

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

27th January 2025



India-China Relations



27th January, 2025

CONTEXT: "Recent developments that reflect our continuous diplomatic engagement... have set our ties in the direction of some improvement," S. Jaishankar

Significance of China for India and the Challenges

- Geopolitical neighbour: 3488 km; NSG, UNSC; Indian Ocean; Neighbourhood Policy; Pakistan's alignment; 'String of Pearls' Strategy; OUAD
- Energy Security: Strait of Malacca;
 Asian Premium; Brahmaputra River;
 Critical minerals import
- Economic Interests: 2/3rd APIs; largest trading partner- USD 118.4 billion two-way commerce; >55% of India's- Strait of Malacca and SCS; Cyber Threats- Huawei and ZTE, AIIMS Delhi
- Counterbalancing Western
 Dominance: IMF, WTO, UN reforms;
 Global South; SCO and BRICS

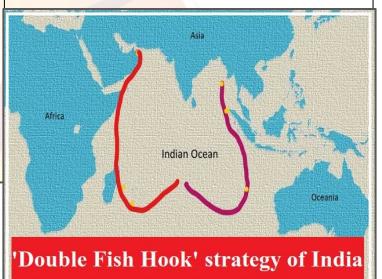
Top 10 Trading Partners of India in 2024



| Rank | India's Major Trade Partners | Exports (USD Billion) | Imports (USD Billion) | Total Trade (USD Billion) | Trade Balance (USD Billion) |
|------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | China | 16.66 | 101.75 | 118.41 | -85.09 |
| 2 | United States | 77.52 | 40.77 | 118.29 | 36.74 |
| 3 | United Arab Emirates | 35.63 | 48.02 | 83.65 | -12.39 |
| 4 | Russia | 4.26 | 61.43 | 65.69 | -57.17 |
| 5 | Saudi Arabia | 11.56 | 31.81 | 43.37 | -20.25 |

How India has responded?

- 'Necklace of Diamonds' Strategy Global Alliances: I2U2, QUAD, MSP, SCRI, IORA etc.
- India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)
- Vibrant Villages Programme
- Disengagement at the border





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"Recent developments that reflect our continuous diplomatic CONTEXT: engagement... have set our ties in the direction of some improvement," S. Jaishankar

- Cabinet approves Centrally Sponsored Scheme- "Vibrant Villages Programme" for the FY 2022-23 to 2025-26
- Financial allocation of scheme is Rs. 4800 Cr
- Will lead to infrastructure development and livelihood opportunities in 4 states and 1 UT along the northern land border





PROGRAMME

VIBRANT

VILLAGES

Border villages with sparse population, limited connectivity and infrastructure to be covered under the Vibrant Villages Programme

Additional funding for activities like construction of village infrastructure, housing, tourist centres, road connectivity, provisioning of decentralized renewable energy, direct to home access for Doordarshan and educational channels, and support for livelihood generation to be provided

Existing schemes will be converged

Way Forward

- Strategic Military Modernization-Drone tech., 73 strategic roads; Rafale
- Economic Measures: APIs, electronics, and solar equipment; MSME sector; Japan, South Korea, and EU nationstechnology transfer;
- Regional Leadership Enhancement-BIMSTEC, IORA, SCRI

BIMSTEC

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



India

First

summit

held in

Thailand

Sri Lanka +







Stands for The Bay of Bengal **Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation**

7 MEMBER COUNTRIES

Bangladesh

Thailand 4

Sri Lanka

is the

current

Chair

Importance of

Declaration

BIMSTEC

through Bangkok

- Accounts for 22% of the world's population
- Combined GDP of \$2.7 trillion
- One-fourth of the world's traded goods cross the Bay every year
- Six focus areastrade, technology, energy, transport, tourism and fisheries

Diplomatic Engagement: SCO, BRICS vs. QUAD; Strategic Autonomy

Supply Chain: alternative markets for Indian exports- UK, EU; PM Gati Shakti; China+1

Maritime Strategy: Sagarmala; QUAD, ASEAN

P2P Connections

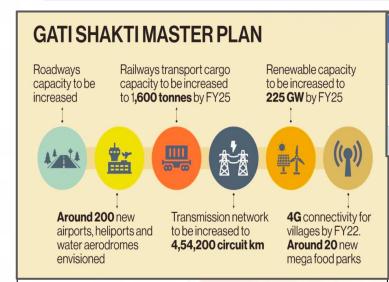


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| Sagarmala project: Key facts | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Commencement | Approved by the Union cabinet on | | |
| date: | March 25, 2015 | | |
| Ministry in- | Ministry of Ports, Shipping and | | |
| charge: | Waterways | | |
| Budget: | Rs six lakh crores | | |

Mains Practise Question

Q. "China is using its economic relations and positive trade surplus as tools to develop potential military power status in Asia." In the light of this statement, discuss its impact on India as her neighbour.



