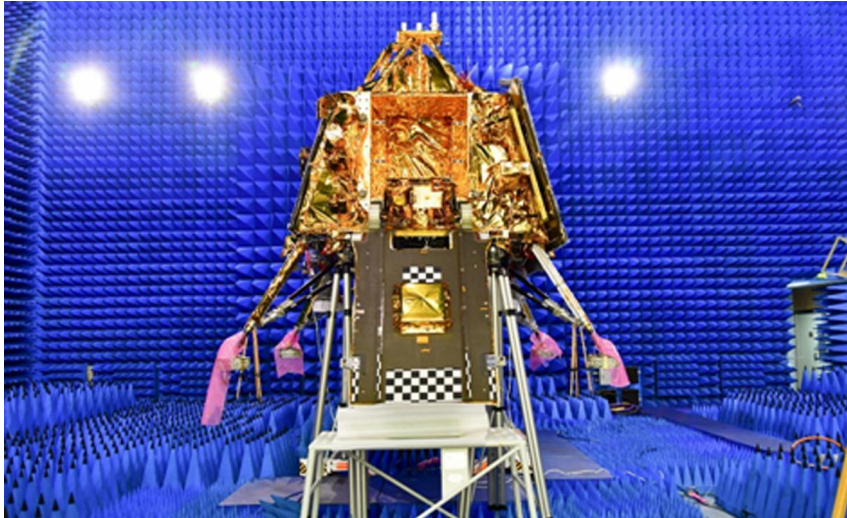


The Chandrayaan3 lander has successfully completed the crucial test



The Chandrayaan3 lander has successfully completed the crucial EMIEMC (electromagnetic interference/ electromagnetic compatibility) test.

EMI-EMC (Electro - Magnetic Interference/ Electro - Magnetic Compatibility) test is conducted for satellite missions to ensure the functionality of the satellite subsystems in the space environment and their compatibility with the expected electromagnetic levels. This test is a major milestone in the realization of the satellites. Chandrayaan-3 interplanetary mission has three major modules: the Propulsion module, Lander module, and Rover. The mission's complexity calls for establishing radio-frequency (RF) communication links between the modules. During the Chandrayaan-3 lander EMI/EC test, Launcher compatibility, Antenna Polarization of all RF systems, Standalone auto compatibility tests for orbital and powered descent mission phases, and Lander & Rover compatibility tests for post landing mission phase were ensured. The performance of the systems was satisfactory.

The mission is considered of great importance to India's space program, as it seeks to increase the country's understanding of the Moon's composition and pave the way for future missions.

Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)



Emissions trading, also known as ‘cap and trade’, is a cost-effective way of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. To incentivise firms to reduce their emissions, a government sets a cap on the maximum level of emissions and creates permits, or allowances, for each unit of emissions allowed under the cap. Emitting firms must obtain and surrender a permit for each unit of their emissions. They can obtain permits from the government or through trading with other firms. The government may choose to give the permits away for free or to auction them.

The origins of cap-and-trade programmes to control pollution date back to the 1980s and 90s when they were successfully used in the United States to phase out lead in petrol and to reduce sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxide emissions to combat acid rain.

China officially launched a major national emissions trading scheme in December 2017 after piloting seven schemes at local government level. It plans to introduce the national scheme first to the energy sector, with full implementation by 2020, to become the largest ETS in the world.

The European Union emissions trading system, or EU ETS, is currently the world’s largest system. It operates in all 28 EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, limiting emissions from more than 11,000 heavy users of energy including power stations and industrial plants, and airlines operating between the ETS member countries.

Judicial changes in Israel



Critics of the Supreme Court, including many in the coalition government, say the bench is left-leaning and elitist and has become too interventionist in the political sphere, while often putting minority rights before national interests.

The government has been pushing for changes that would limit the Supreme Court's powers to rule against the legislature and the executive, while giving coalition lawmakers more power in appointing judges.

The panel for selecting judges requires politicians and judges who sit on it to agree on appointments. The present proposal would change that, giving coalition governments decisive sway.

Israel's democratic "checks and balances" are relatively fragile. It has no constitution, only "basic laws" meant to safeguard its democratic foundations. In its one-chamber Knesset, the government controls a majority.

Critics say that the changes will weaken the courts and hand unbridled power to the government, endangering rights and liberties with catastrophic effects for the economy and relations with Western allies, who have already voiced concern. The opposition also says his nationalist allies want to weaken the Supreme Court to establish more settlements on land the Palestinians seek for a state.

Vibrant villages scheme



The scheme will provide funds for development of essential infrastructure and creation of livelihood opportunities in 19 Districts and 46 Border blocks 4 states and 1 UT along the northern land border of the country which will help in achieving inclusive growth and retaining the population in the border areas. In the first phase 663 Villages will be taken up in the programme.

