



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

29th April 2025



Are India's Cities Future-Ready?

CONTEXT: As summer intensifies, Indian cities are struggling with water shortages and rising electricity demand and temperatures. Are our cities prepared for climate extremes and rapid urbanisation?

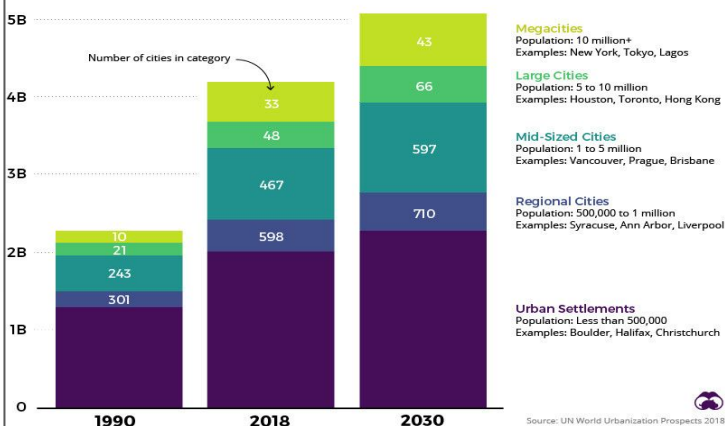
Urbanisation

- Global Phenomenon
- Economic Development

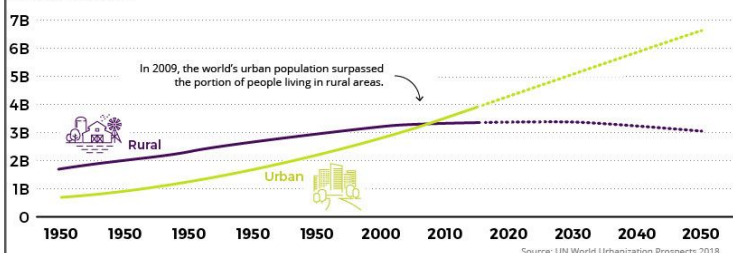
Legal/Institutional frameworks w.r.t. Urban Planning & Development

- 74th CAA
- Article 243W
- MoHUA - Nodal Ministry
- Town Planning Acts/Development Authorities Act
- Municipalities
- National Building Code
- Building Bye-laws

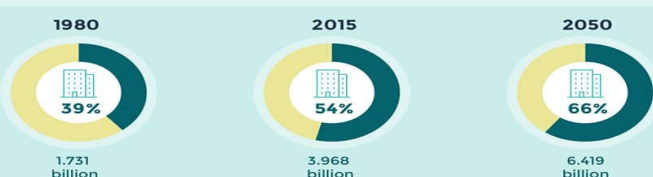
GLOBAL URBAN POPULATION, BY SIZE OF CITY



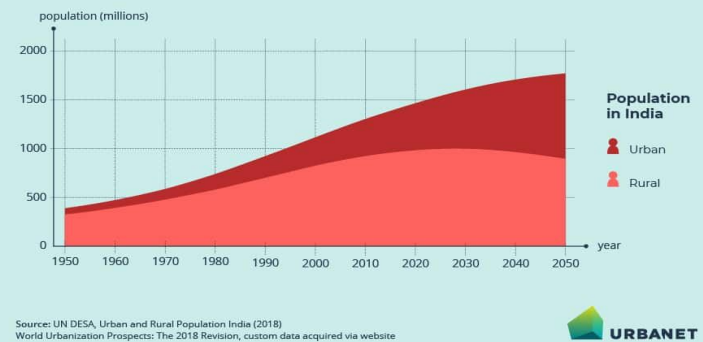
GLOBAL POPULATION



Share of the Urban Population Worldwide



Urban and Rural Population in India



Infrastructure Requirements

- Estimated Financial Needs
 - ₹70 lakh crore by 2036
 - Annual requirement: ₹4.6 lakh crore
- Sectoral Allocation
 - 50% for basic Urban Services
 - 50% for Urban Transport

Current Investment

- ₹1.3 lakh crore - 2018; 27%

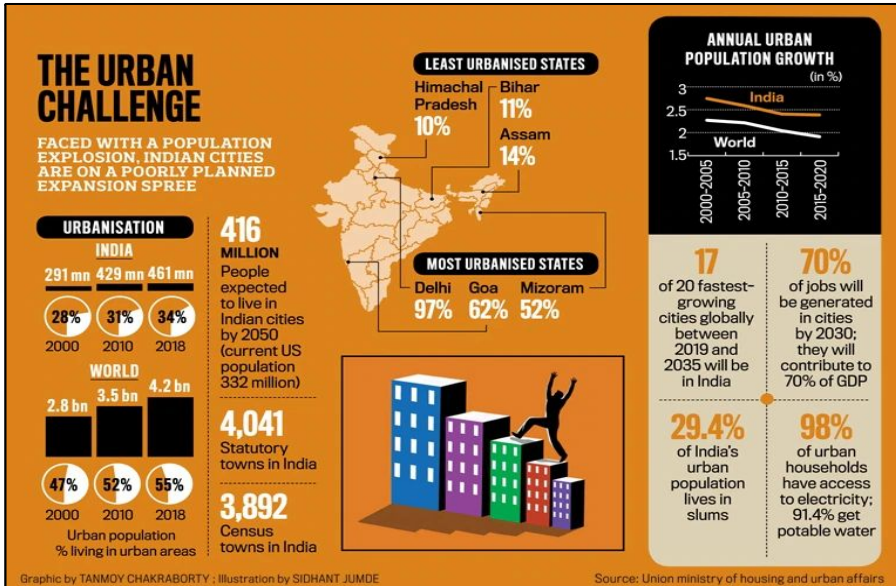
Issues: Urban Planning & Development

- **Unplanned Urban Sprawl** - Lack - Basic Amenities, Traffic congestions, Encroachment of green spaces
- **Affordable Housing Shortages** - Growth of Slums, Social conflicts, High economic burden
- **Inadequate Infrastructure** - Infra issues, Increases inequality
- **Lack of Public Participation** - Exclusion of community needs, Hampered decision-making & Corruption
- **Environmental Degradations** - Traffic congestions, inadequate SWM, 'concretisation'



Are India's Cities Future-Ready?