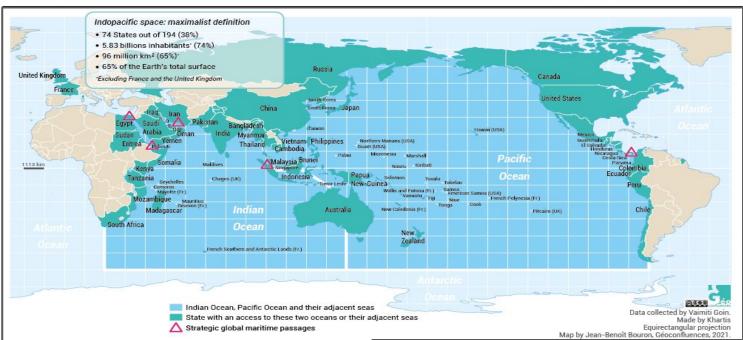


Indo-Pacific



27th January, 2025

<u>CONTEXT</u>: India, Indonesia reaffirm commitment to peace, stability, prosperity in Indo-Pacific.

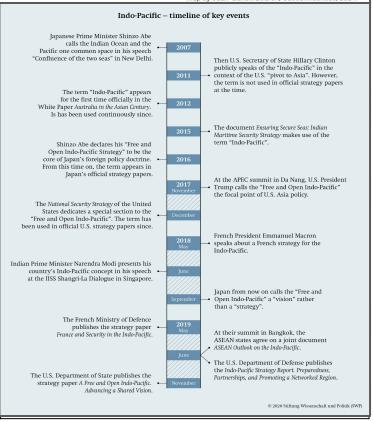


What is it?

The Indo-Pacific region is a term used to refer to the vast geographic area that encompasses the Indian Ocean and the western and central Pacific Ocean, including the seas and straits that connect them.

<u>Evolution of the term 'Indo-Pacific'</u> Origin

- 1920s- German geopolitician Karl Haushofer- a region where India, China, and Japan would align with Germany against the United States, United Kingdom, and western Europe.
- Used by Indian historian Kalidas Nag in the 1940s.





Indo-Pacific



27th January, 2025

<u>CONTEXT</u>: India, Indonesia reaffirm commitment to peace, stability, prosperity in Indo-Pacific.

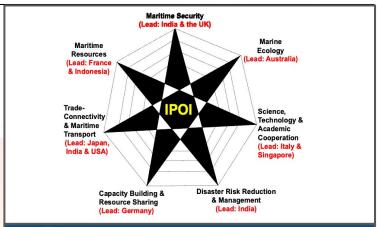
<u>Different initiatives taken by India in</u> <u>the Indo-Pacific region</u>

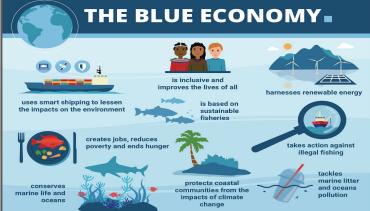
- Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD): Track 1.5 event -discussions on public policy
- Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI):
 Maritime Security, Maritime Ecology,
 Maritime Resources, Capacity

 Building and Resource Sharing,
 Disaster Risk Reduction and
 Management, Science, Technology
 and Academic Cooperation, Trade,
 Connectivity, and Maritime Transport
- QUAD: regional security and economic cooperation
- Indo-Pacific Division in MEA: cooperate with all the matters related to the Indo-Pacific
- SAGAR initiative: strategic partnerships with other Indian ocean region littorals in Asia and Africa.
- Indo-Pacific Division in MEA:
 cooperate with all the matters related to the Indo-Pacific
- QUAD
- Hosting HACGAM: India stands for open & rule-based maritime borders in the Indo-Pacific (18th Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting, in New Delhi in 2022)

Issues and Challenges:

- **Territorial disputes:** South China Sea and the East China Sea.
- Regional power competition: China's increasing assertiveness vs. United States and its allies.
- **Economic challenges:** uneven economic development, trade imbalances, and increasing debt levels.





