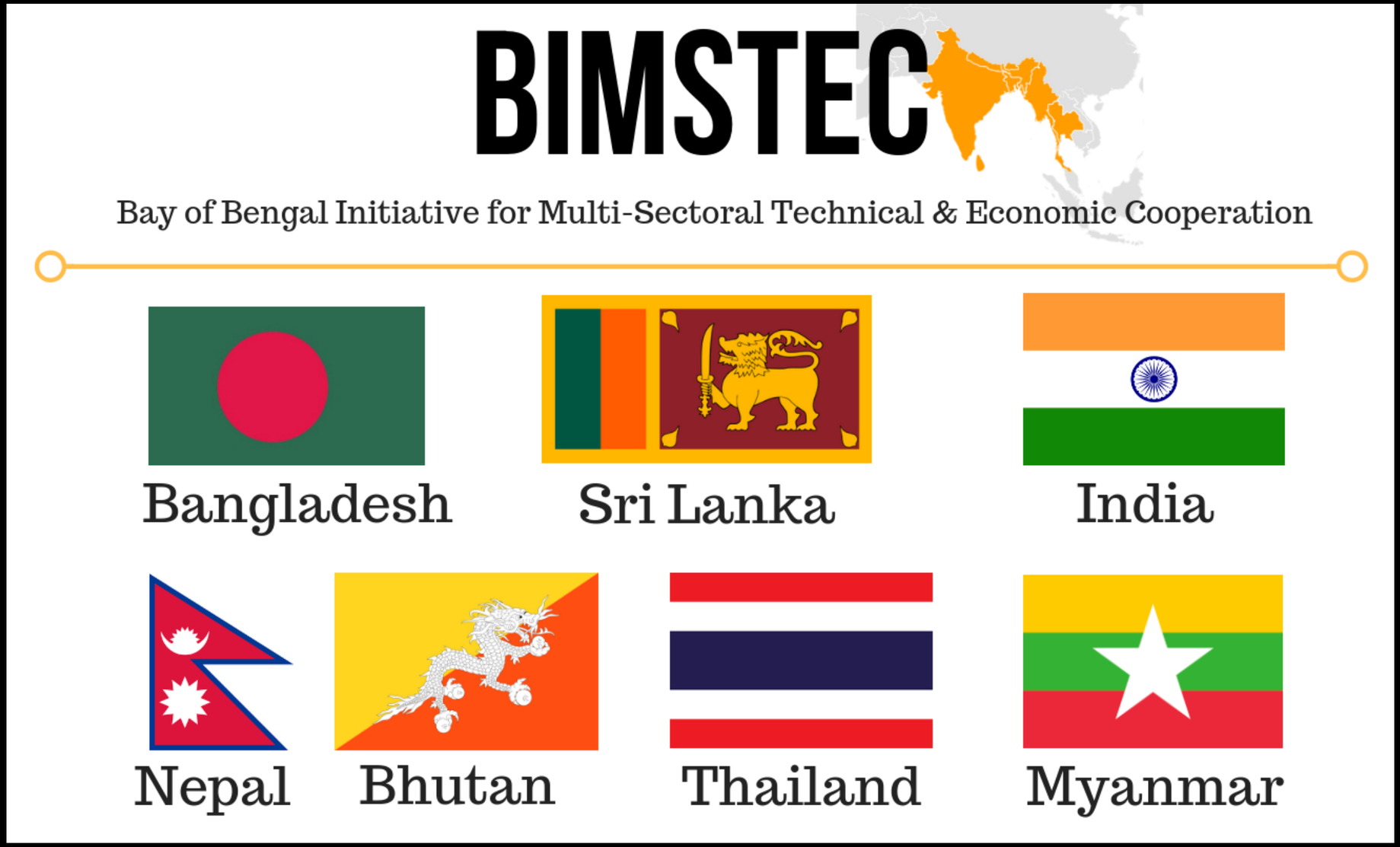
Secretary-General (2025): Mark Rutte (Netherlands)

2025 Summit: The Hague, 24-25 June 2025

Defence spending pledge: 5% of GDP by 2035

Key enlargement aspirants: Ukraine, Georgia, Bosnia & Herzegovina

BIMSTEC


BIMSTEC
Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical & Economic Cooperation
Bangladesh
Sri Lanka
India
Nepal
Bhutan
Thailand
Myanmar

6th BIMSTEC SUMMIT

4 APRIL 2025 BANGKOK, THAILAND

BIMSTEC: Introduction & Purpose

- **Full name:** Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).
- **Founded:** 6 June 1997 (originally BIST-EC; became BIMST-EC and then BIMSTEC).
- **Members (7):** Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand.
- **Purpose:** Promote regional cooperation in the Bay of Bengal region across multiple sectors — trade, transport & connectivity, energy, disaster management, counter-terrorism, fisheries, climate, tourism, technology and more.

Institutional Structure & Headquarters

- Secretariat: BIMSTEC Secretariat — Dhaka, Bangladesh (coordinates programmes & administration).
- Secretary-General (2025): H.E. Indra Mani Pandey (India) — assumed charge as BIMSTEC Secretary-General in January 2024.

Decision Bodies

- **BIMSTEC Summit (Heads of State)** — highest body.
- **BIMSTEC Ministerial Meetings (various sectors).**
- BIMSTEC Working Groups & Projects (14+ sectors; six priority pillars reorganised).

Priority Sectors & Lead Countries (Reorganisation)

BIMSTEC covers 14 sectors, recently reorganised into seven priority pillars (each led by a member state) — examples include:

Trade, Investment & Development

Lead: Bangladesh

Security

Lead: India — includes Counter-Terrorism & Transnational Crime, Disaster Management, Energy Security

Other pillars: Connectivity & Transport (ADB/Member coordination), Environment & Climate, Technology, Agriculture & Food Security, People-to-People Contacts.

BIMSTEC Membership & Strategic Geography

Members' geography:

South Asia + Southeast Asia bridging — connects the northeastern Indian states, the Bay of Bengal littoral and ASEAN's western flank; strategic corridor linking South Asia to Southeast Asia.

Population & economy footprint:

BIMSTEC members cover a large share of regional population and growing trade potential — important for regional supply-chain linkages and energy corridors.

6th BIMSTEC Summit (Bangkok)

- **Host & Chair:** Thailand hosted the 6th BIMSTEC Summit (theme: "Prosperous, Resilient and Open BIMSTEC").
- **Major outcomes:** Leaders agreed to enhance cooperation on trade, transport, disaster relief, and disaster-affected area assistance following a major earthquake in the region; chairmanship formally passed to Bangladesh.
- **Controversy / political dimension:** Myanmar's junta leader Min Aung Hlaing attended the Summit — a rare diplomatic re-engagement that drew international attention — and discussions included disaster relief coordination.

BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity

- **Master Plan:** BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity (MPTC) covers roads, railways, ports, inland waterways, civil aviation and multimodal transport to deepen regional linkages. The plan has been subject to ADB support and national implementation roadmaps.
- **Status:** Several priority projects (road/rail/port links) have been identified and pilot projects advanced; completion and financing were central items in recent meetings.

BIMSTEC Free Trade Area (BFTA)

- **FTA talks history:** The idea for a BIMSTEC Free Trade Area (BFTA) has existed since early 2000s; negotiations and frameworks (e.g., Framework Agreement) have progressed slowly.
- **Current status (2025):** Negotiations continue but BFTA remains unimplemented; the slow pace and differing economic priorities of members are key bottlenecks. This remains an important exam point.

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India–BIMSTEC: Strategic Overview

India's approach: BIMSTEC is a central pillar of India's Act East & neighbourhood engagement — it links India's Northeast with Southeast Asia and provides a forum avoiding larger geopolitical faultlines. India leads the Security pillar and supports connectivity & capacity building.

India's Initiatives & Projects under BIMSTEC

- **Connectivity:** India advocates transport linkages that integrate Northeast India with Southeast Asia via BIMSTEC corridors and supports the Master Plan for Transport Connectivity.
- **Capacity building & assistance:** India runs training, technical assistance, and development projects (disaster management training, capacity building for customs & trade facilitation, IT & digital public goods exchanges).
- **Energy & blue economy:** India participates in regional energy cooperation dialogues and supports fisheries, maritime safety and coastal resilience projects.

Related Static Facts

- **Founded:** 6 June 1997 (Bangkok).
- **Members (7):** Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand.
- **Secretariat:** Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- **Secretary-General (2025):** Indra Mani Pandey (India) — assumed office Jan 2024.
- **6th Summit (Bangkok):** 4 Apr 2025 — theme "Prosperous, Resilient and Open BIMSTEC"; chairmanship passed to Bangladesh; Myanmar's junta attendance was notable.
- **BFTA status:** Framework & negotiations exist but unimplemented (important exam fact).

World Economic Forum (WEF)

World Economic Forum (WEF)

Full Name: World Economic Forum.

Founding / Origins: Founded in 1971 by governments, international organisations, academia, and civil society.

Objectives / Mandate:

- Foster public-private cooperation.
- Provide a platform for global dialogue on economy, technology, and governance.
- Promote sustainable and inclusive development.

Structure:

Annual Meeting

Annual Meeting at Davos (Switzerland).

Regional Summits

Regional summits throughout the year.

Global Councils

Global Future Councils and Industry Strategy Groups.

India's Role: India regularly participates with high-level delegations; WEF recognises India's role in digital transformation and clean energy transition.

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Reason in News (2025):

- The 2025 Annual Meeting (20–24 January, Davos) was themed "Collaboration for the Intelligent Age."
- Key discussions revolved around AI governance, ethical regulation, human capital development, and global resilience.
- India's digital public infrastructure model (UPI, Aadhaar, ONDC) was showcased as a case study in inclusive technology governance.
- The session on "South-South Technology Partnerships" featured Indian policy-makers prominently.

AI Action Summit Overview

Full Name: Artificial Intelligence Action Summit.

Founding / Origins: Proposed by France in collaboration with India to create a global forum for AI governance.

Headquarters / Nature: No permanent HQ; annual summit model.

Membership: 100 + countries participated in the inaugural edition (2025).

Objectives & Structure

Objectives / Mandate:

- Shift global focus from AI safety to **AI action** – ensuring responsible, inclusive, and sustainable use of AI.
- Promote collaboration on AI ethics, governance, and equitable benefits.

Structure:

High-level ministerial sessions, policy roundtables, industry and academia forums.

India's Role & 2025 Highlights

India's Role: Co-chair of the inaugural summit with France; showcased its AI Mission **"AI for All."**

Reason in News (2025):

- The first AI Action Summit was held in **Paris (10–11 February 2025)**.
- Co-hosted by France and India.
- Adopted the **"Paris Declaration on Responsible AI for Humanity"** emphasising AI ethics and data sovereignty.

- Formed a **Global AI Action Fund** for developing countries to build AI capacity.
- India's Digital Public Infrastructure model was recognised as a replicable framework for AI in governance.

Exam Facts to Remember

01

First Summit

First AI Action Summit 2025 – Paris.

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Co-chairs

Co-chairs: France and India.

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Key Document

Key document: Paris Declaration on Responsible AI.

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AI Fund

Creation of AI Action Fund for Global South.

ćd

India's Model

India's AI for All model highlighted.

United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management – Asia & the Pacific (UN-GGIM-AP)

Origins of the Global Mechanism

- The United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) was established in 2011 by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
- It serves as the global inter-governmental mechanism to coordinate and set policies for geospatial information management.
- The initiative evolved from expert consultations in 2009–2010, highlighting the growing global dependence on location-based data for governance, development, and sustainability.
- **Purpose:** to provide a formal structure for countries to collaborate on the collection, sharing, standardization, and ethical use of geospatial data.

Formation of the Regional Committee (UN-GGIM-AP)

- The Regional Committee for Asia and the Pacific (UN-GGIM-AP) originated as the Permanent Committee on GIS Infrastructure for Asia and the Pacific (PCGIAP) in 1995.
- It was restructured and renamed as UN-GGIM-AP in 2012, aligning it with the global GGIM framework.

It represents **56 countries and economies** of Asia-Pacific.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) acts as its secretariat.

Aim: to strengthen regional cooperation in geospatial data and technologies, aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Structure & Membership

The Committee comprises national geospatial agencies of member countries.

It operates through three layers of governance:

1

Plenary Meeting (decision-making body).

2

Executive Board (policy implementation and oversight).

3

Working Groups (technical and thematic functions).

India participates through the Survey of India, under the Department of Science & Technology.

Major Working Groups

1

Geodetic Reference Frame

Establishing standardized coordinates and reference points across the Earth's surface.

2

Integrated Geospatial Information for Land Administration

Linking land records with spatial data for better governance.

3

Integration of Geospatial Information and Statistics

Combining maps with national data (population, health, economy).

4

Implementation of the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF)

A guiding policy for countries to build geospatial capacity.