CONTEXT: As summer intensifies, Indian cities are struggling with water shortages and rising electricity demand and temperatures. Are our cities prepared for climate extremes and rapid urbanisation?



- **Promoting Sustainability** - Climate Risk assessments, Resource Mapping
- **Utilising Innovation & Technology** - Integrated data platforms

For Finances

A. Long-term Reforms

- Strengthening Institutional Frameworks - Empower SFCs
- Expanding Revenue Sources - coverage & collection efficiency
- Capacity Building

B. Medium-term Measures

- Develop a Robust Project Pipeline - Sustained Private Capital
- Leverage DPI - Technology
- Harness Land Value - metro and rail projects

C. Short-term Actions

- Efficient Utilization of Existing Funds - AMRUT & SCM
- Enhancing Cost Recovery

Issues in Urban Financing

- **Municipal Finances**
 - Stagnant Revenue - Municipal revenue - 1% of GDP
 - Tax Collection Inefficiency - Property tax revenue (0.15% of GDP)
 - Cost Recovery - Urban services - 20%-50%
- **Inefficient Fund Utilization**
 - Unspent Revenues - 23% of municipal revenues - 15th FC
 - Scheme Utilization - AMRUT(80%) & SCM (70%)
- **Decline in PPPs**
 - Funding Decline- PPP investments - ₹8,353 crore (2012) to ₹467 crore (2018); weak commercial viability

Way forward

- **Evidence Based Planning** - Data - demographics, economic activities, etc. - NSSO
- **Master/Strategic Plans** - population projections - UNFPA
- **Performance Monitoring** - K.P.I.s - MoHUA' 'Ease of Living Index'
- Infusing Transparency - SWC

Mains Practise Question

"Sustainable urbanisation is critical for India's economic growth, environmental security, and social equity." In this context, examine the major challenges to sustainable urbanisation in India and suggest a multi-pronged strategy to address them.

(15 Marks, 250 words)



"Vacant but Vital": The Deputy Speaker



CONTEXT: In recent years, the Deputy Speaker's position has fallen into unusual and troubling neglect.

Constitutional Importance of the Deputy Speaker

- Mandated – **Article 93:** "as soon as may be."
- Role – **vital for continuity, stability, and balance** – not merely ceremonial
- **Article 94:** Deputy Speaker remains until resignation, removal, or loss of membership.

Chairperson of Committee.

258. (1) The Chairperson of a Committee shall be appointed by the Speaker from amongst members of the Committee:

Provided that the Deputy Speaker, in case is a member of the Committee, shall be appointed as Chairperson of the Committee.

93. The Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the House of the People

The House of the People shall, as soon as may be, choose two members of the House to be respectively Speaker and Deputy Speaker thereof and, so often as the office of Speaker or Deputy Speaker becomes vacant, the House shall choose another member to be Speaker or Deputy Speaker, as the case may be.

Article 94 in Constitution of India

94. Vacation and resignation of, and removal from, the offices of Speaker and Deputy Speaker

A member holding office as Speaker or Deputy Speaker of the House of the People--

- (a) shall vacate his office if he ceases to be a member of the House of the People;
- (b) may at any time, by writing under his hand addressed, if such member is the Speaker, to the Deputy Speaker, and if such member is the Deputy Speaker, to the Speaker, resign his office; and
- (c) may be removed from his office by a resolution of the House of the People passed by a majority of all the then members of the House:

RULES OF PROCEDURE AND CONDUCT OF BUSINESS IN LOK SABHA

6

Election of Deputy Speaker.

8. (1) The election of a Deputy Speaker shall be held on such date as the Speaker may fix, and the Secretary-General shall send to every member notice of this date.

Nomination of Panel of Chairpersons.

9. (1) At the commencement of the House or from time to time, as the case may be, the Speaker shall nominate from amongst the members a panel of not more than ten³ Chairpersons, anyone of whom may preside over the House in the absence of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker when so requested by the Speaker or, in the absence of the Speaker, by the Deputy Speaker.

10. The Deputy Speaker or any other member competent to preside over a sitting of the House under the Constitution or these rules shall, when so presiding, have the same powers as the Speaker when so presiding and all references to the Speaker in these rules shall in these circumstances be deemed to be references to any such person so presiding.

Powers of Deputy Speaker or other member presiding.

CHAPTER II Joint Sittings of Houses

Presiding Officers.

5. During the absence of the Speaker from any joint sitting, the Deputy Speaker of the House or, if he is also absent, the Deputy Chairman of the Council or, if he is also absent such other person as may be determined by the members present at the sitting, shall preside.

CHAPTER XVIII

RESOLUTION FOR REMOVAL OF SPEAKER OR DEPUTY SPEAKER FROM OFFICE

200. (1) A member wishing to give notice of a resolution, under clause (c) of article 94 of the Constitution, for the removal of the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker shall do so in writing to the Secretary-General 'and shall furnish the full text of such resolution.]

Notice of resolution for removal of Speaker or Deputy Speaker.

(2) On receipt of a notice under sub-rule (1) a motion for leave to move the resolution shall be entered in the list of business in the name of the member concerned, on a day fixed by the Speaker, provided that the day so fixed shall be any day after fourteen days from the date of the receipt of notice of the resolution.



"Vacant but Vital": The Deputy Speaker



CONTEXT: In recent years, the Deputy Speaker's position has fallen into unusual and troubling neglect.

Relevance in Parliamentary Practice

- **Speaker – cannot preside continuously;** Deputy Speaker – **uninterrupted sessions.**
- Can preside over **important debates** and **committees.**
- Expected to be **impartial** after election, like the Speaker.
- **Convention:** Offer the Deputy Speaker post to the **Opposition** to maintain bipartisan respect (though not legally binding).