What Is The Quad?

The Quad, officially the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD), is not a formal alliance. It is an informal strategic forum comprising four maritime democracies:

India, Japan, Australia and the United States



PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

Maritime security, addressing climate change, combating Covid-19 pandemic, among others.

The Quad is also seen as an attempt to counter the growing might of China





Indo-Pacific



27th January, 2025

<u>CONTEXT</u>: India, Indonesia reaffirm commitment to peace, stability, prosperity in Indo-Pacific.

- Environmental issues: coral reefs and mangroves; climate change- La Nina and cyclones, pollution, and overfishing.
- Non-traditional security threats: transnational crime, terrorism, and cyberattacks



Way Ahead

- Bilateral cooperation: Example: maritime security and counter-piracy.
- Multilateral cooperation: ASEAN, APEC, and IORA
- Regional efforts: Quad- regional security, advance economic integration, and address common challenges such as climate change and cybersecurity.
- International efforts: UN -peace and security, provide humanitarian assistance, and advance sustainable development in the region.



- Balancing China's influence: building stronger ties with other countries in the region.
- Maritime security: safety of shipping lanes and combating piracy and other maritime threats.
- **Climate change:** rising sea levels and extreme weather events.
- **Economic growth:** economic ties between India and other countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

Mains Practise Question

The new tri-nation partnership AUKUS is aimed at countering China's ambitions in the Indo-Pacific region. Is it going to supersede the existing partnerships in the region? Discuss the strength and impact of AUKUS in the present scenario. (2021)



Whip System



27th January, 2025

SYLLABUS: GS Paper 2: Polity

Newspaper: Indian Express Page Number: 6

VICE PRESIDENT Jagdeep Dhankhar's recent statement that party whips curtail an MP's freedom of expression by enforcing a party line has sparked a debate. "Why should there be a whip? Whip means you are curtailing expression, curtailing freedom, and subjecting your representative to servility. You do not allow such a person to use his or her mind," Dhankhar had told a group of students at his residence on January 23.

In popular perception, a party whip is sacrosanct, especially when it comes to being present in Parliament when a matter important for the party is up for voting and casting their vote as per the party's wishes. There are consequences, including expulsion, for defiance of a whip.

Where does the term whip come from?

It originates from the hunting fields of England, where a whipper-in was a member of the hunting party whose job was to bring straying hounds back into the pack. Its use in politics comes from

Anglo-Irish politician and philosopher Edmund Burke. As per

What are the different kinds of whips?

There are three kinds. A oneline whip just informs members about a vote but permits them to abstain. A two-line whip asks them to be present but does not tell them how to vote. The threeline whip, largely the norm these days, directs members to be present and vote as per the party line.

What is the history of the whip system in India?

In India, the whip system is as old as its parliamentary history, according to former Lok Sabha secretary-general P D T Achary. The system is important for parliamentary functioning as parties see voting on some matters as crucial to how their politics is perceived. Hence, MPs are expected to be present at the time of voting on matters critical to the party and follow the organisation's line. Absence or voting against the party line can be a huge embarrassment to the party.

majority. Failure to demonstrate majority in the Lower House in such a context can also lead to a no-confidence motion.

carries the heading "Three-Line Whip". Under each sentence, there are three thick horizontal lines. Largely the norm these days, this kind of whip directs members to be present and vote as per the party line.

Achary said if a member violates a three-line whip, which is the strictest of directions by a

party, the leader of the party can recommend his or her disqualification to the Presiding Officer of the House. "As per the Anti-Defection Law, disqualification can happen

for violation of a three-line whip. There were always members who thought that this curtailed their freedom, but even the Supreme Court has said that the whip system is necessary for the preservation of political parties," Achary said. He said the party system was at the root of Indian parliamentary democracy and that violation of a whip can have serious consequences in the context of the Anti-Defection Law that came into force in 1985.



Whip System



27th January, 2025

SYLLABUS: GS Paper 2: Polity

Newspaper: Indian Express Page Number: 6

Who enforces the whip system?

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs is the government's chief whip in the Lok Sabha and can request leaders of all parties of the ruling alliance to issue a three-line whip to their members to be present and vote in a certain manner. "If a member of a party in the ruling alliance violates a whip by its chief whip, the leader of the party can recommend the member's disqualification," Achary said. In the Rajva Sabha, the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs is the government's chief whip, but what matters for members of parties most are the directions issued by their whips.