Comprehensive development of villages of blocks on northern border thus improving the quality of life of people living in identified border villages. This will help in encouraging people to stay in their native locations in border areas and reversing the outmigration from these villages adding to improved security of the border.

The scheme aids to identify and develop the economic drivers based on local natural human and other resources of the border villages on northern border and development of growth centres on “Hub and Spoke Model” through promotion of social entrepreneurship, empowerment of youth and women through skill development and entrepreneurship, leveraging the tourism potential through promotion of local cultural, traditional knowledge and heritage and development of sustainable eco-agribusinesses on the concept of “One village-One product” through community based organisations, Cooperatives, SHGs, NGOs etc.

Vibrant Village Action Plans will be created by the district administration with the help of Gram Panchayats. 100 % saturation of Central and state schemes will be ensured.

Key outcomes that have been attempted are, connectivity with all-weather road, drinking water, 24x7 electricity – Solar and wind energy to be given focuseed attention, mobile and internet connectivity. Tourist centers, multi-purpose centers and health and wellness Centers

Independent CEC



A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court has said that until the Parliament makes an appropriate law under Article 324 of the Constitution, the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners shall be based on the advice tendered by a committee composed of the Prime Minister of India, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha (or, the leader of the single largest party in opposition) and the Chief Justice of India.

The primary claim of the petitioners seems to be that in the absence of a law made by Parliament to govern the manner in which the CEC and ECs are appointed, there is a “vacuum” and given that the Election Commission’s work is fundamental to the electoral process and democracy, it would be necessary for the court to step in and direct how appointments should be made

The disagreement of the petitioners was that as per Article 324(2) of the Constitution, the appointment of the CEC and ECs, though to be made by the President, should be done based on a law to be promulgated. Yet, no law was enacted by Parliament in this regard. Taking advantage of this scenario, the dispensation at the Centre chooses the CEC and ECs, who are often seen to act in tune with those in power and those who select them. Therefore, the petitioners pleaded for

an independent body to appoint the CEC and the ECs to ensure functional autonomy for the panel.

The court noted vacuum in the appointment process of the poll panel under Article 324 of the Constitution, as the Executive was entrusted exclusively with it as "a mere transient or stop gap arrangement". This was to be replaced by a law made by the Parliament taking away the exclusive power of the Executive.

Chinese Taiwan relation



Taiwan, officially known as the Republic of China (ROC), is an island separated from China by the Taiwan Strait. It has been governed independently of mainland China, officially the People's Republic of China (PRC), since 1949. The PRC views the island as a renegade province and vows to eventually "unify" Taiwan with the mainland. In Taiwan, which has its own democratically elected government and is home to twenty-three million people, political leaders have differing views on the island's status and relations with the mainland.

Cross-strait tensions have escalated since the election of Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen in 2016. Tsai has refused to accept a formula that her predecessor, Ma Ying-jeou, endorsed to allow for increased cross-strait ties. Meanwhile, Beijing has taken increasingly aggressive actions, including by flying fighter jets near the island. Some analysts fear a Chinese attack on Taiwan has the potential to draw the United States into a war with China.

Beijing asserts that there is only “one China” and that Taiwan is part of it. It views the PRC as the only legitimate government of China, an approach it calls the One-China principle, and seeks Taiwan’s eventual “unification” with the mainland. Beijing claims that Taiwan is bound by an understanding known as the 1992 Consensus, which was reached between representatives of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Kuomintang (KMT) party that then ruled Taiwan. However, the two sides don’t agree on the content of this so-called consensus, and it was never intended to address the question of Taiwan’s legal status. For the PRC, as Chinese President Xi Jinping has stated, the 1992 Consensus reflects an agreement that “the two sides of the strait belong to one China and would work together to seek national reunification.” For the KMT, it means “one China, different interpretations,” with the ROC standing as the “one China.”

Taiwan’s KMT-drafted constitution continues to recognize China, Mongolia, Taiwan, Tibet, and the South China Sea as part of the ROC. The KMT does not support Taiwan’s independence and has consistently called for closer ties with Beijing. But in the face of recent election losses, KMT leaders have discussed whether to change the party’s stance on the 1992 Consensus.

The KMT’s chief rival party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), has never endorsed the understanding laid out in the 1992 Consensus. President Tsai, who is also the leader of the DPP, has refused to explicitly accept the consensus. Instead, she has attempted to find another formulation that would be acceptable to Beijing.