Growing Constitutional Vacuum

- **Vacant since 2019** (17th Lok Sabha) and continues post-2024
- Longest vacancy ever; a **constitutional anomaly.**
- Weakens institutional safeguards, **centralises power**, and risks confusion during emergencies
- **Disregard – constitutional conventions** & undermines **parliamentary norms.**
- Denial of the Deputy Speaker role – Opposition

Need for Legislative Reform

- **Proposals:**
 - Amend constitutional language to specify a **strict timeline** (e.g., 60 days post first sitting).
 - Introduce a **statutory mechanism** empowering the President to initiate election on government advice.
- Current ambiguity – **unsuitable for a healthy democracy.**

Mains Practise Question

"The office of the Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha is a constitutional necessity, not a ceremonial formality." In this context, discuss the significance of the Deputy Speaker and analyse the constitutional, procedural, and institutional implications of not electing one.

(15 Marks, 250 words)



SYLLABUS: GS 1, 3: Climate Change, Environment, Conservation.

Newspaper : Indian Express; **Page No :** 16

THE GOVERNMENT has notified draft Rules introducing targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by “obligated entities” in energy-intensive sectors and industries.

The Draft Greenhouse Gases Emissions Intensity (GEI) Target Rules, 2025, notified by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change on April 16, puts in place a compliance mechanism for the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme, 2023 (CCTS).

The CCTS was launched to create a framework for the trading of carbon credits, to facilitate the reduction of emissions in energy intensive industries, and to support India's climate commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015.

The draft Rules are open for objections and suggestions in a 60-day window from the date of their notification.

What is meant by greenhouse gases emissions intensity (GEI)?

GHGs are gases that trap heat in the atmosphere and contribute to the “greenhouse effect” that raises surface temperature on Earth.

The five most abundant GHGs in the atmosphere are water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and ozone. Other GHGs include synthetic fluorinated gases such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs).

GHG emissions intensity, or GEI, is the amount of GHGs that are emitted per unit of product output — the amount of GHGs that are released in the production of, say, 1 tonne of cement, aluminium, or paper, etc.

The draft Rules define GEI as “greenhouse gases emission intensity in tCO₂e/ equivalent output or product”. tCO₂e, or tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, is the standard unit used to measure the impact of all GHGs, not just CO₂, based on their potential to warm the planet.

So what do the draft GEI target Rules say?

The Rules set forth baseline emissions for 2023-24 and define gradual reduction targets for the years 2025-26 and 2026-27 as part of the mechanism to make India's Carbon Credits Trading Scheme, 2023, operational.

GHG intensity reduction targets and benchmarks have been set for the highly en-

ergy-intensive aluminium, chlor-alkali, pulp and paper, and cement industries.

These targets, for a two-year period starting 2025-26, cover 282 entities or industrial units in these industries — 13 aluminium plants, 186 cement plants, 53 pulp and paper plants, and 30 chlor-alkali plants.

Among the large corporations that have been assigned targets under the Rules are Vedanta, Hindalco, Bharat Aluminium, JSW Cement, Ultratech, Nalco, JK Cement, Dalmia Cement, Shree Cement, Grasim Industries, and JK Paper.

The Rules also lay down the mechanism for industries to comply with these targets, and specify penalties for their failure to do so.

Why is it important to have the targets?

The introduction of industry-specific targets is crucial to meet India's climate goals. The ultimate objective is to push industries towards a low-carbon growth trajectory through reduction, removal or avoidance of GHG emissions.

A cement plant can, for example, reduce its GEI by adopting cleaner and greener processes in the various stages of production. It could replace the use of coal with biomass, and adopt cleaner, more energy-efficient kilns.

More importantly, the Rules aim to help India meet a key commitment made under the Paris Agreement — to reduce the emissions intensity of its gross domestic product

(the amount of energy used per unit of GDP) by 45% by 2030 compared to 2005 levels.

An overall objective of the Rules is “to promote the adoption of sustainable, cutting-edge technologies across traditionally high-emission industries, for addressing climate change”.

Not all of this is entirely new. While targets have been set for the reduction of GHG emissions intensity for the first time, a scheme to improve energy efficiency, known as PAT — Perform, Achieve, Trade — has been running since 2012.



SYLLABUS: GS 1, 3: Climate Change, Environment, Conservation.

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And how do these draft Rules tie into India's carbon credit trading scheme?

The CCTS established a framework for generating, trading, and using carbon credit certificates.

Under Article 17 of the Kyoto Protocol, the international treaty that committed industrialised countries and economies in transition to limit and reduce GHG emissions in accordance with agreed individual targets, countries that have emission units to spare — permitted but “unused” — were allowed to sell this excess capacity to countries that were over their targets.

Since carbon dioxide is the principal greenhouse gas, this trade is spoken of as trading in carbon in the “carbon market”.

With the introduction of the GEI targets, industries will know what exactly to achieve in order to earn carbon credits. They will also have to create action plans towards achieving those goals.

Industries will be issued carbon credits for cutting emissions intensity, which they can trade on India's carbon market. Industries that fail to meet their obligations under the carbon trading scheme would have to buy credits to meet their compliance shortfall, or be penalised by the Central Pollution Control Board, as per the Rules.

Carbon credits are traded through the Indian Carbon Market platform, with oversight of the Bureau of Energy Efficiency under the Union Ministry of Power.

The availability of credits provide industries with the incentive to decarbonise. Industries with resources to adopt clean technology can use their credits to earn profits, while those with fewer resources can make the shift gradually by buying carbon credits.

Similar carbon credit markets have been operational elsewhere in the world — in Europe and China since 2005 and 2021 respectively.