Given that the whip system is crucial for all political parties, an All-India Whips conference has been held since 1952, when the first Lok Sabha was constituted. The first such event was held in Indore on September 13, 1952. Organised by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, the conference provides a forum "to the whips of various political parties

Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs:

- The conference is often organized under the aegis of the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, which plays a central role in coordinating these discussions.
- Whips from the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, and state legislatures.
- · Officials from the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and other relevant bodies.





Aadhar to Chinar Trees



27th January, 2025

SYLLABUS: GS 2 Paper: Governance; Environment

Newspaper: Indian Express Page Number: 12

THE JAMMU & KASHMIR government has launched an initiative for the conservation of the region's chinar trees, which have been dwindling in number over the years.

The initiative involves conducting a census of chinar trees and assigning each one of them a "Tree Aadhaar" number.

What is a chinar tree?

Chinar, also known as Oriental plane tree (plantus orientalis), is a maple-like tree with a huge canopy. It is found in cool climate regions with sufficient water. It takes 30 to 50 years for a chinar tree to mature and 150 years for it to reach its full size. The tree can grow up to a height of 30 metres while its girth ranges between 10 and 15 metres.

How did the tree get its name?

The name 'chinar' was given to the tree by Mughals - some suggest it was Mughal emperor Jahangir who coined the name. It is said that the term 'chinar' came into use after

Conservation Concerns:

- 1. Decline in Numbers:
 - . Urbanization, deforestation, and climate change have contributed to the decline in Chinar
 - Efforts are underway to protect and plant more Chinar trees, especially in Kashmir.
- 2. Government Initiatives:
 - The government of Jammu and Kashmir has declared the Chinar tree a protected species, and felling the tree without permission is illegal.

Geographical Distribution:

- Native to Eurasia, particularly Southern Europe and Western Asia.
- In India, it is predominantly found in Jammu and Kashmir and, to a lesser extent, in Himachal Pradesh.

someone witnessed crimson red chinar tree leaves from a distance during the autumn season, and shouted "Che naar ast" - a Persian phrase meaning "what flame is that?"

Why is the chinar significant?

Chinar trees, called Buen or Booyn in Kashmiri, are a major tourist attraction in the Kashmir valley during the autumn season,

when their green leaves slowly change into crimson red and gold. They also find a special place in the art, literature and craft of Kashmir — local papier mache and embroidery work, hand-woven carpets, and walnut wood carvings often feature chinar motifs.

What is the chinar conservation project? To cut a chinar tree, the government's nod Scientific Name: Platanus orientalis

Family: Platanaceae

Appearance:

- · A tall deciduous tree, often growing up to 30 meters in height.
- Large, broad leaves with 5-7 lobes, resembling the shape of a human hand.
- The leaves change color from green to vibrant shades of red, gold, and orange during autumn, making it visually stunning.
- · Thick, spreading trunk with smooth bark that exfoliates in patches.

· Known for its longevity, the Chinar tree can live for centuries.

Flowers and Fruits:

• Produces small, inconspicuous flowers and round, spiky fruits that contain seeds.

is needed, even if the tree is on someone's private property. However, often, the trees are cut anyway. The new project aims to make sure the government can track the status of each tree.

Thus, the new initiative involves conducting a census of chinar trees across the Kashmir valley and the Chenab region. As part of the process, the government has not only enumerated chinar trees bu<mark>t also given a</mark> unique identity — called Tree Aadhaar — to each chinar tree. The census has been done district-wise. Each tree has been geo-tagged.

According to Dr Syed Tariq, the coordinator of the project, 28,560 chinar trees have been enumerated and GI-tagged so far. "We think the total number of chinar trees in Jammu and Kashmi<mark>r is somewhere between</mark> 32,000 to 33,000. Out of these, we have tagged 28,560 trees, which are accessible." he told The Indian Express.

Tariq also said the authorities have started putting a metallic QR code on chinar trees The code when scanned will provide information about the particular tree on 25 parameters. These include the longitude and latitude, age, height, girth, health, etc.



Corbett Tiger Reserve



27th January, 2025

SYLLABUS: GS 3: Environment

Newspaper: Indian Express Page Number: 6

in the Ramnagar forest division of Corbett Tiger Reserve in Uttarakhand. Villagers say the 47-year-old was on a tree, cutting leaves for her horse, and was climbing down when the tiger caught her by the foot. Around 5.30 pm, her husband found her decapitated body and her sandals in the shrubs.