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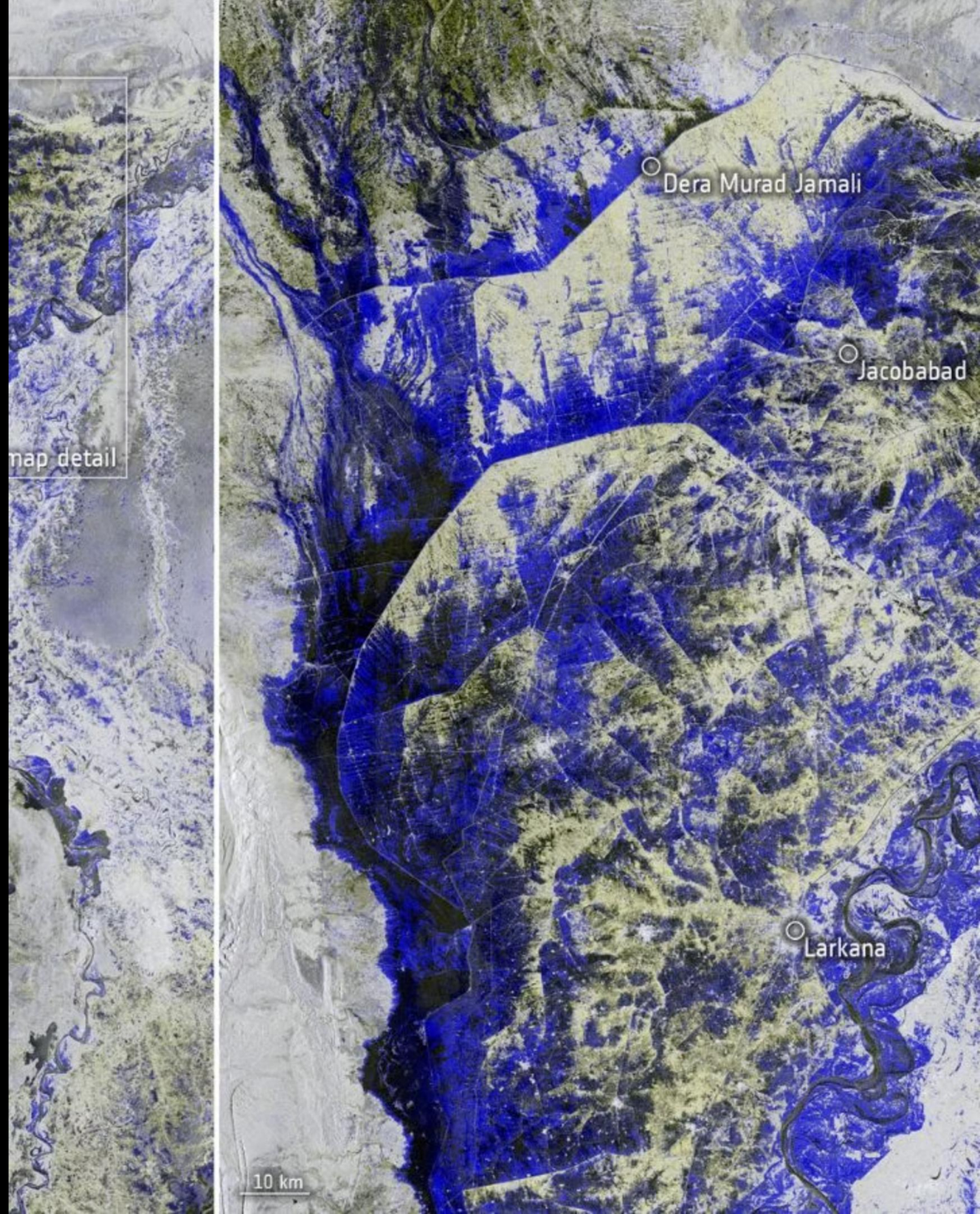
Understanding Geospatial Information

- **Geospatial Information** refers to data linked to specific geographic locations on or near the Earth's surface.
- It includes location (latitude, longitude), attributes (land use, ownership, elevation), and time (when data was collected).
- **Example:** A satellite map showing flood zones and affected areas.
- **Uses:** disaster response, infrastructure planning, environmental management, and defense.



Mandate of UN-GGIM and Regional Committees

International Cooperation

Promote international cooperation in geospatial data sharing, capacity building, and standard setting.

Policy Development

Develop policies, legal frameworks, and governance models for the ethical use of location-based data.

Open Data Ecosystems

Encourage open data ecosystems to support evidence-based policymaking.

Global-Regional Link

Act as the link between regional efforts and global standards.

Functions of UN-GGIM-AP

Technical Cooperation

Facilitate technical cooperation among member nations.

Capacity Building

Build regional capacity in geospatial technologies.

Standardization

Promote standardized data collection and management practices.

Global Alignment

Align national geospatial infrastructures with global frameworks such as the UN-IGIF.

SDG Contribution

Strengthen geospatial contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

India's Election as Co-Chair

- India was elected Co-Chair for 2025-28 through the Survey of India.
- Reinforces India's growing leadership in the global geospatial ecosystem.
- Aligns with national initiatives like:
  - National Geospatial Policy 2022
  - PM GatiShakti Mission (infrastructure integration)
  - Digital India and Bhu-Aadhaar (land records digitisation).
- Significance: enhances India's role in policy formulation, regional capacity building, and sustainable use of geospatial data.

Strategic Implications for India & Asia-Pacific

India's leadership helps standardize data frameworks and improve collaboration with ASEAN, BIMSTEC, and SAARC members.

Geospatial technologies crucial for:

Disaster Management

Floods, cyclones, earthquakes.

Climate Resilience

Urban planning.

Infrastructure Development

Resource mapping.

India's Strategic Priorities & Quick Revision

Regional Cooperation

Enhance regional cooperation under Co-Chairship.

South–South Collaboration

Promote South-South collaboration for technology exchange.

Public–Private Partnerships

Expand public-private partnerships in geospatial innovation.

National Integration

Integrate geospatial systems with national missions such as Smart Cities, Digital Land Records, and PM GatiShakti.

Chabahar Port

Introduction – What & Where

- Full Name: Chabahar Port (Terminals: Shahid Beheshti & Shahid Kalantari)
- Location: Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Iran, on the Gulf of Oman near the Strait of Hormuz.
- Strategic classification: Iran's only ocean-going deep-water port; approximately 170 km west of Pakistan's Gwadar Port (CPEC) and part of India's westward connectivity.

India-Iran Agreement & Development

1	2	3
2005 India entered into an agreement with Iran in 2005 to develop Chabahar Port.	2015 MoU in 2015 between India & Iran for development of the Shahid Beheshti terminal; India formally took over through India Ports Global Ltd. (IPGL) in 2018.	2016 Trilateral Agreement (India-Iran-Afghanistan, 2016) for transit and trade corridor through Chabahar.

Strategic & Economic Importance

Direct Access

Provides India direct sea-land route to Afghanistan & Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan.

INSTC Corridor

Part of the International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC) linking India → Iran → Caspian Sea → Russia → Europe.

Strategic Balance

Counterbalance to China's Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) and Pakistan's Gwadar Port.

Regional Policy

Supports India's "Connect Central Asia" and extended-neighbourhood policy.

US Waiver & Recent Developments

US Waiver

India secured a six-month waiver from US sanctions on Chabahar (Oct 2025-Apr 2026) allowing continued Indian operations.

US sanctions had become applicable under the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act (2012) from Sept 2025, which made US waiver significant.

Ongoing Developments

Ongoing developments: Integration with INSTC and proposed Chabahar–Zahedan–Mashhad rail-link (Iran).

Institutional / Operational Aspects

Nodal Body

Nodal Indian body: India Ports Global Ltd. (IPGL) for terminal operations.

Investment

Indian investment via India-Iran agreement, backed by Indian companies and Government of India.

Coordination

Works in coordination with Iranian authorities, maritime agencies and regional logistics bodies.

Operations

Key operational features: transit trade to Afghanistan, Central Asia; warehousing, logistics hub; custom corridor.

Lipulekh Pass

Location & Basic Facts

Lipulekh Pass is a high-altitude mountain pass in the Himalayas, located in the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand (India) near the tri-junction of India, Nepal and China (Tibet).

Approximate altitude: ~5,334 m (≈17,500 ft) above sea level.

Historically used as a trade and pilgrimage route linking India with Tibet and via Kailash–Mansarovar Yatra.

Strategic Significance & Routes

The pass is the shortest route for the Lake Mansarovar / Mount Kailash pilgrimage from India.

It also serves as a border/trade link between India and Tibet (China). India and China announced reopening trade through Lipulekh Pass in August 2025.

Located in a geopolitically sensitive region, owing to proximity to the India-Nepal border and China.

Territorial Dispute & Treaty Context

The area around Lipulekh Pass (including Kalapani, Limpiyadhura) is claimed by both India and Nepal:

- Nepal's claim is based on the Treaty of Sugauli (1816) which defines the Kali (Mahakali) River as the boundary. Nepal asserts the source is at Limpiyadhura, which would place Kalapani/Lipulekh in Nepal.

- India's position: The river begins at Kalapani springs and the watershed demarcation places Lipulekh within Indian territory.

In August 2025, Nepal officially objected to India-China trade through the pass. India responded by calling the claim "unjustified and untenable."

Infrastructure, Yatra & Trade Developments

Road connectivity

The 80 km road from Dharchula to Lipulekh (via Gunji-Nabhidhang) has been upgraded by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO).

Yatra

The Lipulekh route is used for the Kailash–Mansarovar Yatra, which resumed via this route.

Trade

India–China reopened border trade through Lipulekh in 2025, which revived strategic significance but aggravated Nepal's objections.

Challenges & Significance

Challenges:

- Border infrastructure in harsh terrain and extreme altitude.
- Territorial dispute complicates diplomacy with Nepal.
- Security and logistics given proximity to China frontier.

Significance:

- Enhances India's cultural and strategic link with Tibet/China and Central Asia.
- Important for pilgrimage tourism and local economy.
- Border-trade route renewal adds economic dimension to strategic geomap.

Kalapani–Limpiyadhura Dispute

Geographic Context & Background

1

Kalapani Region:

Located in the Pithoragarh district (Uttarakhand, India) near the tri-junction of India, Nepal, and China (Tibet Autonomous Region).

2

Constituent Areas:

1. Kalapani – Indian paramilitary presence since 1962.
2. Limpiyadhura – The far-western Himalayan watershed origin of the Kali River (disputed).
3. Lipulekh Pass – Himalayan pass providing access to Tibet.

3

Topography:

High-altitude terrain (4,000–5,500 m asl), source of Kali (Sharda/Mahakali) River, which forms the India–Nepal boundary as per the Treaty of Sugauli (1816).

4

States/Provinces Involved:

1. India: Uttarakhand (Pithoragarh district)
2. Nepal: Sudurpashchim Province (Darchula District)

Historical & Treaty Framework

Year / Treaty / Event	Key Provisions / Developments
1816 – Treaty of Sugauli (between British India & Nepal)	Defined Kali River as boundary between British India and Nepal. Dispute arises from differing interpretations of the river's source.
1860s British Survey Maps	Ambiguity: some maps mark river source at Kalapani, others at Limpiyadhura → area between (~372 sq km) became "grey zone."
1962 Sino-Indian War	India deployed troops in Kalapani valley for frontier defense; Nepal did not object formally until later decades.

Timeline Continued

1998–99

Nepal raised the issue after India–China reopened the Lipulekh trade route.

May 2020

India inaugurated new Dharchula–Lipulekh road (BRO) → Nepal issued strong protest.

June 2020

Nepal's Parliament passed a constitutional amendment adopting a new national map showing Kalapani, Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura as Nepali territory (~372 sq km).

2025

Nepal protested India–China reopening Lipulekh route for trade; India reaffirmed the boundary alignment per historical maps and usage.

Core of the Dispute – The Kali (Mahakali) River Source

India's View

River originates near Kalapani springs, south of Lipulekh; the territory east of river belongs to Nepal, west to India.

Boundary demarcation based on watershed principle and long administrative control by India (since 1962).

Nepal's View

River originates at Limpiyadhura, further northwest; entire area of Kalapani–Lipulekh lies east of the river, hence within Nepal.

Boundary demarcation strictly as per Sugauli Treaty language "east of Kali River," interpreted using older British maps.

- **Cartographic Evidence:** Multiple British Survey maps (1819–1880s) vary in river depiction.
- **Population:** Sparse, with Indian administrative control, Indian roads and security posts, but claimed in Nepal's official map (2020).

Strategic & Diplomatic Dimensions

Strategic Importance:

- The tri-junction provides surveillance over routes into Tibet (China).
- Lipulekh Pass gives India a vantage point near Mansarovar region.

China's Role:

- Indirectly relevant — its agreement with India on border trade through Lipulekh (2015) triggered Nepal's objections.

Diplomatic Channels:

- Joint Boundary Working Group (BWG) established in 1981; meetings irregular.
- India maintains that issues must be settled bilaterally through existing mechanisms; rejects "map diplomacy."

- Nepal continues to urge talks; bilateral dialogue ongoing since 2020.

Key Facts & Data for Exams

Parameter	Detail
Disputed Area Size	~372 sq km (Kalapani–Lipulekh–Limpiyadhura).
Treaty Basis	Treaty of Sugauli (1816).
India's Control	Administrative, security & infrastructural control since 1962.
Nepal's Claim Formalised	2020 via constitutional amendment.
River at Dispute	Kali / Sharda / Mahakali River.
Associated Pass	Lipulekh Pass (5,334 m).
BRO Infrastructure	Dharchula–Gunji–Nabhidhang–Lipulekh road.
Recent Flashpoint	2025 India–China trade reopening; Nepal protest.