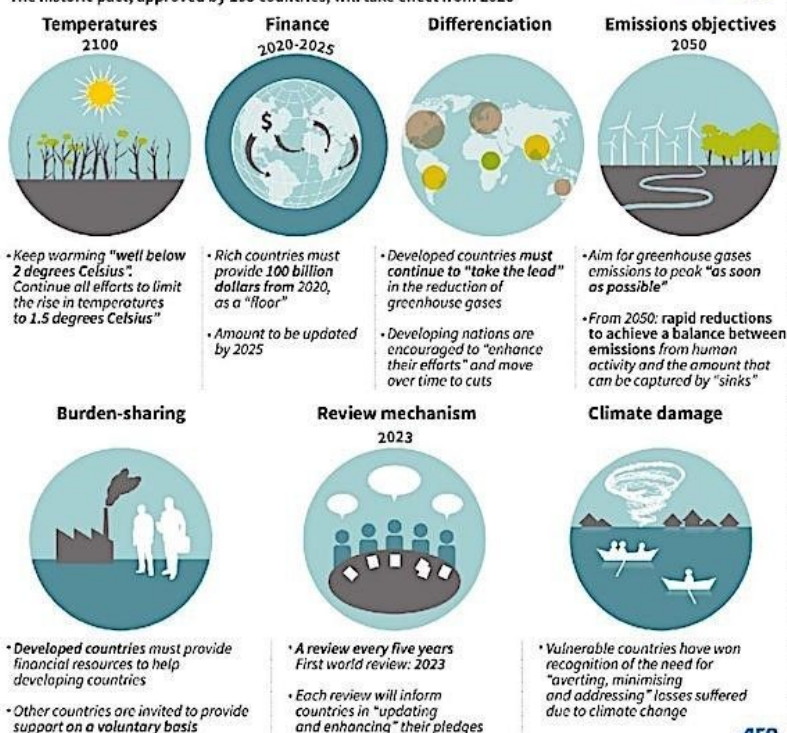
The UN Climate Agreements

Kyoto Protocol & Paris Agreement

Kyoto Protocol	Paris Agreement
 Was created in 1997 and ratified in 2005. Had two periods from 1997-2012.	 Signed in November of 2016. New commitments are due every 5 years
 Legally binding agreement to decrease GHG	 Not legally binding commitment to reduce emissions, increase accountability
 Original commitment to decrease overall emissions by 5% from 1990 levels	 Overall goal to limit global temperatures to 1.5 degrees celsius above pre-industrial levels
 Only required developed nations to reduce emissions	 Asked all nations to reduce emissions
 Targets are set but no determined time frame	 New set of targets declared after 5 years (these are now due in 2020)


The Paris climate agreement: key points

The historic pact, approved by 195 countries, will take effect from 2020



SYLLABUS: GS 1, 3: Climate Change, Environment, Conservation.

Newspaper : Indian Express; **Page No :** 16

	<div><p>Cabinet</p><p>Cabinet approves India's Updated Nationally Determined Contribution to be communicated to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</p></div>	
<p>Posted On: 03 AUG 2022 2:33PM by PIB Delhi</p> <p>The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved India's updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to be communicated to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).</p> <p>The updated NDC seeks to enhance India's contributions towards achievement of the strengthening of global response to the threat of climate change, as agreed under the Paris Agreement. Such action will also help India usher in low emissions growth pathways. It would protect the interests of the country and safeguard its future development needs based on the principles and provisions of the UNFCCC.</p> <p>India at the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Glasgow, United Kingdom, expressed to intensify its climate action by presenting to the world five nectar elements (Panchamrit) of India's climate action. This update to India's existing NDC translates the 'Panchamrit' announced at COP 26 into enhanced climate targets. The update is also a step towards achieving India's long term goal of reaching net-zero by 2070.</p> <p>Earlier, India submitted its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to UNFCCC on October 2, 2015. The 2015 NDC comprised eight goals; three of these have quantitative targets upto 2030 namely, cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil sources to reach 40%; reduce the emissions intensity of GDP by 33 to 35 percent compared to 2005 levels and creation of additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent through additional forest and tree cover.</p> <p>As per the updated NDC, India now stands committed to reduce Emissions Intensity of its GDP by 45 percent by 2030, from 2005 level and achieve about 50 percent cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030. Today's approval, also takes forward the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of sustainable lifestyles and climate justice to protect the poor and vulnerable from adverse impacts of climate change. The updated NDC reads "To put forward and further propagate a healthy and sustainable way of living based on traditions and values of conservation and moderation, including through a mass movement for 'LIFE' – 'Lifestyle for Environment' as a key to combating climate change". The decision on enhanced NDCs demonstrates India's commitment at the highest level for decoupling of economic growth from greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>India's updated NDC has been prepared after carefully considering our national circumstances and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC). India's updated NDC also reaffirms our commitment to work towards a low carbon emission pathway, while simultaneously endeavoring to achieve sustainable development goals.</p>		

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change



India achieves two targets of Nationally Determined Contribution well ahead of the time

Posted On: 18 DEC 2023 4:55PM by PIB Delhi

As a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris Agreement, India submitted its first Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in the year 2015 comprising, *inter-alia*, of following two quantifiable targets:

- To reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33 to 35 percent by 2030 from 2005 level; and
- To achieve about 40 percent cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030.

These two targets have been achieved well ahead of the time. As on 31st October, 2023; the cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources is 186.46 MW, which is the 43.81% of the total cumulative electric power installed capacity. As per the third national communication submitted by India to the UNFCCC in December 2023, the emission intensity of its GDP has been reduced by 33 percent between 2005 and 2019.

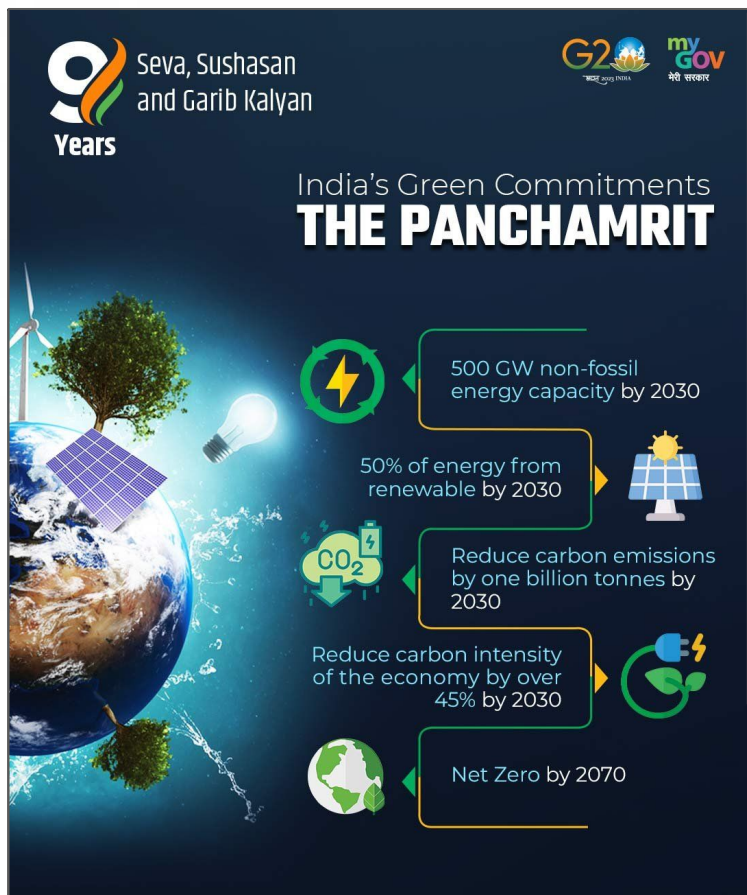
In August 2022, India updated its NDC according to which target to reduce emissions intensity of its GDP has been enhanced to 45 percent by 2030 from 2005 level, and the target on cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources has been enhanced to 50% by 2030.