Power lines through great Indian bastard habitat



The nearly 7,200 km of overhead lines are meant to transfer solar power into the grid but existing lines have been harming Great Indian Bustards, which have been dying by colliding into them or

getting electrocuted. Only about 150 of these birds are still left, most of them in Jaisalmer in Rajasthan.

Around 122 of the total 150 GIBs found in the country were in Jaisalmer district of Rajasthan, according to a 2018 GIB count. The rest were scattered in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka

A Supreme Court appointed-committee has recommended that, in order to protect the endangered Great Indian Bustard, close to 800 km, or about 10% of the length of proposed power lines in the Thar and Kutch deserts of Rajasthan and Gujarat should be re-routed or made to go underground.

The deaths of these birds, and the danger to them from power lines and renewable energy projects, triggered a petition in the Supreme Court in 2019, by environmentalists who asked that all overhead lines — existing and prospective — be made to go underground. Private and public power companies, supported by the Centre’s Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), contended that shifting all overhead lines underground would be expensive and impractical, and would significantly hike the cost of solar power, undermining India’s commitment to green growth

Glacial melt and Indus river basin



Increased glacial melt in the Indus river basin due to global warming is likely to raise strategic concerns over the sharing of water in the region, a new research article in the Current Science journal has indicated.

Except for the Upper Indus basin (high mountain ranges of the Hindukush, Karakoram and Himalaya (HKH)) all other sub-basins show a substantial rate of glacier mass loss, which can affect future water availability, creating a need for relooking into some of the water-sharing practices in the basin, the paper has concluded.

This is mainly because the mass loss in the Upper Indus basin is low and glacier stored water is high, indicating longer sustainability of glacier melt water compared to other sub-basins in the Himalayas posing new strategic concerns,

The impact of climate change is not uniform across the trans-boundary river basin, which is of strategic importance to India, Pakistan, China and Afghanistan, covering an area of around 1 million sq km and supporting a population over of 268 million people, according to the study. Glaciers act as buffers by providing melt water supply during summer, especially in drought years.

Even if global warming is kept to 1.5 degrees Celsius, as envisioned in the 2015 Paris Agreement, warming in the Hindu Kush Himalaya will be slightly higher, as will the amount of monsoon rainfall, the scientists said. This would alter the water dynamics of the region.

India and Pakistan, in 1960, signed an Indus water treaty for the equitable distribution of water resources. The treaty allocates the western rivers (Indus, Jhelum and Chenab) to Pakistan and the eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas and Sutlej) to India. It allows each country certain uses on the rivers allocated to the other, according to the World Bank.

India has recently informed Pakistan of its intent to renegotiate the 62-year-old treaty brokered by the multilateral bank for the management of cross-border rivers because the Pakistani side's "intransigence" in handling disputes had raised questions about integrity of the pact.

Money laundering rules to apply to crypto trade



The government has imposed anti-money laundering provisions on cryptocurrencies or virtual assets as it looks to tighten oversight of digital assets. In a gazette notification, the Finance Ministry said the anti-money laundering legislation has been applied to crypto trading, safekeeping and related financial services.

After this, Indian crypto exchanges will have to report suspicious activity to the Financial Intelligence Unit India (FIU-IND). The move is in line with the global trend of requiring digital-asset platforms to follow anti-money laundering standards similar to those followed by other regulated entities like banks or stock brokers.

Virtual digital assets were defined as any code or number or token generated through cryptographic means with the promise or representation of having inherent value.

Crypto assets are by definition borderless and require international collaboration to prevent regulatory arbitrage. Therefore, any legislation for regulation or for banning can be effective only with significant international collaboration on the evaluation of the risks and benefits and evolution of common taxonomy and standards.

Modernization of trans- mission sector



The country will soon have a modern and smart power transmission system with features such as real-time monitoring and automated operation of grid, better situational assessment, capability to have increased share of renewable capacity in the power-mix, enhanced utilisation of transmission capacity, greater resilience against cyber-attacks as well as natural disasters, centralised and data-driven decision-making, reduction in forced outages through self-correcting systems etc .

These recommendations are part of a report of a task force set up by the power ministry in September 2021 under the chairmanship of Powergrid chairman and managing director to suggest ways for modernisation of transmission sector and making it smart and future-ready.

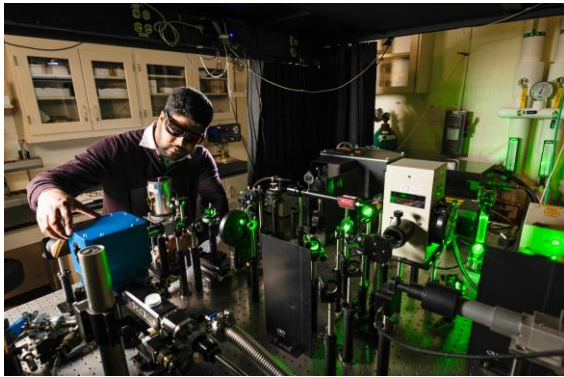
The task force in its report has recommended a bouquet of technological and digital solutions, which can be adopted to make the state transmission grids future ready. These recommendations have been clubbed under categories of modernisation of existing transmission system; use of advanced technology in construction and supervision, operations and management; smart and future-ready transmission system; and up-skilling of workforce.