Broader Implications & Way Forward

Implications:

- Impacts India–Nepal relations — political sensitivities and national identity narratives in Nepal.
- Affects India's border management with China and access to the Kailash–Mansarovar route.
- Illustrates complex colonial-era map legacy issues.

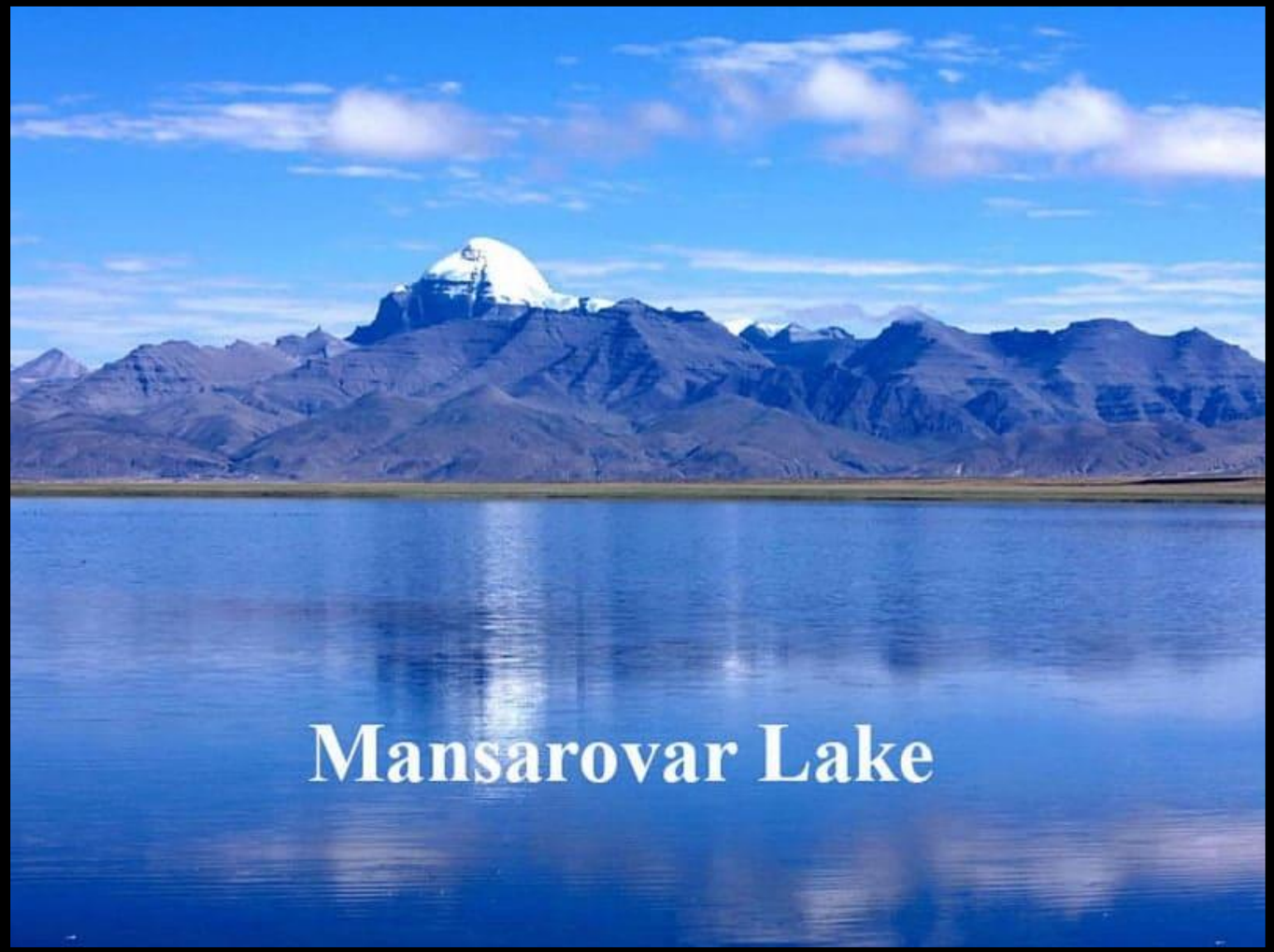
Way Forward:

- Resume high-level Boundary Working Group talks.
- Strengthen Track II diplomacy and data-based joint surveys.
- Promote development cooperation (hydropower, tourism, trade) to dilute tensions.
- Avoid cartographic escalation — maintain status quo pending dialogue.

Acronyms & Key Terms

Acronym	Full Form / Explanation
BRO	Border Roads Organisation
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone (not directly applied here but often linked in Indo-Nepal hydro context)
Sugauli Treaty (1816)	Treaty between East India Company and Kingdom of Nepal defining boundaries.
Mahakali River	Local name of the Kali River forming boundary.
BWG	Boundary Working Group (India–Nepal mechanism).

Lake Manasarovar



Introduction & Geography

- Lake Manasarovar is a high-altitude freshwater lake located in Ngari Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region (China), near the western India–Nepal–China tri-junction.

- Altitude: approx. 4,588 m to 4,650 m above sea level depending on source.

- Area / Depth: Covers around 412 km^2; maximum depth around 70–80 m.

- Location detail: Situated at the southern foot of Mount Kailash (≈20 km away) in Burang County.

Name, Etymology & Origin

Name

From Sanskrit "Manas" (mind) + "Sarovar" (lake) = "Lake of the Mind".

Tibetan names

Include Mapam Yumtso meaning "Invincible Lake" or "Unconquerable Lake".

Geological note

The region was once the Tethys Sea; the lake is a remnant of that ancient ocean.

Religious & Cultural Significance

Revered by multiple religions:

Hinduism

Bathing/drinking water believed to cleanse sins; myths link lake to Brahma and the origin of rivers.

Buddhism

Associated with myths of Buddha's mother Maya bathing here; monks circumbulate the lake.

Jainism & Bon religion

The lake holds significance in these faiths too.

Pilgrimage: The lake is part of the famous Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra; pilgrims circle Mount Kailash and visit the lake.

Hydrology & River Systems

The lake lies at a key watershed. Major rivers originate or have headwaters nearby: Brahmaputra (Yarlung Tsangpo), Indus, Sutlej, and Karnali (a major tributary of the Ganga).

To the west lies the salt-water sister-lake Rakshas Tal (Rakshastal) which is in stark contrast to Manasarovar.

Access & Pilgrim Routes

- Accessed generally via Tibet (Ngari region) for the Yatra; routes include via Nepal and Indian border passes (e.g., Lipulekh Pass).

- Best travel season: April-September (summer in Tibetan plateau); winters are extremely cold with heavy snow and difficult access.

Environmental & Strategic Aspects

Environmental Challenges

The high-altitude ecosystem is fragile; climate change, glacial melt, and increased tourism present challenges.

Transparent water, high aesthetic value: Often called one of the most transparent and pure lakes in Asia.

Strategic Location

Near India-China border; access impacts India's pilgrimage logistics and Himalaya frontier connectivity.

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

Introduction – What is IORA

Full Name: Indian Ocean Rim Association

Established: 6–7 March 1997, Mauritius.

Former Name: Indian Ocean Rim Initiative (IORI) – conceptualized in 1995.

Secretariat Headquarters: Ebène, Mauritius.

Current Chair (2023–25): Sri Lanka (took over from Bangladesh).

Vice-Chair (2023–25): India.

Members: 23 Member States + 10 Dialogue Partners.

Official Motto: "Enhancing Regional Cooperation for a Peaceful, Stable & Prosperous Indian Ocean."

Membership & Partners

Category	Countries
Members (23)	Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, France (Réunion), India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.
Dialogue Partners (10)	China, Egypt, Germany, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United States.
Observer Organisations	Indian Ocean Research Group, Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), Partners such as UN ESCAP, ILO, FAO.

Objectives & Purpose

Strategic Goal:

Foster regional economic cooperation among littoral states of the Indian Ocean.

Primary Objectives:

1. Promote sustainable growth and balanced development in the region.
2. Enhance maritime safety and security.
3. Encourage trade facilitation, investment, and technology exchange.
4. Support Blue Economy and climate change adaptation.
5. Strengthen disaster-risk management and humanitarian cooperation.

Priority & Focus Areas (Post-2022 Charter)

Key Priority Areas	Examples / Implementation
Maritime Safety & Security	Counter-piracy, coordinated patrols, intelligence sharing.
Trade & Investment Facilitation	IORA Business Forum, trade fairs, harmonisation of tariffs.
Fisheries Management	Sustainable fisheries; linkages with IOTC.
Disaster-Risk Management	Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (IOTWS).
Tourism & Cultural Exchange	"Visit Indian Ocean" campaign.
Academic, Science & Technology Cooperation	IORA Academic Group; oceanographic research.
Blue Economy (introduced 2014)	Marine renewable energy, shipping, marine biotech.
Women's Economic Empowerment	Women's Business Forum (WBF) for inclusive growth.

Institutional Framework

Council of Ministers (COM)

Highest decision-making body; meets annually; chaired by rotating member.

Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)

Implements COM decisions; meets twice annually.

Working Groups / Clusters

Thematic groups on Maritime Security, Blue Economy, Disaster Management, Trade.

Secretariat (Ebène, Mauritius)

Administrative & coordination hub.

Specialised Agencies

Regional Centre for Science & Technology Transfer (RCSTT – Tehran), Fisheries Support Unit (Oman).

India's Role in IORA

Founding Member (1997).

Vice-Chair (2023–25) → To assume Chairship (2025–27).

Focus Areas led by India:

Disaster Risk Management (DRM)

India hosts IORA-Disaster Risk Reduction Centre (IORA-DRRC) at New Delhi (2022).

Blue Economy

India organised IORA Blue Economy Dialogue (Goa, 2019).

Maritime Security

Conducts joint naval exercises and capacity-building programmes.

Diplomatic Context:

Supports Indo-Pacific Vision through synergy with BIMSTEC, IONS, and ASEAN frameworks.

Recent Development:

IORA–BIMSTEC MoU (2025) signed during 6th BIMSTEC Summit for cooperation on maritime governance and disaster resilience.

Key Achievements & Recent Summits

23rd Council of Ministers Meeting (2023)

Held in Colombo → adoption of IORA Vision 2030.

24th Ministerial (2024, Colombo)

Focus on Blue Economy Financing and Digital Maritime Corridors.

IORA Vision 2030

Long-term roadmap for connectivity, trade facilitation, and ocean governance.

IORA Leaders' Summit (planned 2025)

To be chaired by Sri Lanka, with India as Vice-Chair.

University Network

India advocated establishment of IORA University Network for marine sciences.

Strategic Importance of IORA

Global Trade Hub

Links East Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia & Oceania — covers a maritime region accounting for ⅔ of global oil shipments & ⅓ of global cargo trade.

Indo-Pacific Balance

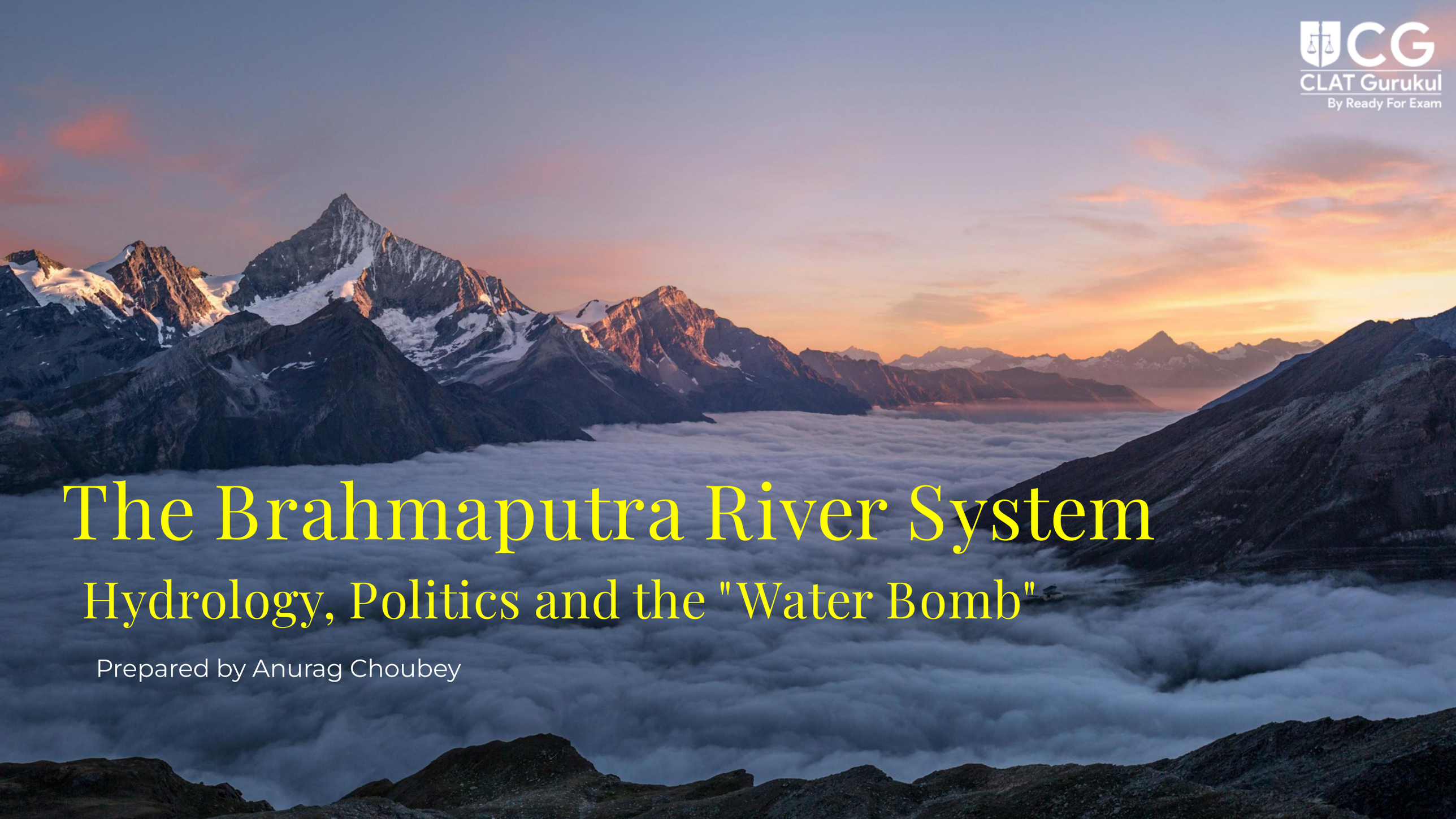
Central to the Indo-Pacific strategic narrative balancing regional influence among India, ASEAN, Australia, and emerging powers.