GHGs Emissions Intensity

SYLLABUS: GS 1, 3: Climate Change, Environment, Conservation.

Newspaper : Indian Express; **Page No :** 16



WHAT IS NET ZERO?

Net zero refers to a balance where emissions of greenhouse gases are offset by the absorption of an equivalent amount from the atmosphere. Experts see net zero targets as a critical measure to successfully tackle climate change and its devastating consequences

PLEDGES BY TOP THREE EMITTERS

- CHINA:** Beijing announced no new pledges on Monday. It previously pledged net zero by 2060.
- UNITED STATES:** The US touted domestic legislation to spend \$555bn to boost renewable power and electric vehicles. It has pledged net zero by 2050.
- INDIA:** The country's economy will become carbon neutral by the year 2070



SYLLABUS: GS 2: Centre-State Relations

Newspaper : Indian Express; Page No : 16

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, APRIL 28

MORE THAN half a century after it warned of creeping centralisation, a long-forgotten Tamil Nadu report has resurfaced at the heart of India's ongoing federalism debate.

Earlier this month, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin, citing concerns over the erosion of the powers of states, announced the formation of a high-level committee headed by former Supreme Court judge Justice Kurian Joseph to revisit the Centre-state relationship and suggest measures to strengthen the constitutional rights of states.

Back in 1969, Tamil Nadu's strongly federalist Chief Minister C N Annadurai had established the Centre-State Relations Inquiry Committee under the leadership of Dr P V Rajamannar, a former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court.

The three-member committee — also

comprising Dr A Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar and Justice P Chandra Reddy — was asked to study the Constitution and recommend steps to ensure “the utmost autonomy of the State in the executive, legislative and judicial branches... without prejudice to the integrity of the country as a whole.”

The Rajamannar Committee concluded: “There has been a growing realisation of the strong domination of the Centre... and the tendency on the part of the Centre to exercise control over the States, drastically affecting the autonomy of the States.”

‘Administrative units of Centre’

The report complained that while the Constitution is federal, it had worked in a way that “the States had practically become the administrative units of the Centre” (p 18).

The committee backed its claim with detailed analyses of provisions such as Articles 256, 257, and 365, which gave the Centre sweeping powers to issue directions

to states, and enforce them through President's Rule.

“Article 365 highlights the subordinate position of the States... This obviously results in the assumption of the legislative and executive powers of the State by the Union,” the Committee said (p 21).

It recommended that Article 356 — the provision that allows the Centre to impose President's Rule in a state — be repealed, and that a strong Inter-State Council be set up under Article 263 to resolve differences through dialogue.

**EXPL
HIST**

Control over money

The Committee also criticised institutions such as the Planning Commission, which was created by an executive order of the Centre. “The Centre has got a whip in its hands... because the grants are given by the Centre at its discretion... The Plan allocation is left entirely to the whims and fancies of

those who call themselves Members of the Planning Body” (p 8).

This, it said, had made the Finance Commission — which has a constitutional mandate — irrelevant. Worse, it had rendered states “suppliants for aid” in their own jurisdictions. The report warned that the “Triple” of central planning, massive grants, and party politics was eroding the federal balance.

**IN
ED
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Meaning of ‘strength’

The Committee questioned the understanding that a strong Centre is essential for India's unity.

“By taking upon itself too many obligations... the Centre will become incurably weak,” it cautioned, adding that true strength lay in restraint and clarity of purpose, not expansionism (p 19).

The Committee quoted from

Annadurai's “trenchant criticism” of the implications of a “strong” Centre (1967): “I want the Centre to be strong enough to maintain the sovereignty and integrity of India [but]... I would put it in another way. It is to safeguard the independence of the country... Anybody will accept... that all these powers needed to make the Centre responsible for the safety of this country ought to be with the Centre. But that does not mean that the Centre in order to safeguard India from Pakistanis or the Chinese or the Baluchis, should think of having a health department here. In what way does that strengthen the sovereignty and independence of India? Should they have an education department here? In what way does that improve the fighting capacity of the military personnel there?”

Now, once again

Annadurai's successor as Chief Minister, M Karunanidhi, submitted the report to

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1974. And half a century later, under vastly different political skies, the Stalin-led DMK government is once again asking uncomfortable questions about federalism.

Tamil Nadu has had high-profile disputes with the BJP-led central government over NEET, GST compensation, delimitation, and language policy, among others.

By invoking the Rajamannar Committee, Stalin seeks not just policy reform, but ideological realignment — returning to the Dravidian movement's core belief in state empowerment.

The newly constituted committee will study the current legal framework and recommend steps to restore state rights.

Whether its findings will be heeded in New Delhi is uncertain. The Rajamannar Report was never acted upon by the Centre. Its recommendations, echoed later by the Sarkaria Commission (1988) and Punchhi Commission (2010), remain largely shelved.



SYLLABUS: GS 2: Centre-State Relations

Newspaper : Indian Express; **Page No :** 16

Sarkaria Commission

The **Sarkaria Commission** was established by the Government of India in 1983 to examine and review the working of the existing arrangements between the Union and the States and suggest changes within the framework of the Constitution of India.

- The Commission submitted its final report in **1988**.
- It contained **247 specific recommendations**.