"Tigers have never attacked us before... They prey on goats and dogs; not humans. In fact, children from our village have to walk five km to reach the inter-college (for Classes 11 and 12). We often hear the tigers roar and it shakes the floor, but we never feared for our lives until now," says Shanti's mother-in-law Anuli Devi, 70.

Two days after the incident, the tiger was captured by the Forest Department and sent to the Corbett Rescue Centre.

Since 2017, Ramnagar division has seen 12 deaths in attacks by tigers, of which seven were of women. In 2024, five deaths were reported near the Corbett buffer area — four of these victims were women and three of them from Dhela, a village in the buffer zone of the Corbett National Park. So far this year, there have been two deaths in tiger attacks in two days.

Ramnagar Divisional Forest Officer Diganth Nayak says women often fall prey to tigers because they venture into forests to collect fodder for their cattle and firewood. "When women sit on their haunches to pick firewood and cut grass, tigers mistake them for prey," he says.

The Corbett National Park, spread over 1,288.31 square kilometres and three districts — Pauri, Nainital, and Almora — is home to

Firewood keeps us warm, heats our water, and helps us cook food. The government has given us gas cylinders, but who will pay us for refilling it every 20 days."

Forest officials, however, say the women often illegally sell the firewood to homestays and resorts for ₹300-400 during the winter season, when agriculture is on the wane.

The bundon of water in a cut

260 tigers, making this the park with the highest density of tigers in the country, according to the Status of Tiger report 2022. According to data provided by Saket Badola, director, national park, there are nearly 46 villages with a combined population of 2,939 near the Corbett buffer zone. Most of the villages surrounding the park rely on dairy and subsistence farming. But with the produce of rice and wheat barely enough for their families, the villagers turn to the forests for firewood and minor forest produce. Since most of the men have migrated to the cities for work, it leaves the women to shoulder the foraging responsibilities

On a January morning, the forest department called a meeting at Dhela village to resolve this human-animal conflict and to find an answer to a prickly problem: how to stop women from venturing into the forests. intervention — that legal action would be taken against villagers venturing into the forest — is met with anger.

"Our women go to the forest for livelihood and it can't be stopped. If you threaten to send us to jail, we will gladly go," a man seethes

DFO Nayak shoots back, "You say you have been going to the forest for 20 years. Back then, there were 80 tigers. Now, there are over 260. We have to change our traditions. Nothing is more important than life."

DFO Nayak finally tables a resolution: "Women can go out to fetch firewood, but in groups of 15, twice a week from each village, and our forest officials will accompany them. This will decrease the chances of an encounter." The officials also promise to bring fodder to the villages at nominal rates of ₹2.50 per kg.

When the meeting ends, the

Flora and Fauna:

- 1. Tigers:
 - Home to a healthy population of Bengal tigers, it is a critical area for tiger conservation in

 ladia.
- 2. Other Wildlife:
 - Mammals: Leopards, elephants, sloth bears, jackals, otters, and various deer species like sambhar, chital, and barking deer.
 - Birds: Over 650 bird species, making it a birdwatcher's paradise.
 - Reptiles: Crocodiles, gharials, and pythons are commonly found near water bodies.
- 3. Vegetation:
 - Diverse flora with sal forests, grasslands, riverine vegetation, and dense Himalayan subtropical broadleaf forests.

Pollution Control Boards



27th January, 2025

SYLLABUS: GS-3: Environment

Newspaper: Indian Express Page Number: 6

CPCB's affidavit stated. Pollution control boards cited delays due to reasons ranging from unavailability of candidates from feeder cadres in other state departments, backlog in filling reserved quota posts, conduct of recruitment exams and vacancies which were under process due to promotions.

REFLECTING TARDY progress on compliance of a National Green Tribunal (NGT) order to fill up vacant posts across pollution control boards in the country by April end, only 167 posts out of 2,228 vacancies have been filled so far in 12 states and two union territories. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the country's top pollution control watchdog, submitted this information to the NGT on Friday.

Based on affidavits submitted to the NGT last year, out of 11,562 sanctioned posts, 5,671 or 49.04 per cent, were reported to be vacant in 28 states and 8 union territories.

The states which did not submit progress reports are Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, Odisha, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh & West Bengal. Andaman & Nicobar, Chandigarh, Dadra Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir, Lakshadweep were among union territories which did not submit a progress report.