Capacity Building Platform

Acts as a platform for small island developing states (SIDS) and African littoral nations for capacity-building & technology access.

India's Maritime Diplomacy

Enhances India's maritime diplomacy and supports SAGAR vision ("Security and Growth for All in the Region").



The Brahmaputra River System

Hydrology, Politics and the "Water Bomb"

Prepared by Anurag Choubey

Overview & Significance

One of Asia's Largest and Most Dynamic Rivers

- The Brahmaputra River, known as Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet, is one of Asia's largest and most dynamic rivers.

- Flows through Tibet (China) → Arunachal Pradesh & Assam (India) → Bangladesh, joining the Ganga (Padma) before emptying into the Bay of Bengal.

Geopolitically Sensitive

- Transboundary river shared by China, India, Bhutan, and Bangladesh — making it geopolitically sensitive.
- Recent disputes over China's mega hydropower projects have made it central to Indo-China relations.
- Frequent in news for risks of floods, glacial melt, dam-building, and river management conflicts.

Origin and Course

From Tibet to the Bay of Bengal (Part 1)

01

Origin

Arises from Angsi Glacier (south of Mount Kailash, Tibet) — official Chinese claim.

02

Alternate Source

Alternate identified source: Chema-Yungdung Glacier — older geographical view.

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Tibetan Name

Known as Yarlung Tsangpo (meaning "The Purifier") in Tibet.

The Tibetan Plateau Journey

- Flows eastward for nearly 1,100 km across the Tibetan Plateau.
- Receives tributaries: Lhasa River, Nyang Chu, and Parlung Tsangpo.
- Cuts through the Namcha Barwa range, forming the world's deepest gorge — The Great Bend or Yarlung Tsangpo Canyon.

Origin and Course

India & Bangladesh (Part 2)

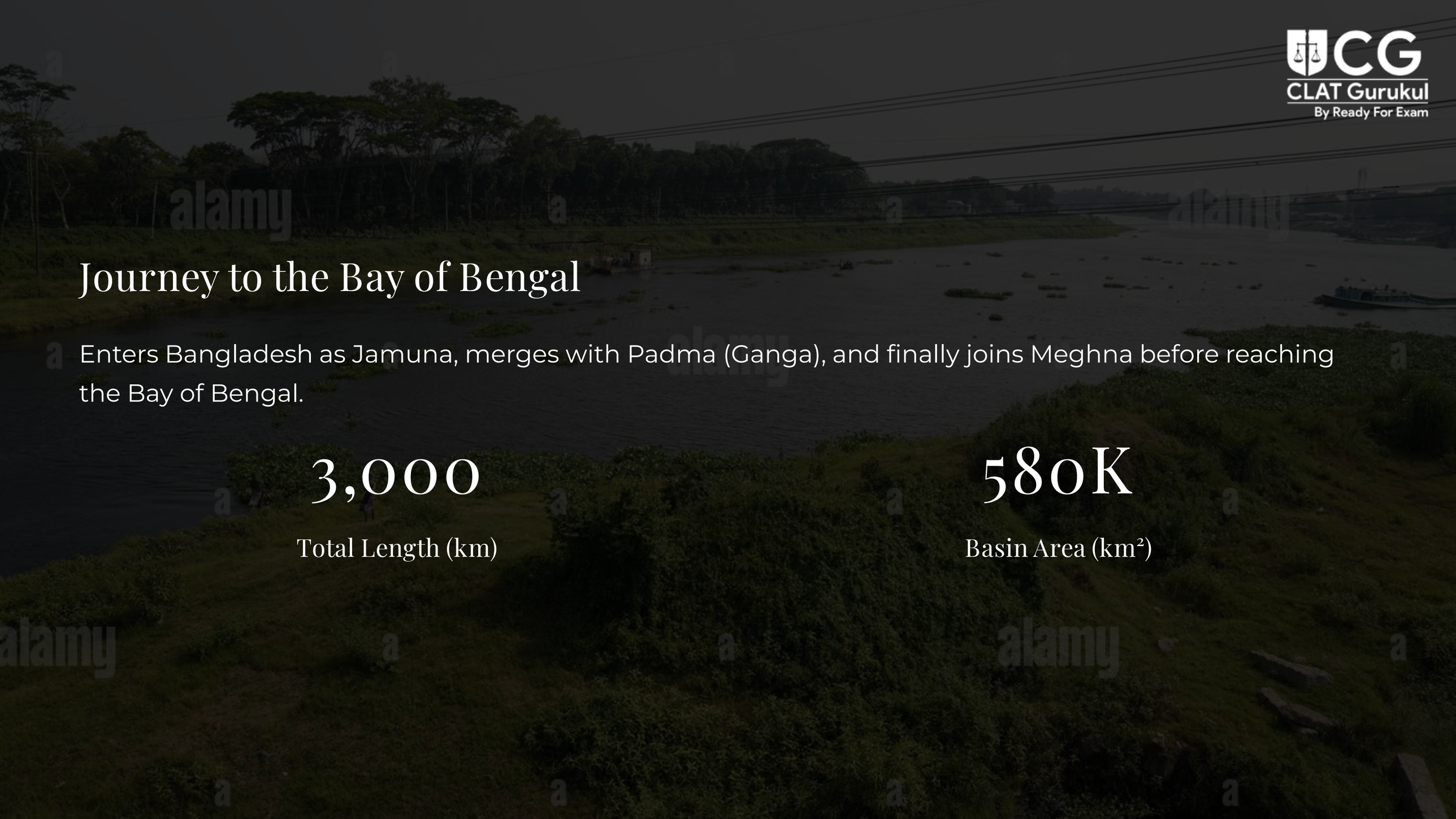
Entry into India

Enters India near Gelling, Arunachal Pradesh, where it's called Siang or Dihang.

Joins Lohit and Dibang rivers near Sadiya, becoming the Brahmaputra.

Through Assam

Flows westward through Assam, creating fertile alluvial plains and Majuli Island (world's largest river island).



Journey to the Bay of Bengal

Enters Bangladesh as Jamuna, merges with Padma (Ganga), and finally joins Meghna before reaching the Bay of Bengal.

3,000

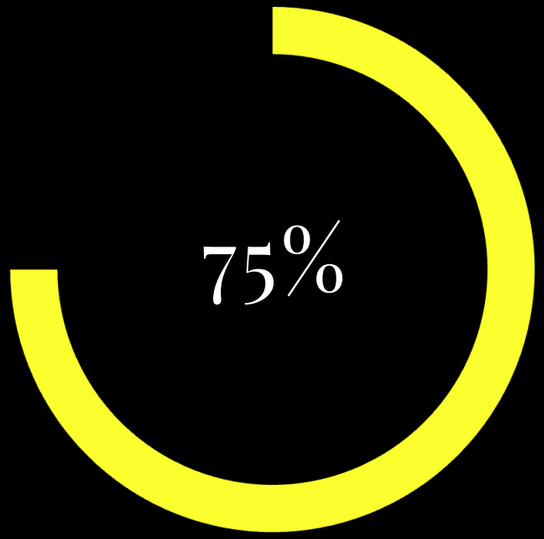
Total Length (km)

580K

Basin Area (km^2)

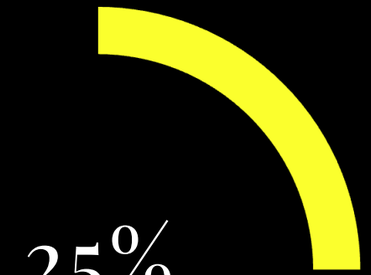
Hydrology and Flow Characteristics

Mixed Hydrological Regime (Part 1)



Monsoon Rains

Fed by monsoon rains (70–80%)



Glacial Melt

Fed by glacial melt (20–30%)

Average discharge: **~20,000 cubic meters per second** — among the highest in the world.

Sediment Load and Flood Dynamics

- Annual sediment load: ~700–800 million tonnes — causes heavy siltation and frequent floods.
- Peak discharge during floods: can exceed 70,000 m^3/s (Assam plains).
- High sediment load and steep gradients cause braided channels, bank erosion, and channel migration.

Hydrology and Flow Characteristics
Seasonal Variations (Part 2)

Monsoon Dominance

Flow peaks June–September, often leading to devastating floods in Assam and Bangladesh.

Dry Season

November–April — minimal discharge; river often splits into multiple narrow channels.

Dynamic Geomorphology

- Dynamic geomorphology: forms numerous sandbars (chars) and shifting islands.
- Frequent avulsion events (course shifting), responsible for erosion in Dibrugarh, Majuli, and Dhakuakhana.
- Flood hazard frequency: average annual flood area in Assam = 31 lakh hectares affected.

Geomorphology and Peculiarities

The Great Bend & Canyon (Part 1)

The Great Bend

The Great Bend: where the river turns sharply southward around Namcha Barwa Peak (7,782 m) — a tectonic hotspot.

Yarlung Tsangpo Canyon: **deepest canyon globally (~5,500 m depth)**, site for China's planned mega-dam.

Majuli Island

Majuli Island: formed by the shifting Brahmaputra — **largest inhabited river island on Earth**.

Highly braided plains: indicate enormous sediment load and high river energy.

Landslides and glacial lake bursts often trigger sudden discharge surges.

Geomorphology and Natural Hazards (Part 2)

- Region lies in Seismic Zone V — very high earthquake vulnerability.
- Risk of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) due to rapid Himalayan glacier retreat.
- Example: 2017 Siang turbidity incident — sudden color change linked to upstream landslides in Tibet.
- Combined natural + anthropogenic pressures make it one of the most hazard-prone river systems globally.

Chinese Projects on the Yarlung Tsangpo

Western Route Hydro Initiative (Part 1)

2000s

China began harnessing the Yarlung Tsangpo in the 2000s under its Western Route Hydro Initiative.

1

2015

2

Zangmu Hydropower Project: Tibet's first large dam (510 MW, operational since 2015).

Expansion

3

Followed by smaller run-of-river dams at Pangduo, Zhikong, and Gyaca.

Claimed as "clean energy projects," but India concerns remain due to cumulative impact.

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The Medog / Great Bend Mega-Dam

Part 2

- Medog Dam Project: proposed on the Great Bend, near Namcha Barwa, Tibet.
- Approved in 2024, construction initiated mid-2025, per Chinese reports.

Largest Hydropower Proposal in Human History

60K	$165B	2,000
Proposed Capacity (MW)	Estimated Cost (USD)	Elevation Drop (m)
≈3× Three Gorges Dam	¥1 trillion investment	Natural advantage

Engineering plan: cascade of multiple dams using a 2,000 m natural elevation drop for hydropower.

India's Concerns and the "Water Bomb" Narrative

India fears that massive reservoirs upstream could act as "water bombs" — if mismanaged or deliberately breached.

Risks Include:

Sudden Flood Releases

Sudden flood releases affecting Arunachal & Assam.

Seismic-Triggered Failures

Seismic-triggered failures (earthquake + landslide zone).

Ecological Impact

Ecological impact — sediment and nutrient cut-off downstream.

Strategic Leverage

Strategic leverage: China could regulate water flows in times of tension.

India's MEA has repeatedly raised this issue diplomatically.

India's Diplomatic & Policy Measures

MoU with China (2002) for hydrological data exchange during flood season renewed in 2013 & 2018.

India receives daily discharge data from three stations in Tibet (June–October).

India's official stance: projects are within Chinese territory but transparency and safety must be ensured.

Arunachal Pradesh Govt (2025) termed the Medog Dam a "potential water bomb."

India is also pushing its own hydropower projects (Upper Siang, Subansiri, Dibang) to establish downstream rights.