Key Recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission on Inter-State Relations

• Governor's Role and Appointment:

- **Selection:** Consult the Vice President and Lok Sabha Speaker while appointing Governors.
- **Tenure:** Fix a five-year term, ensuring they're not liable to transfer or removal during that period.
- **Powers:** Curtail discretionary powers under Article 356 (dismissing state governments) and make it a transparent, accountable process with checks and balances.
- **Refrain from Interfering:** Governors should avoid unnecessary interference in state administration and function as impartial guides.

• Legislative Relations:

- **Concurrent List:** Clearly define the division of legislative powers between the centre and states in the Concurrent List (subjects with overlapping jurisdiction).
- **Prior Consultation:** Ensure prior consultation with states before introducing central legislation impacting state subjects.
- **Financial Impact:** Assess and compensate states for any financial burden arising from centrally imposed schemes.

• Administrative Relations:

- **Central Intervention:** Limit the centre's power to deploy para-military forces in states without their consent.
- **Central Agencies:** Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of central agencies operating in states to avoid overlap and friction.
- **Inter-State Councils:** Strengthen Inter-State Council and Zonal Councils as platforms for resolving disputes and fostering cooperation.



SYLLABUS: GS 2: Centre-State Relations

Newspaper : Indian Express; Page No : 16

• **Financial Relations:**

- **Finance Commission:** Enhance the role of the Finance Commission in determining devolution of financial resources to states.
- **Central Grants:** Make central grants less discretionary and more formula-based, ensuring transparency and equity.
- **Debt Management:** Coordinate and streamline states' borrowing powers to avoid unsustainable debt burdens.

• **Additional Recommendations:**

- **All India Services:** Review the recruitment and allocation of All India Service officers to ensure states have a say in their deployment.
- **Language Policy:** Promote wider use of regional languages in official communication and court proceedings.
- **Constitutional Amendments:** Create a mechanism for easier amendments to the Constitution, particularly concerning Centre-State relations.

• **Strengthening of Inter-State Council:**

- The Commission recommended that the Inter-State Council should be strengthened to provide a more effective platform for consultation and coordination between the Centre and the States.

• **Addressing Inter-State Disputes:**

- The National Development Council should be reconstituted and renamed as the National Economic and Development Council.
- It should act as a forum for consultation and coordination between the centre and the states on economic and development matters.

• **Protecting States' Rights:**

- The Commission recommended that the Central Government should respect the rights of the States as enshrined in the Constitution.



SYLLABUS: GS 2: Centre-State Relations

Newspaper : Indian Express; **Page No :** 16

Punchhi Commission

Formation: The Punchhi Commission, formed by the Union Government in April 2007 and chaired by former Chief Justice of India **Madan Mohan Punchhi**, conducted a comprehensive examination of the existing Union-State arrangements.

- **Scope of the Review:** This review encompassed **legislative and administrative relations, court rulings on powers and responsibilities, the role of Governors, emergency provisions**, and more.
 - The Commission submitted its detailed seven-volume report to the government in **March 2010**.
- Following this, the Inter-State Council's Standing Committee considered the Punchhi panel's suggestions during meetings in **April 2017, November 2017, and May 2018**.

Key Recommendations of the Punchhi Commission include

- **National Integration Council:** Proposed the creation of a superior entity, the 'National Integration Council,' to address **internal security matters**, similar to the **Homeland Security Department in the United States**.
- **Amendment to Article 355 and Article 356:** Recommended amendments to **Article 355 and Article 356 of the Constitution**, focusing on safeguarding States' interests and preventing the misuse of Central powers.
- **Article 355** pertains to the **Centre's duty to protect States from external aggression**, while Article 356 addresses the **imposition of the President's rule** in case of State machinery failure.
- **Subjects in the Concurrent List:** Advocated for States to be consulted through the Inter-State Council before introducing bills related to matters in the concurrent list, promoting **cooperative federalism**.
- The concurrent list includes subjects on which both **State and Centre governments can legislate**.
- **Appointment and Removal of Governors:** Recommended that Governors abstain from active politics for at least two years before their appointment.
- Emphasised the involvement of the State's Chief Minister in the Governor's appointment process.
- Proposed the formation of a committee, including the **Prime Minister, Home Minister, Lok Sabha Speaker, and the relevant Chief Minister, to handle Governor appointments**.
- Suggested a fixed five-year term for Governors and outlined a process for removal via a State Legislature resolution.
- **Union's Power of Making Treaties:**
 - Advocated for regulating the union's treaty-making power concerning matters in the State list, ensuring States have increased representation in their internal affairs.
- **Appointment of Chief Ministers:**
 - Called for clear guidelines to limit the **Governor's discretionary powers** in the appointment of chief ministers.
 - Considered a **pre-poll alliance** as a single political party.
 - Outlined a precedence order for forming the State government based on the **largest pre-poll alliance, single largest party with support, post-poll alliances** with a few parties joining the government, and post-poll alliances with outside support from independents.



SYLLABUS: GS 2: International Relations

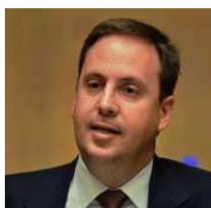
Newspaper : The Hindu; **Page No :** 15

'IMEC will work if India, Europe keep agriculture sector out'

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit
MUMBAI

The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor's (IMEC) potential can be realised if Europe and India can find common grounds by keeping the agriculture sector aside, Steven Ciobo, Australia's former minister of trade and defence, said on Monday.

He said at a time when the world is undergoing a third industrial revolution,

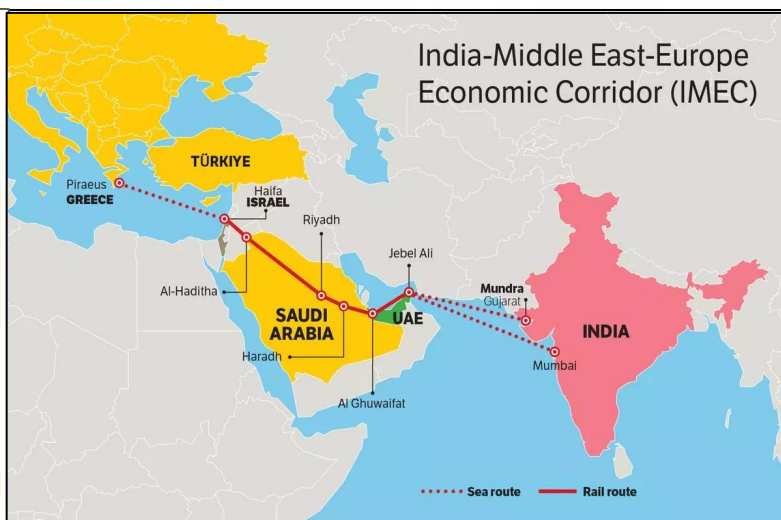


Steven Ciobo

the impact of artificial intelligence will be extraordinary. "The core of IMEC should be built on what is going to be 20 years from

now. The UAE, Saudi Arabia are already trying to leverage their position to make sure they are on top of AI. India is on the top when it comes to the talent pool related to AI. IMEC stands to achieve when it realises this," he said. Mr. Ciobo was speaking during the first India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor Summit held here.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that the State would be a gateway for the IMEC.