Dy April 30, 2023.

The NGT's direction left out states falling in the National Capital Region as a Supreme Court order of August 27 had already covered them. NGT's

Types of Pollution Control Boards:

- 1. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB):
 - Established in 1974 under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.
 - Functions as the national authority under the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).
 - It formulates guidelines, sets pollution standards, and advises the government on environmental policies.
- 2. State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) and Union Territory Pollution Control Committees (UTPCCs):
 - Operate at the state and UT levels under the supervision of CPCB.
 - Their role is to implement environmental laws, issue consents to industries, and monitor
 pollution levels in their respective regions.



Guillain Barre Syndrome



27th January, 2025

SYLLABUS: GS Paper 3: Science and Technology

Newspaper: Indian Express Page Number: 6

THE NUMBER of cases of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), a rare neurological disorder, crossed the 100 mark in Pune on Sunday. One suspected GBS death was also reported from Solapur. Initial unconfirmed reports hinted at the possibility of the wirting contracted the

As many as 81 patients are from areas coming under the Pune Municipal Corporation, 14 from areas under the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation, and the remaining 6 from other districts.

Cacac cama to light when has

A central team of health officials is expected to visit Pune on Monday to monitor the situation.

Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS)

What is it?

 Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) is a rare, neurological disorder in which the body's immune system mistakenly attacks the peripheral nervous system (the network outside the brain and spinal cord).

Causes and Triggers:

- 1. Autoimmune Reaction: Immune system attacks myelin sheaths or nerve cells.
- 2. Common Triggers
 - Viral or bacterial infections (e.g., Campylobacter jejuni, influenza, or Zika virus).
 - · Post-vaccination (rare cases).
 - Surgery or trauma.

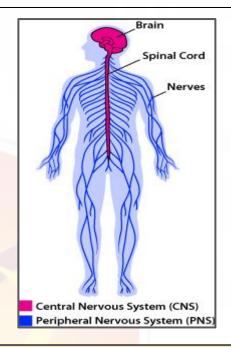
GUILLIAN BARRÉ SYNDROME (GBS)

RARE but POTENTIALLY SERIOUS AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE

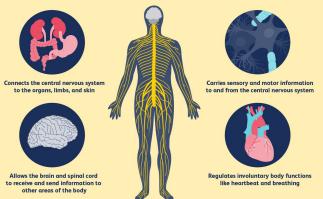
DEMYELINATION & DEGENERATION of the PERIPHERAL NERVES







What Does the Peripheral Nervous System Do?



vervwell

Key Facts for UPSC:

- 1. Associated with Zika Virus: WHO linked GBS to Zika outbreaks, increasing global awareness.
- 2. Post-COVID-19 Link: Reported as a rare side effect of COVID-19 or its vaccines.
- 3. Public Health Concern: Early diagnosis and treatment are critical in severe cases.
- 4. Disability Prevention: Ensuring access to medical and rehabilitation facilities.



Daily Quiz



27th January, 2025

Q1. Consider the following statements:

- India is a founding member of the Quad, which solely focuses on military alliances to counter regional threats.
- 2. The Act East Policy aims to strengthen India's strategic and economic ties with only ASEAN nations.
- 3. SAGAR emphasizes inclusive development and maritime security in the Indian Ocean region.

Which of the statements given above is/are NOT correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 3 only
- c) 1 and 2 only
- d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: c

Q2. Consider the following statements:

- 1. The three-line whip, the strictest, mandates members to be present and vote according to the party line.
- 2. Violation of a three-line whip is devoid of any legal consequence under the Anti-Defection Law.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: a

Q3. Consider the following statements about the Corbett Tiger Reserve (CTR):

- 1. Project Tiger was launched in this reserve in 1973.
- 2. It was originally established as Hailey National Park.
- 3. CTR has the highest tiger density in the world.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: c

Q4. Consider the following statements about the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB):

- 1. It was established under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- 2. The CPCB monitors water and air quality across India.
- 3. It can issue directives to industries under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.
- 4. The CPCB reports to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) Only Three
- d) All Four

Answer: c

Q5. Consider the following statements:

- Guillain-Barré Syndrome is an autoimmune disorder that affects the peripheral nervous system.
- It is caused exclusively by bacterial infections.
- 3. The syndrome can lead to ascending muscle weakness and paralysis.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) None

Answer: c





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