Major Indian Projects on the Brahmaputra Basin

Project	River	Capacity	State	Status
Upper Siang	Siang	~11,000 MW	Arunachal	Proposed
Dibang Multipurpose Project	Dibang	2,880 MW	Arunachal	Under constructio n
Lower Subansiri	Subansiri	2,000 MW	Arunachal–Assam border	Nearly complete
Teesta V & VI	Teesta	~1,200 MW	Sikkim	Operational

Legal and Environmental Dimensions

No multilateral treaty governs Brahmaputra waters among China, India, and Bangladesh.

Existing cooperation limited to seasonal data sharing.

Need for a tripartite river-basin management framework (India–China–Bangladesh).

International law principles

- Equitable and reasonable utilization (UN Watercourses Convention, 1997).
- Obligation not to cause significant harm to co-riparian states.
- Prior notification for major interventions.

China is not a party to the UN Watercourses Convention → legal enforceability is weak.

Environmental and Ecological Impacts

Massive damming threatens:

- Aquatic biodiversity (Gangetic & Assam dolphins).
- Floodplain fertility due to sediment retention.
- Cultural and ecological sites in Arunachal valleys.

Submergence risk to tribal and forest areas

(Apatani, Adi, Memba regions).

Alteration in wetland hydrology

(Majuli, Deepor Beel).

Increased vulnerability to dam-induced floods and climate-triggered glacial bursts.

Lengths & Reach (quick, precise facts)

Total length (whole river)

≈ 2,900 km (Tibet → India → Bangladesh).

Length in India

≈ 916 km (official Indian water resources publications/CWC).

Basin area (approx.): ~5.8 × 10^5 km² (shared by China, India, Bhutan, Bangladesh).

Important sub-stretches to remember:

- Sadiya–Dhubri stretch (approx. 891 km) — often cited in river-navigation contexts (NW-2).

Longest / Most important bridges (high-probability exam facts)

- **Bhupen Hazarika Setu / Dhola–Sadiya Bridge**

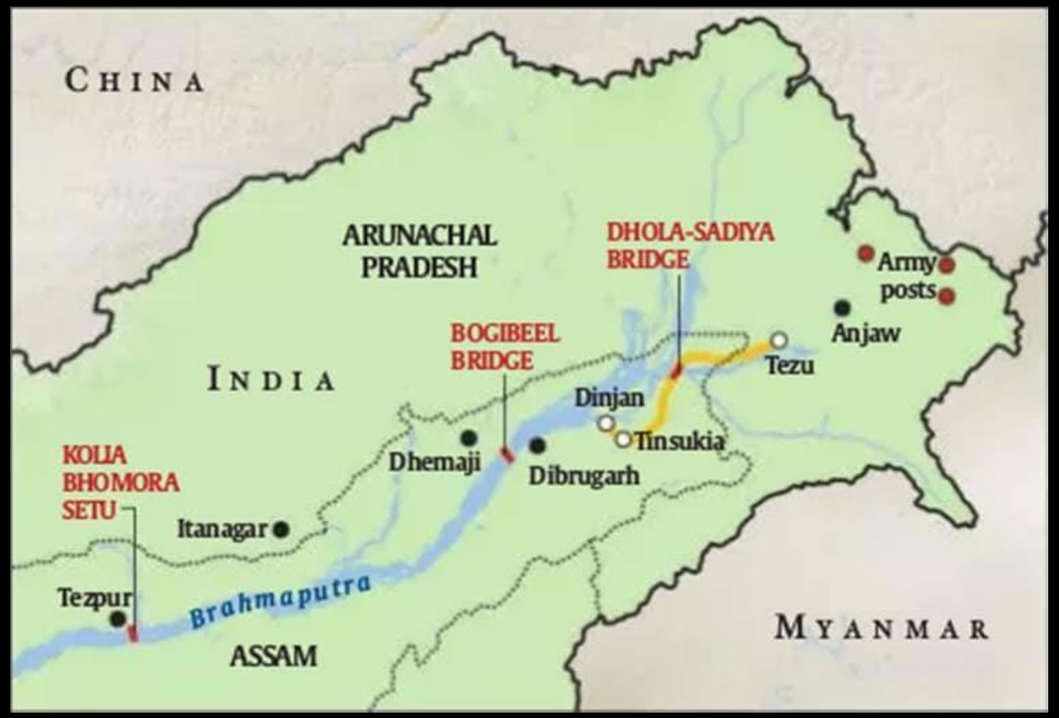
  (over Lohit, a Brahmaputra tributary): **9.15 km** — commonly cited as India's longest bridge over water (connects Dhola–Sadiya; opened 2017). Memorize: **9.15 km**.

- **Bogibeel Bridge**

  (spans the Brahmaputra between Dibrugarh–Dhemaji): **4.94 km** — India's longest rail-cum-road bridge (opened 2018; strategic military/logistics importance). Memorize: **4.94 km, rail+road**.

Saraighat Bridge (Guwahati): 1,492 m (≈1.49 km) — first rail-cum-road bridge on the Brahmaputra (inaugurated 1962) — high-value history fact. Memorize: **1.49 km; 1962**.

Other names: Kolia Bhomora Setu (~3.0 km), Naranarayan Setu, New Saraighat (road bridge beside old one), Dibang River Bridge (6.2 km — over the Dibang tributary). (Use these when asked about connectivity or strategic infrastructure.)



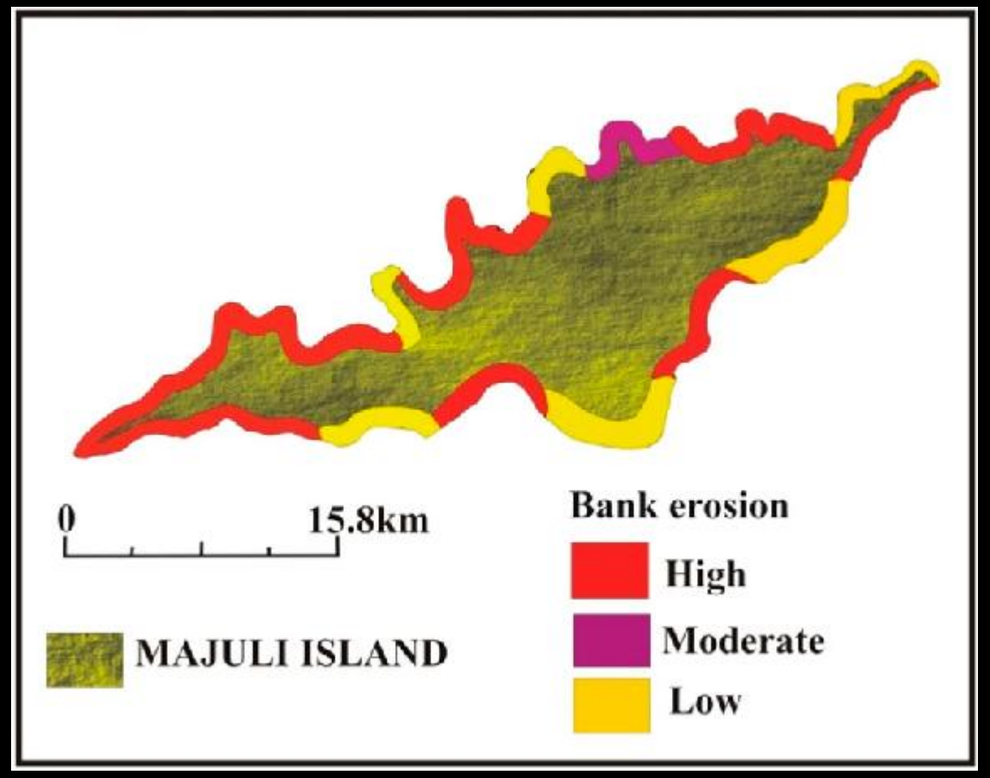
Navigability, ports, National Waterway & logistics

National Waterway-2 (NW-2): Declared for the Brahmaputra (Dhubri → Sadiya); crucial for inland water transport, cargo and ferry movement — many exam questions ask about NW-2.

Pandu Port (Guwahati): Major river port on the Brahmaputra serving Guwahati — important for trade/riverine logistics and tourist cruises. Remember: **Pandu = main river port for Guwahati**.

Navigational draft in NW-2 stretches: government sources provide channel/draft figures used for exam MCQs (e.g., draft maintained between Dhubri–Neamati ≈ 2.5 m, and other stretches slightly less).

Majuli, erosion & a couple of high-value environmental facts



Majuli: world's largest river island, located in the Brahmaputra (Assam). It's a frequent CLAT/GS question because of its ecology, cultural value (Vaishnavite satras), and dramatic area loss due to erosion.

Erosion: Majuli's area has shrunk substantially over the 20th–21st centuries because of Brahmaputra's shifting channels — remember erosion, river-island dynamics & relocation/rehabilitation issues for policy/ethics/MCQ prompts.

Strategic point: Bridges + ports + NW-2 development are all closely tied to defence logistics and regional connectivity — often the reasoning angle in higher-order CLAT questions.

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Hydrology of Indus River

Origin & Overview

- The Indus River is one of the longest in Asia and the principal river of Pakistan.
- Origin: from the Sengge Zangbo (Lion's Mouth) Glacier near Mount Kailash, Tibet (China).
- Total Length: ~3,180 km; Length in India: ~1,114 km.
- Basin area: ~1.165 million km² shared by China, India, Afghanistan & Pakistan.
- The Indus Valley was the cradle of the Harappan Civilization, marking its historical significance.
- The river system is glacio-fluvial — largely fed by snowmelt and monsoon rains.

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India's Reach & Strategic Significance

- Flows through Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir, and Punjab before entering Pakistan near Skardu.
- Supports irrigation, power, and drinking water in arid trans-Himalayan regions.
- Strategically critical: controls upper catchments of all major tributaries flowing into Pakistan.
- Plays a key role in India's hydro-diplomacy and water security under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT).
- Exam pointer: Indus = Origin in Tibet → India (Ladakh–Punjab) → Pakistan → Arabian Sea near Karachi.

Tributaries & River System Structure

- Right-bank tributaries: Shyok, Gilgit, Hunza, Kabul, Kurram, Gomal (mostly in Pakistan/Afghanistan).
- Left-bank tributaries: Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, Sutlej — these drain large parts of India's north.
- Mnemonic: "BRCJS" → Beas–Ravi–Chenab–Jhelum–Sutlej.
- The five rivers of Punjab (Beas, Ravi, Chenab, Jhelum, Sutlej) merge with Indus in Pakistan.
- Catchment in India: ~321,000 km².
- Tributaries descend steeply from the Himalayas, carrying enormous sediment loads.

India's Control & Exam Pointers

India holds upper reaches of all eastern rivers and headwaters of western tributaries (Jhelum, Chenab).

Hydrological complexity: flows shift sharply due to snowmelt timing; irrigation season overlaps with Pakistan's sowing period → source of friction.

Exam focus:

Chenab Baglihar, Ratle	**Jhelum** Uri, Kishanganga	**Sutlej** Bhakra–Nangal
Ravi Ranjit Sagar (Thein)	**Beas** Pong	

Length order (descending): Indus > Chenab > Sutlej > Jhelum > Ravi > Beas.

Hydrology & Flow Characteristics

- Average discharge: ~6,600 m^3/s at the delta.
- Annual flow: ~207 BCM.
- Peak discharge: during June–September (monsoon + glacier melt).
- Type: glacio-fluvial — snowmelt contributes up to 40% of flow.
- Major storage: Tarbela (Pakistan), Bhakra & Pong (Ind
- Basin exhibits extreme seasonality — floods in summer, droughts in winter.

Climate & Exam Insights

- GLOF (Glacial Lake Outburst Floods): high risk in Ladakh & Gilgit.
- Climate change causing earlier snowmelt and erratic monsoon, altering flow timing.
- Sedimentation: major challenge—Tarbela & Mangla losing ~1% storage annually.

Exam-ready lines:

- Indus = snow-fed + monsoon-fed → bimodal regime.
- One of the most sediment-laden rivers globally.
- Delta region (Sindh) facing salinity & sea intrusion due to reduced flows.

Major Indian Projects

River	Project	Type	State
Sutlej	**Bhakra–Nangal**	Multipurpose	**Himachal–Punjab**
Sutlej	Nathpa Jhakri	Hydropower	**Himachal**
Beas	**Pong (Maharana Pratap Sagar)**	Irrigation + Power	Himachal
Ravi	**Ranjit Sagar (Thein)**	**Multipurpose**	**Punjab–J&K**
Chenab	**Baglihar, Dul Hasti, Pakal Dul, Ratle**	**Power**	**J&K**
Jhelum	**Uri I & II, Kishanganga**	**Power**	J&K
Indus (main)	**Nimoo Bazgo, Alchi, Durbuk–Shyok**	**Small hydro**	**Ladakh**

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Strategic Importance of Indian Projects

- Located in upper basin → gives India potential leverage during disputes.
- Run-of-River design ensures compliance with IWT (non-consumptive use).
- Provide power security to J&K & Ladakh.

- Serve as data-gathering & monitoring hubs for upstream flows.
- Exam cue: Baglihar & Kishanganga = hallmark cases tested in CLAT / UPSC.
- Baglihar (Chenab): Neutral Expert (2007) upheld India's design with minor changes.
- Kishanganga (Jhelum): PCA (2013) allowed project with 9 m^3/s minimum flow.