India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)

1. Overview

- **Launch:** Announced during the G20 Summit in New Delhi, September 2023.
- **Participants:** India, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, the EU, and the US.
- **Objective:** Strengthen economic connectivity and facilitate trade, energy, and digital cooperation between India, the Middle East, and Europe.

2. Components of IMEC

- **Railway Network:** Connects Middle Eastern countries, enhancing regional connectivity.
- **Sea Link:** Facilitates maritime trade between India and the Middle East, with onward connections to Europe.
- **Energy Infrastructure:** Includes pipelines to transport renewable energy and hydrogen across regions.
- **Digital Infrastructure:** Enhances high-speed data links and fiber-optic connectivity, supporting digital trade and innovation.



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3. Strategic Importance

- **Economic Growth**: Aims to boost trade and development across participating regions by reducing transportation times and costs.
- **Geopolitical Influence**: Presents an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) by offering a US and EU-backed infrastructure model.
- **Energy Security**: Helps in diversifying energy sources, especially in renewable energy, and meets regional energy needs sustainably.

4. Benefits for India

- **Export Growth**: Easier access to markets in the Middle East and Europe.
- **Job Creation**: Infrastructure projects, particularly in transport and energy, likely to generate employment.
- **Digital Expansion**: Opportunities for India's tech sector in Middle Eastern and European markets.

5. Challenges

- **Political Instability**: Possible risks in politically sensitive regions.
- **High Costs**: Extensive financial and logistical resources required.
- **Coordination**: Success hinges on coordinated policies and continuous cooperation among diverse stakeholders.

6. Future Prospects

- IMEC could reshape global trade patterns, enabling more stable and diversified supply chains and positioning India as a central hub in a growing transcontinental trade network.



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Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

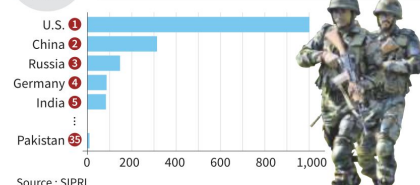
India's military spending in 2024 was nearly nine times that of Pakistan's expenditure, according to a study released on Monday by a leading Swedish think tank that comes amid growing tensions between the two countries over the Pahal-gam terror attack.

The country's military expenditure, the fifth largest globally, grew by 1.6% to \$86.1 billion while Pakistan spent \$10.2 billion, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

The top five military spenders – the United States, China, Russia, Germany and India – accounted for 60% of the global total, with combined

Arms
full

The chart shows the top military spenders (in \$ billion) in the world in 2024. Pakistan was ranked 35 among the spenders



spending of \$1,635 billion, it said.

China's military expenditure increased by 7% to an estimated \$314 billion, marking three decades of consecutive growth, the study noted.

China accounted for 50% of all military spending in Asia and Oceania, investing in the continued

modernisation of its military and expansion of its cyberwarfare capabilities and nuclear arsenal, it said in the report titled 'Trends in World Military Expenditure 2024'.

SIPRI said military spending in Europe (including Russia) rose by 17% to \$693 billion and was the main contributor to the

global increase in 2024.

With the war in Ukraine in its third year, military expenditure kept rising across the continent, pushing European military spending beyond the level recorded at the end of the Cold War, it noted.

SIPRI said Russia's military expenditure reached an estimated \$149 billion in 2024, a 38% increase from 2023 and double the level in 2015. This represented 7.1% of Russia's GDP and 19% of all Russian government spending.

Ukraine's total military expenditure grew by 2.9% to reach \$64.7 billion – equivalent to 43% of Russia's spending. At 34% of GDP, Ukraine had the largest military burden of any country in 2024, the report added.

SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament. Established in 1966, SIPRI provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public. Based in Stockholm, SIPRI is regularly ranked among the most respected think tanks worldwide.

Vision and mission

SIPRI's vision is a world in which sources of insecurity are identified and understood, conflicts are prevented or resolved, and peace is sustained.

SIPRI's mission is to:

- undertake research and activities on security, conflict and peace;
- provide policy analysis and recommendations;
- facilitate dialogue and build capacities;
- promote transparency and accountability; and
- deliver authoritative information to global audiences.

Statutes

The Statutes are the guiding principles of SIPRI's work. They were adopted by the Swedish Government.

History and funding

SIPRI was established in 1966 on the basis of a decision by the Swedish Parliament and receives a substantial part of its funding in the form of an annual grant from the Swedish Government. The Institute also seeks financial support from other organizations in order to carry out its research. Detailed information about the different sources of funding for SIPRI's work is available [here](#).



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SIPRI's structure

SIPRI's **organizational structure** comprises the **Governing Board** and the Director, a Deputy Director, the Research Staff Collegium, and Support Staff, together numbering around 100 people.

SIPRI's current strategy

The current strategy is available to download here: [SIPRI Strategy 2024–29](#).

International reach

Located in Stockholm, Sweden, SIPRI offers a unique platform for researchers from different countries to work in close cooperation. The Institute also hosts guest researchers and interns who work on issues related to SIPRI's research.

SIPRI maintains contacts with other research centres and individual researchers throughout the world. The Institute also cooperates closely with several intergovernmental organizations, notably the United Nations and the European Union, and regularly receives parliamentary, scientific and government delegations as well as visiting researchers.