Major Pakistani Projects

Project	River	Purpose
Tarbela Dam	Indus	Irrigation + Power (≈3,500 MW)
Mangla Dam	Jhelum	Irrigation + Power
Diamer–Bhasha Dam	Indus (under construction)	Power (4,500 MW) + Storage
Guddu / Sukkur / Kotri Barrages	Indus	Diversion & irrigation
Trimmu / Marala Headworks	Chenab	Irrigation

Strategic Aspects for Pakistan

Agricultural Dependence

Pakistan's agriculture depends ~90% on Indus Basin water.

Irrigation Supply

Tarbela & Mangla supply major irrigation canals in Punjab & Sindh.

Future Storage

Diamer–Bhasha aims to reduce reliance on Tarbela but faces funding & displacement issues.

Fears of Indian upstream control trigger diplomatic protests under IWT.

Exam cue: Tarbela = world's largest earth-fill dam; Mangla = 1st large reservoir on Jhelum.

The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) 1960

Signed: 19 Sept 1960, Karachi.

Parties: India & Pakistan; Broker: World Bank.

Division:

- Eastern Rivers — Ravi, Beas, Sutlej → India's exclusive use.
- Western Rivers — Indus, Jhelum, Chenab → Pakistan's use, with India's limited rights.

India can use western rivers for non-consumptive & hydropower purposes (no storage > permitted).

Created the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) for routine cooperation.

Treaty Framework & Dispute Mechanism

01

PIC (Commissioners' level)

First level of dispute resolution

02

Neutral Expert (technical matters)

Second level for technical issues

03

Court of Arbitration (PCA) (legal disputes)

Final level for legal matters

World Bank acts as facilitator, not enforcer.

Recognized globally as a successful water-sharing model between hostile neighbours.

Exam pointer: IWT has survived wars and conflicts, showing treaty resilience.

Key Disputes & Arbitration Cases

1

Baglihar Dam (Chenab):

- Pakistan objected (storage & gates).
- 2007 Neutral Expert decision upheld India's design; required minor spillway adjustment.

2

Kishanganga (Jhelum):

- 2013 PCA award → India allowed diversion but must maintain 9 m^3/s flow downstream.

3

Ratle (Chenab):

- Pakistan raised objections (2022–23).
- India opposed parallel proceedings under both NE & PCA → issued notice for IWT modification (2023).

Contemporary Developments & Implications

- India's 2023 Notice: seeks revision of dispute settlement process citing misuse.
- Pakistan's stance: accuses India of treaty violations & obstruction.
- Current (2024–25): World Bank facilitating neutral expert + arbitration concurrently (unprecedented).
- Strategic debate: whether India can suspend treaty unilaterally during extreme provocation.
- Exam cue: Legal question of "material breach" under Vienna Convention on Treaties (1969) relevant.

Environmental & Climatic Challenges

Glacier retreat

Karakoram & Hindu Kush glaciers melting faster → long-term flow uncertainty.

Sediment load

Heavy; causes siltation in dams & reduced delta fertility.

Floods

Recurring in Pakistan due to monsoon surges & GLOFs.

Salinity & sea intrusion

Due to declining downstream flows in Sindh delta.

Biodiversity loss

Indus dolphins among most threatened freshwater species.

Policy & Legal Implications

Modernization Needs

Need for IWT Modernization: include climate adaptation, ecosystem flows, real-time data exchange.

India's Policy

Full utilization of Eastern rivers (Ravi–Beas–Sutlej) via Shahpur Kandi & Ujh projects.

Pakistan's Priority

Increase storage (Diamer–Bhasha) to offset flow fluctuations.

International Law

"Equitable and reasonable utilization" & "no significant harm" (UN Watercourses Convention, 1997).

Exam cue: China–India–Pakistan triangle → transboundary hydropolitics.

High-Value Data & Facts

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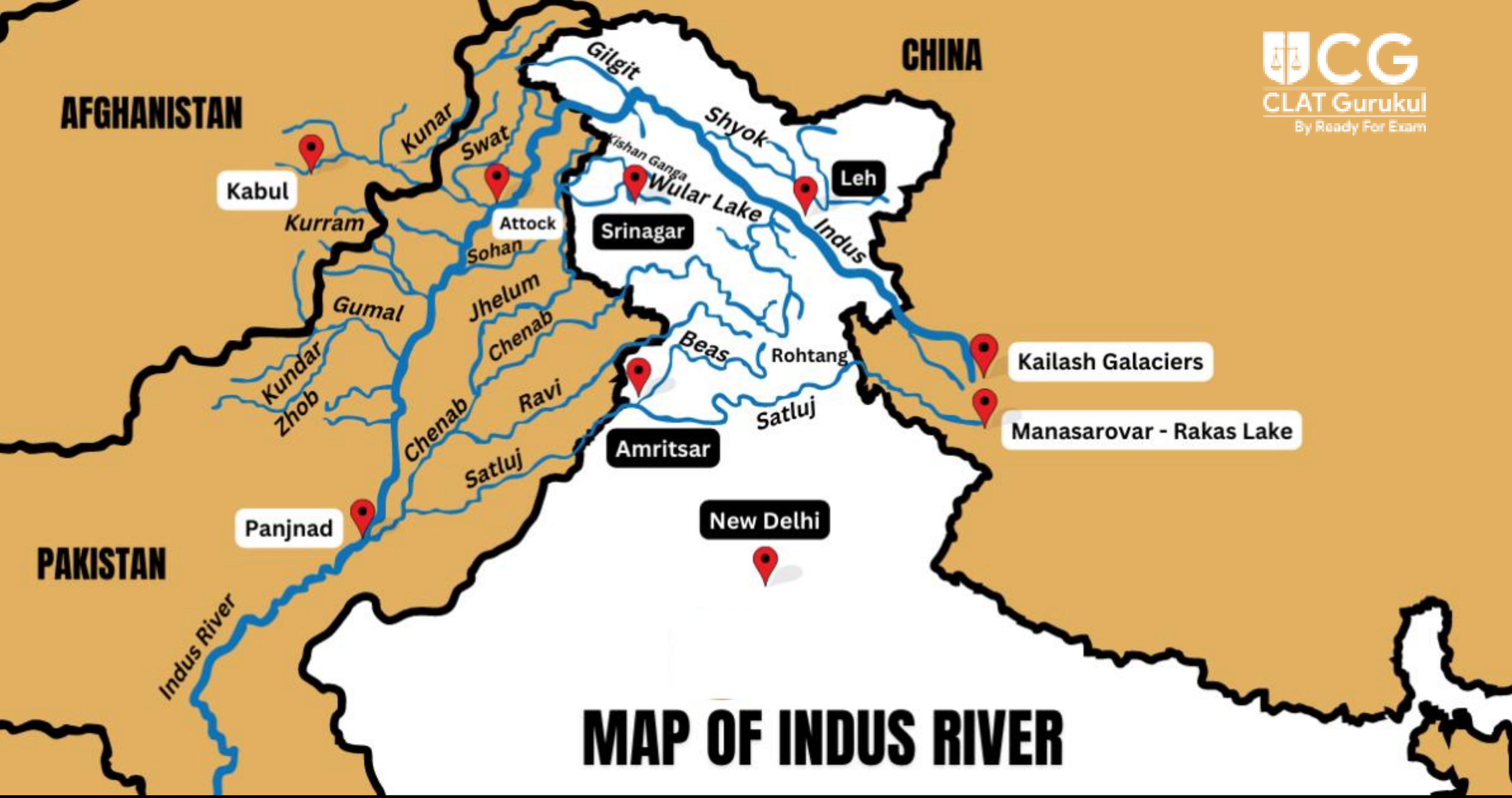
Feature	Data / Fact
Total Length	3,180 km
Length in India	1,114 km
Basin Area	1.165 million km²
Source	Sengge Zangbo Glacier, Tibet
Mouth	Arabian Sea (near Karachi)
Avg Discharge	6,600 m³/s
Major Indian Projects	Bhakra, Pong, Baglihar, Kishanganga, Ratle
Major Pakistani Projects	Tarbela, Mangla, Diamer–Bhasha
IWT Year	1960
Broker	World Bank

Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)


AFGHANISTAN
CHINA
PAKISTAN
Gilgit
Shyok
Kunar
Swat
Kishan Ganga
Wular Lake
Leh
Kabul
Attock
Srinagar
Kurram
Sohan
Indus
Jhelum
Gumal
Chenab
Kundar
Zhob
Beas
Rohtang
Kailash Galaciers
Manasarovar - Rakas Lake
Ravi
Chenab
Satluj
Satluj
Amritsar
New Delhi
Panjnad
Indus River
MAP OF INDUS RIVER

Introduction to Indus Water Treaty

1. **Signing**
   19 September 1960 in Karachi
2. **Signatories**
   Jawaharlal Nehru (India) and General Ayub Khan (Pakistan)
3. **Broker**
   World Bank
4. **Purpose**
   Sharing of the waters of the Indus River system after Partition 1947

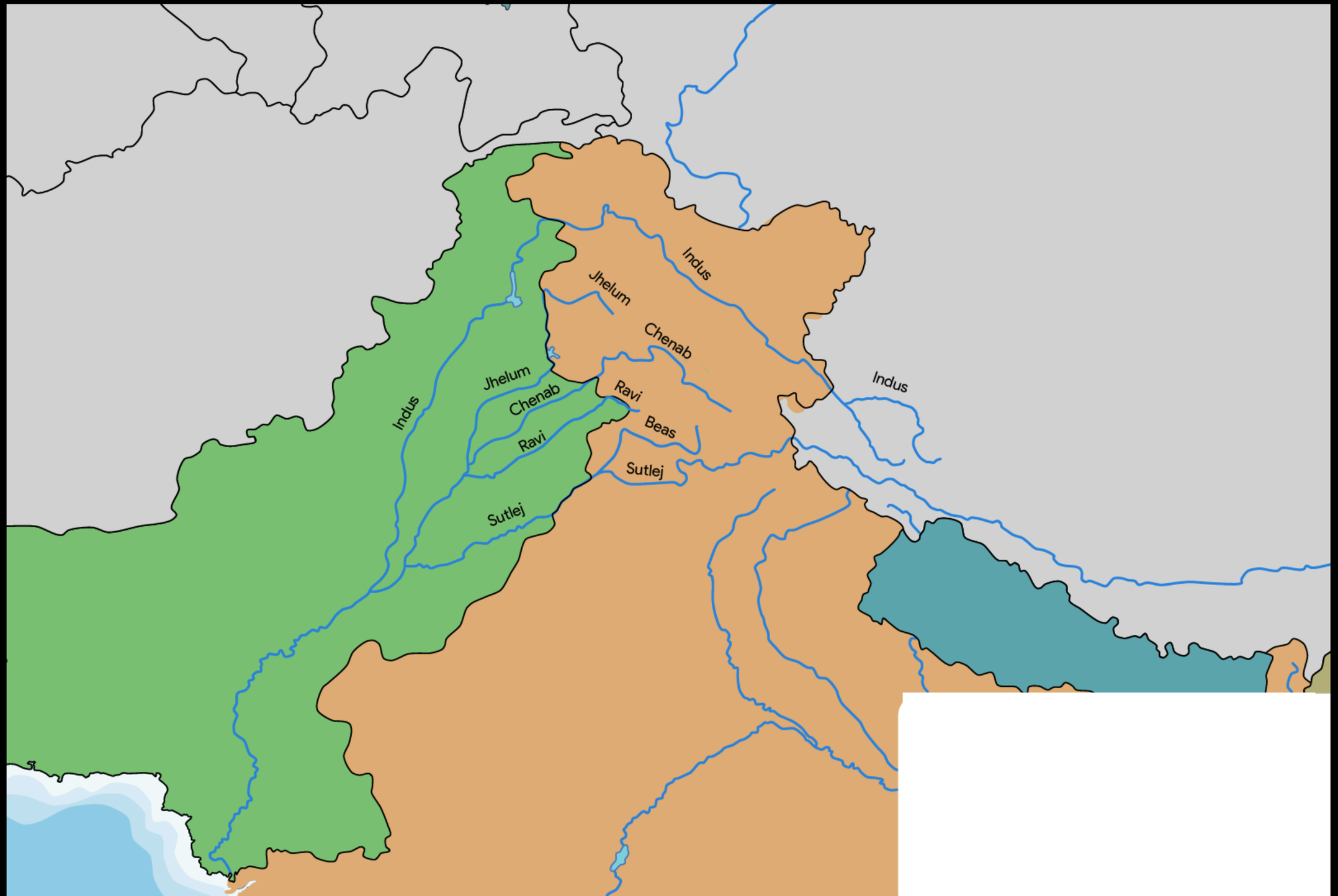
Rivers Covered Under the Treaty

Eastern Rivers (India's control)

- **Ravi**
- **Beas**
- **Sutlej**

Western Rivers (Pakistan's control)

- **Indus**
- **Jhelum**
- **Chenab**



Provisions of the IWT

- India gets unrestricted rights over Eastern Rivers
- Pakistan gets unrestricted rights over Western Rivers
- India allowed non-consumptive uses on Western Rivers (like hydropower, irrigation, navigation)
- 12 Articles and 8 Annexures
- Permanent Indus Commission set up to resolve disputes

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Why was the Treaty Required?