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Agence France-Presse
MANILA

China and the Philippines on Monday defended their claims to a disputed reef in the South China Sea, after Manila accused Beijing of seeking to "intimidate and harass" with a state media report that suggested the area had been seized.

The Sandy Cay reef lies near Thitu Island, or Pag-asa, where the Philippines

stations troops and maintains a coast guard monitoring base.

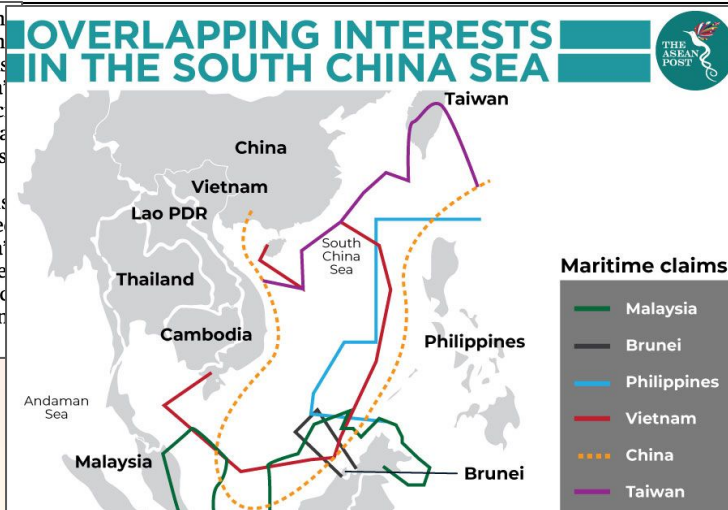
Chinese state broadcaster CCTV said on Saturday that the country's coast guard had "implemented maritime control" over Tiexian Reef, part of Sandy Cay, in mid-April.

The Philippines and China have been engaged in months of confrontations over the South China Sea.

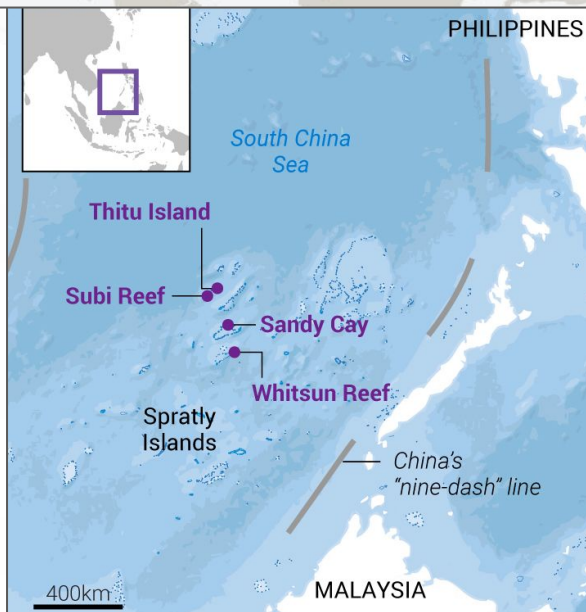
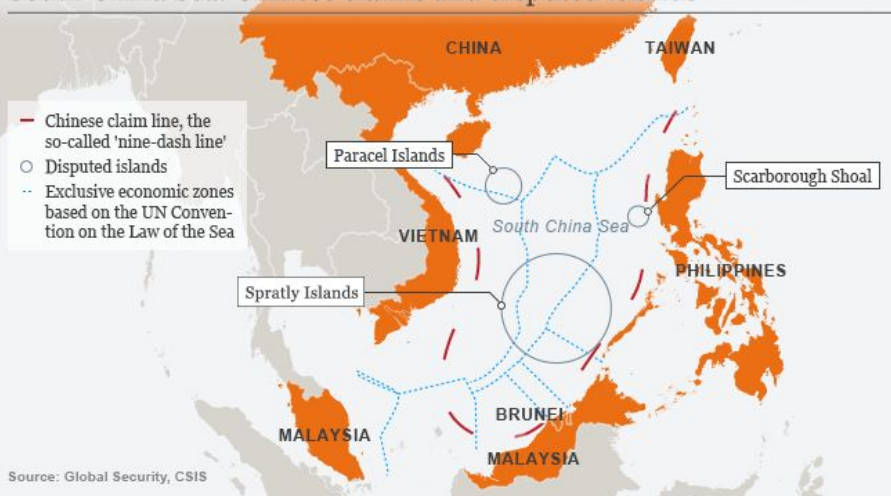
"There is no truth what-

soever to the claim of the China Coast Guard that the (Sandy Cay sandbanks have been seized," Manila National Security Council spokesman Jonathan Ma laya told a Monday press conference.

Beijing's foreign ministry on Monday reiterated the reef was part of China's territory and said its move constituted "rights protection and law enforcement activities".



South China Sea: Chinese claims and disputed islands



Q1. Which of the following statements regarding Speaker and Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha is/are correct?

1. The Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha is subordinate to the Speaker and can be removed by the Speaker unilaterally.
2. Both the Speaker and Deputy Speaker are elected by Lok Sabha from among its members.
3. When the Speaker is absent, the Deputy Speaker exercises all powers of the Speaker.

Select the correct answer using the codes below.

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

Answer: b

Q2. Regarding Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Intensity, consider the following statements:

1. A decline in GHG emissions intensity always means absolute emissions have reduced.
2. India's updated NDC target aims to reduce GHG emissions intensity by 45% from 2005 levels by 2030.

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

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

Answer: a

Q3. Regarding Centre-State relations in India, consider the following statements:

1. Parliament can legislate on a State subject during a national emergency.
2. The President can entrust Union functions to a State Government without Parliament's approval.

3. The Inter-State Council is a constitutional body.

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

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

Answer: c

Q4. Regarding the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), consider the following statements::

1. IMEC is a transcontinental rail and shipping corridor connecting India to Europe via the Arabian Peninsula.
2. It is an initiative under the G20 Mission LiFE.
3. The corridor is envisioned to abolish the Suez Canal.
4. Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Jordan are among the countries participating in IMEC.

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

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

Answer: b

Q5. Consider the following statements:

1. The Spratly Islands are located to the south of the Paracel Islands.
2. Scarborough Shoal lies west of the Philippines.
3. China's "nine-dashed" line lies to the south of the Malay Peninsula.

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

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

Answer: c





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