Post-Partition Water Conflicts

After the 1947 partition, disputes arose between India and Pakistan over water rights to the Indus river system

Temporary Arrangement Failure

The temporary 1948 arrangement failed to provide a sustainable solution

Need for Long-term Stability

A permanent treaty was needed to ensure long-term stability and peaceful water sharing between the two nations

Legal Binding Nature

United Nations Registration

IWT is registered with the United Nations under international law

Vienna Convention Governance

Governed by the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1969)

- Article 26: "Pacta Sunt Servanda" — treaties must be performed in good faith

World Bank Role

World Bank acts as a third-party monitor

Current Context: Why Suspension?

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April 2025

Pahalgam terror attack killed 26 tourists

Treaty Suspension

India suspended the IWT — first time in 65 years

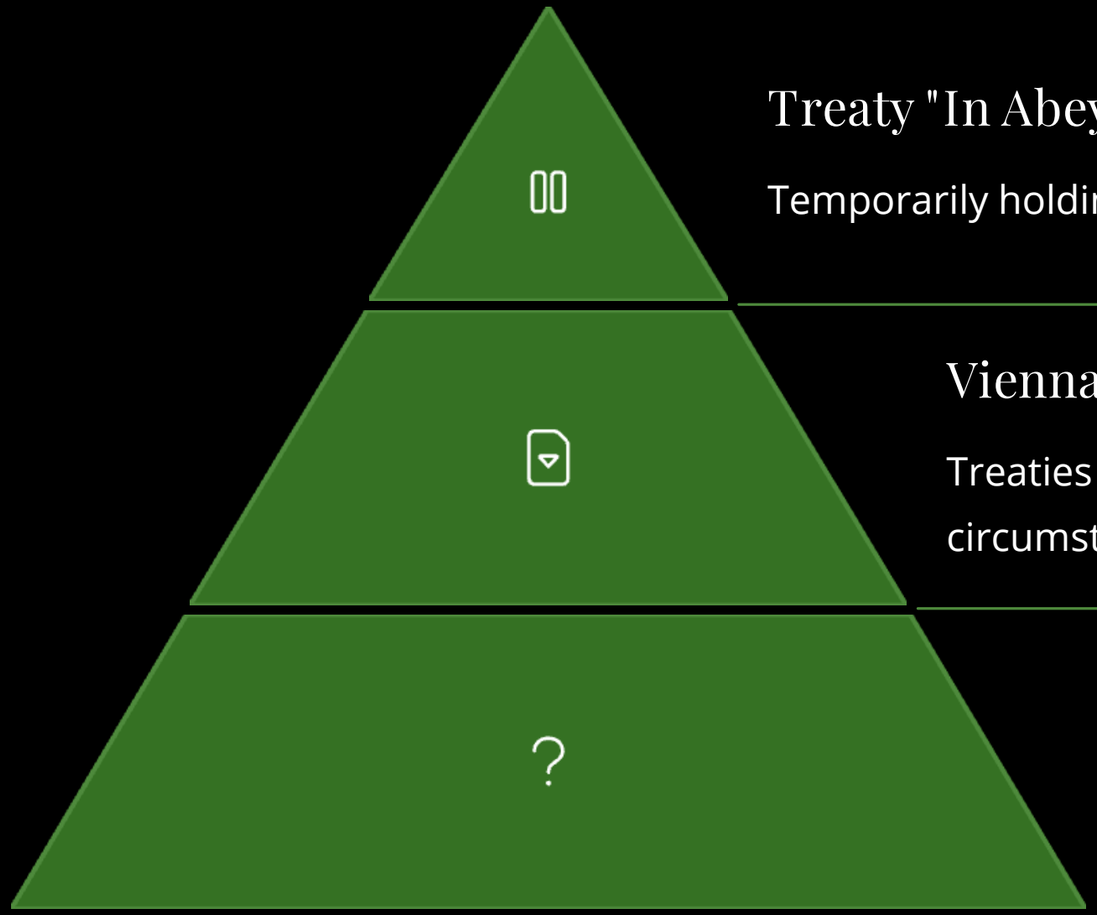
India's Official Stance

Pakistan must credibly and irreversibly stop supporting terrorism

Additional Actions Taken by India

- Closure of Attari Border Post
- Cancellation of Visas
- Expulsion of Pakistani Diplomats

What 'Suspension' Means Legally



Treaty "In Abeyance"

Temporarily holding without termination

Vienna Convention Article 62

Treaties can be suspended if there's a "fundamental change of circumstances"

Grey Area

No direct mention of "abeyance" in IWT text

Pakistan's Options

Limited Legal Recourse

No easy legal pathway for Pakistan

Arbitration Limitations

Available only under limited grounds

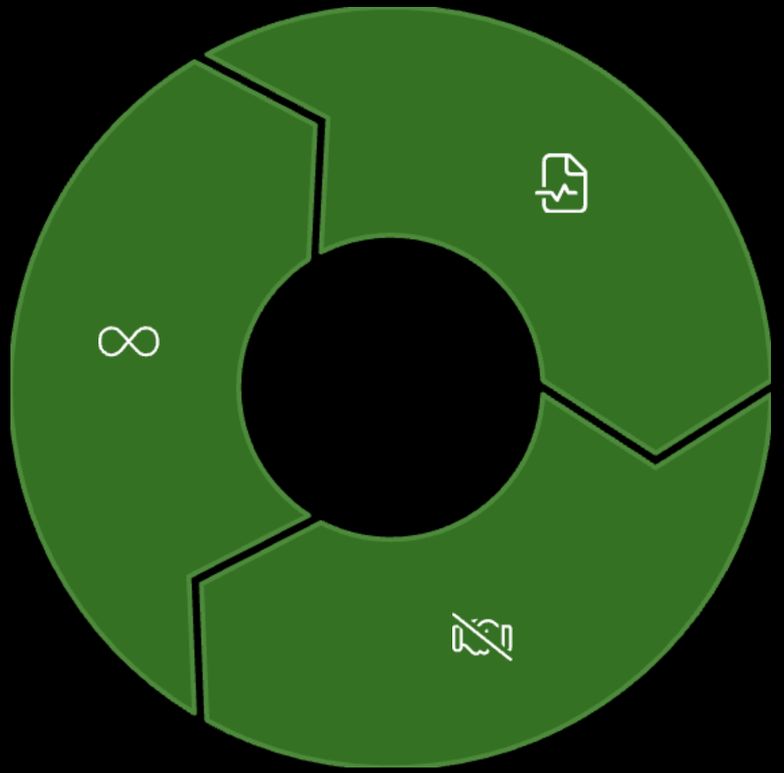
IWT Annexures

Annex F and G of IWT provide specific dispute mechanisms

Can India Unilaterally Exit the IWT?

No End Date

IWT has no specified termination date



No Exit Provision

Withdrawal/Exit not expressly provided in the treaty

Mutual Consent Required

Treaties under international law require mutual consent for modifications or termination

Arbitration and Dispute Mechanism

Permanent Indus Commission

First step in dispute resolution

Neutral Expert

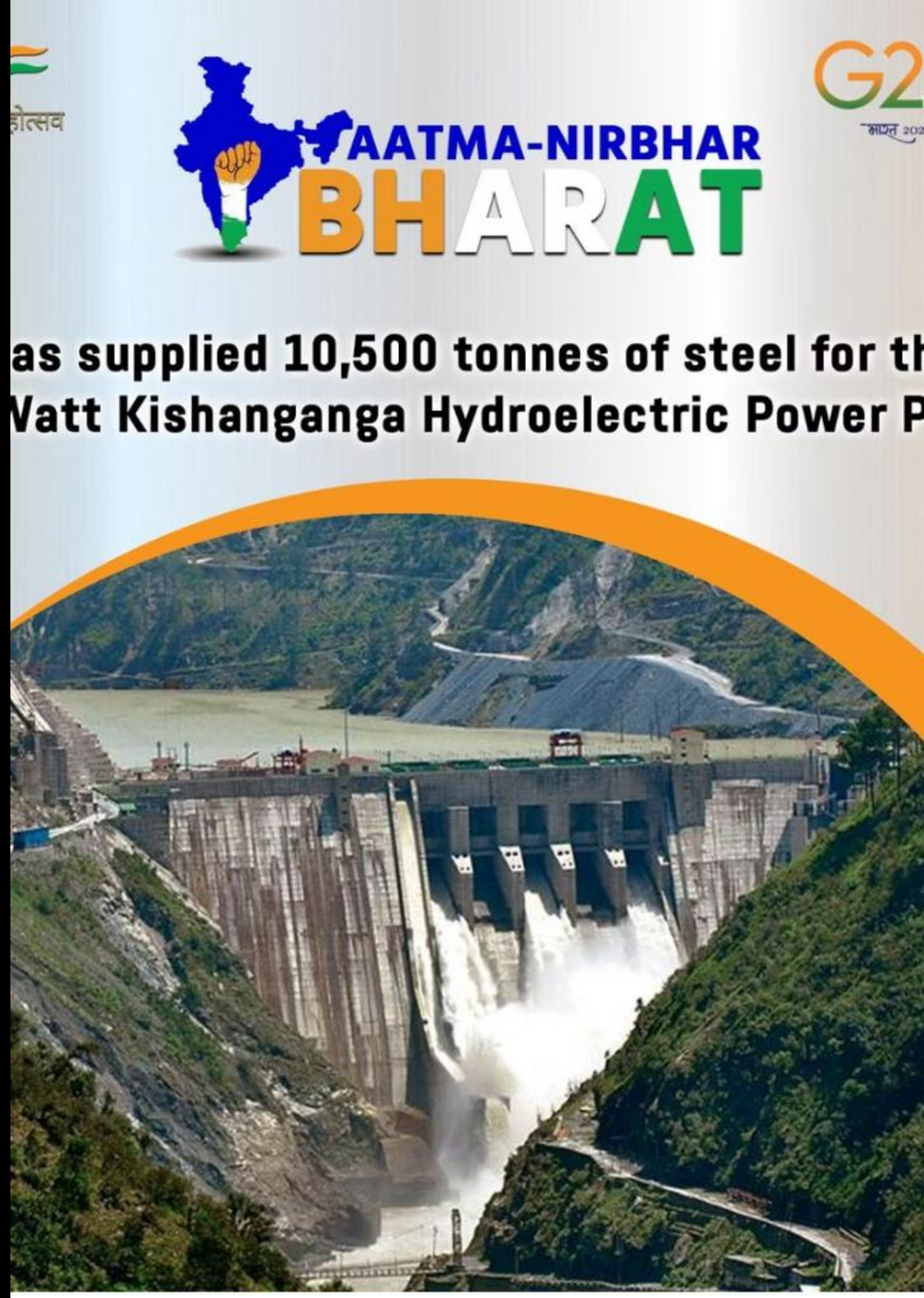
Second level of dispute resolution

Court of Arbitration

Last resort for resolving disputes

Recent Example

January 2023 Neutral Expert ruling favored India in hydroelectric project disputes (Kishenganga, Ratle projects)



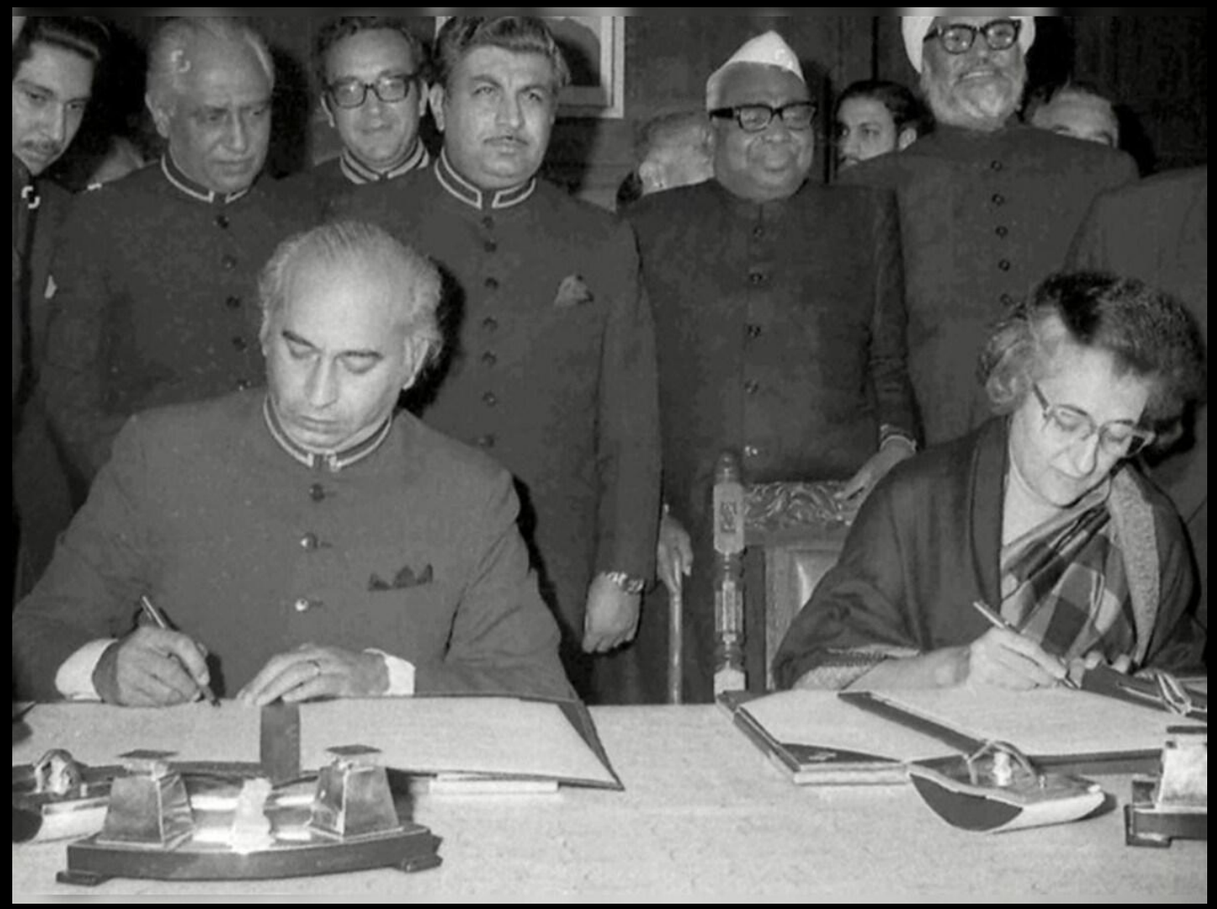
Simla Agreement and its Relation

Simla Agreement Background

- Signed in 1972 after the Indo-Pak war
- Focuses on peaceful resolution of disputes
- Establishes respect for Line of Control (LoC)

Current Implications

Pakistan now says Simla Agreement too will be held "in abeyance" following IWT suspension



Relevant Articles of the Indian Constitution

Article 253

Parliament can make laws to implement any international treaty, agreement or convention

Article 51(c) (Directive Principles of State Policy)

India shall foster respect for international law and treaty obligations

Entry 14 of Union List (Seventh Schedule)

External affairs and treaties fall under Union Government powers

Ratification Process in India: Executive signs the treaties. Parliament may need to legislate if any domestic laws need modification to implement the treaty.

Impact and Important Concepts

Impact on India and Pakistan

- **Immediate impact on Pakistan is limited because India doesn't have immediate capacity to stop or divert water**
- **Symbolic strong diplomatic signal to Pakistan**
- **Pakistan cannot easily approach International Courts because IWT has limited dispute options**

Key Concepts for Students

- **Treaty suspension vs Treaty termination**
- **Vienna Convention on Law of Treaties, 1969**
- **International Dispute Resolution Mechanisms**
- **India's constitutional provisions on treaty making**
- **Water diplomacy as a tool for peace and conflict**

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The Simla Accord

"Agreement on the Establishment of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between the Government of India and the Government of Pakistan,"

AC

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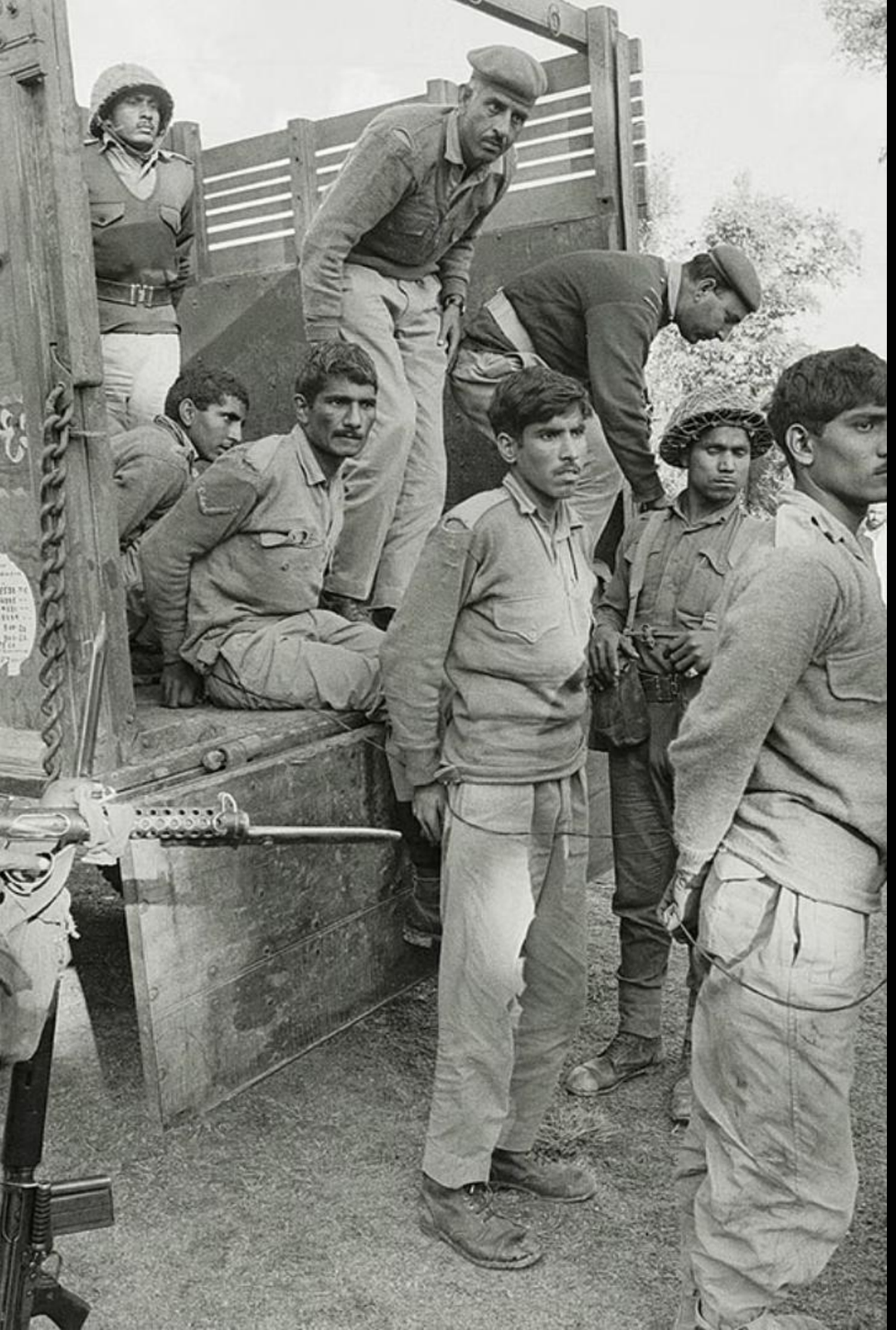
Background of the Simla Accord

The Shimla Accord (or Simla Agreement) was a bilateral treaty signed between India and Pakistan on 2 July 1972 in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, following the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, which led to the creation of Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan).

1. **Indo-Pakistani War**
   1971 conflict resulting in Indian victory
2. **Shimla Accord**
   Bilateral treaty signed on 2 July 1972
3. **Bangladesh Formation**
   Creation of Bangladesh from East Pakistan



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What Necessitated the Simla Accord?

1

End of 1971 War

The 1971 war had just ended with a decisive Indian victory. Pakistan had lost East Pakistan, and over 90,000 Pakistani troops were taken as prisoners of war (POWs) by India.

2

Restoration of Diplomatic Relations

There was an urgent need to normalize relations, resolve outstanding issues (especially Kashmir), and ensure long-term peace and stability in South Asia.

Key Leaders at the Time

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto

- Newly appointed **President of Pakistan** (later PM).
- Leader of the **Pakistan People's Party (PPP)**.
- Known for **sharp diplomatic acumen** and a fiery nationalist stance.
- He sought to restore Pakistan's image after the 1971 defeat and recover POWs and lost territory diplomatically.

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Key Leaders at the Time

Indira Gandhi

- **Prime Minister of India** (1966–1977, 1980–1984).
- Hailed for her **decisive leadership** during the 1971 war and humanitarian aid to Bangladeshi refugees.
- Acclaimed for enhancing India's **strategic clout** in South Asia.
- She led the accord with a combination of firmness and statesmanship, avoiding overreach despite military leverage.

International Context

1

International Pressure

Countries like the USSR, USA, and UK were keen to avoid further escalation between the two nations and supported a peaceful, bilateral resolution.

2

Desire for Bilateralism

India emphasized that all issues between India and Pakistan, including Kashmir, should be resolved bilaterally without third-party mediation.

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Key Provisions of the Simla Accord

Peaceful Resolution of Differences

Both countries agreed to resolve all disputes, including Kashmir, through bilateral negotiations and without any third-party interference.

Respect for the Line of Control (LoC)

The Ceasefire Line in Jammu and Kashmir, drawn in 1949, was renamed as the Line of Control after the 1971 war and both sides agreed to respect and not alter it unilaterally.

Additional Provisions

Withdrawal of Troops

Troops would be withdrawn to their pre-war positions (as on 17 December 1971) except in Kashmir, where the LoC was defined and mutually agreed upon.

Repatriation of Prisoners of War

India agreed to release over 90,000 Pakistani POWs, as a gesture of goodwill.

Normalization of Diplomatic Relations

Both sides agreed to restore diplomatic relations, resume trade, and promote cooperation in various fields.

Legal & Constitutional Aspects

Bilateral Resolution Clause

Article 51(c) of the Indian Constitution

"fostering respect for international law and treaty obligations"

India's broader foreign policy

non-alignment and strategic autonomy

Legal Status of the Simla Accord

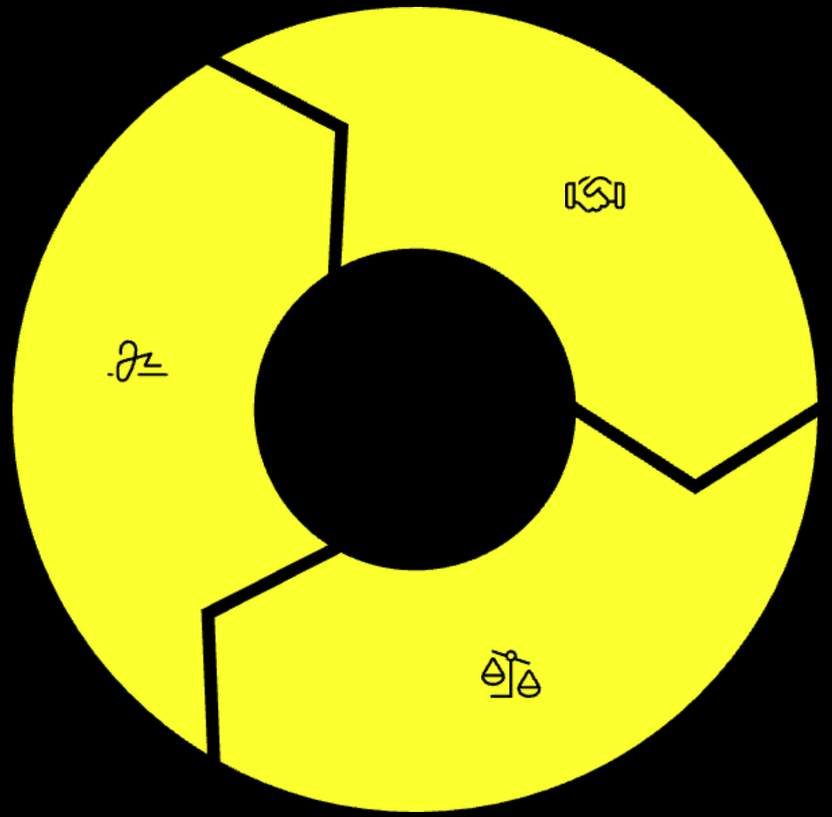
International Agreement

Yes, the Simla Accord qualifies as an international agreement under international law, particularly under the principles of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, 1969, even though Pakistan is not a party to the Vienna Convention.

International Law Perspective

Signed by Heads of Government

It was signed by heads of government (Indira Gandhi for India, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto for Pakistan).



State Consent

It involved state consent, was written and signed, and had the intention to be legally binding.

Customary International Law

It reflects customary international law principles even beyond the Vienna Convention.

Thus, although not a multilateral treaty, the Simla Agreement is a binding bilateral treaty under customary international law.

Significance of Simla Accord for India

🛑 Prevented Internationalization

Pakistan agreed that **future discussions on Kashmir would be bilateral**, weakening its case in the UN/OIC.

⚖️ Diplomatic Maturity

India **did not exploit its war victory** but instead committed to **peace and regional stability**.

🛡️ Strategic Positioning

India **gained recognition of LoC**, which helped **legitimize its military position** in Kashmir.

🤝 Peaceful Engagement Model

Set a precedent for **post-war dialogue and cooperation**, reinforcing India's **constitutional commitment to peace (Article 51)**.

👩‍⚖️ Judicial Reference

Cited in Supreme Court debates on **international treaties, Kashmir disputes**, and **executive agreements**.

Challenges & Criticism

❌ Pakistan's Violations

Frequent **cross-border terror**, **Kargil War (1999)**, and attempts to raise Kashmir internationally.

❌ No Finality on Kashmir

The **Kashmir issue remained unresolved**, with no follow-up dialogue mechanism.

❌ Implementation Gaps

While the **LoC was accepted**, border violations and infiltration continued.

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