The task force also recommended benchmarks for transmission network availability and voltage control based on performance of global transmission utilities.

Grid management in the country, on a regional basis started in the sixties. At the beginning, state grids were interconnected to form a regional grid and India was demarcated into 5 regions

namely Northern, Eastern, Western, North Eastern and Southern regions. With time each grid was connected to the other, to allow greater availability and transfer of power. It all came together when the Southern Region was connected to the Central Grid, with commissioning of 765 kV Raichur-Solapur Transmission Line, thereby achieving ‘ONE NATION-ONE GRID-ONE FREQUENCY’. The Srinagar Leh Transmission System was connected to the National Grid, and was dedicated to the nation in 2019.

New material offers lossless energy possibility



U.S. scientists say they have produced the first commercially accessible material that eliminates the loss of energy as electricity moves along a wire, a breakthrough that could mean longer-lasting batteries, more-efficient power grids and improved high-speed trains.

A group of researchers at the University of Rochester report that they have created a new superconductor that can operate at room temperature and a much lower pressure than previously discovered superconducting materials.

The breakthrough has the potential to create lossless electrical grids, and better and cheaper magnets for use in future nuclear fusion reactors, among other things.

Materials that can conduct electric currents without any loss—so-called superconductors—have been wildly impractical because they typically need to be extremely cooled, to around minus 320 degrees Fahrenheit, and subjected to extreme pressure to work.

The team reports that a rare earth metal called lutetium combined with hydrogen and nitrogen can conduct electricity without resistance at 21 degree Celsius around just 10000 atmospheres of pressure.

India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)



IndAusECTA covers the following major areas:

1. Trade in Goods
2. Trade in Services
3. Rules of Origin
4. Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures
5. Customs Procedures and Trade Facilitation
6. Trade Remedies
7. Legal & institutional Issues
8. Movement of Natural Persons

The Agreement will benefit various labor-intensive Indian sectors that are currently subjected to 5% import duty by Australia. The agreement will result in immediate market access at zero duty to 98.3% of tariff lines accounting for 96.4% of India's exports to Australia in value terms. The remaining 1.7% lines are to be made zero duty lines over 5 years. Overall, Australia is offering duty elimination on 100% of its tariff lines.

Immediate duty-free access covers all labour-intensive sectors such as Textiles and Apparel, Agricultural and Fish products, Leather, Footwear, Furniture, many Engineering Products, Jewelry and select Pharmaceuticals. As a result, many industries such as steel, aluminium, garments and others will get cheaper raw materials which will enable them to become competitive.

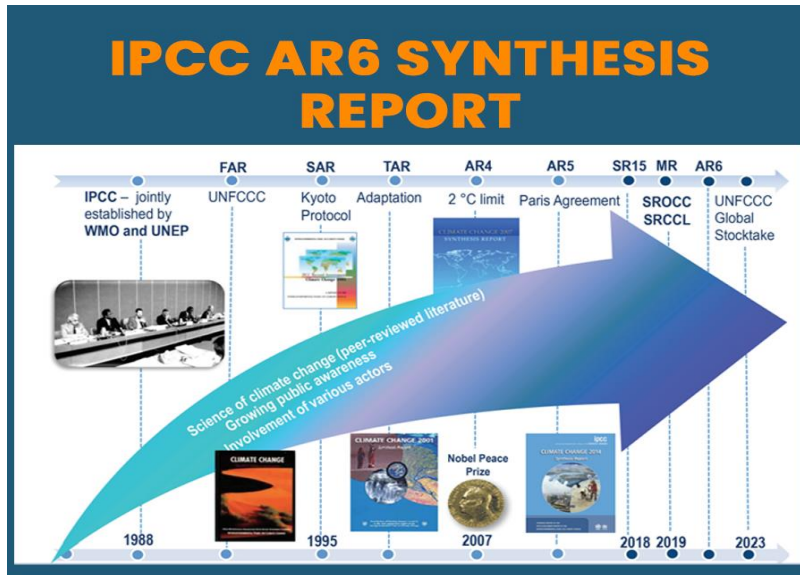
India is offering zero duty access to 90% value of products from Australia (including coal). Zero duty on 85.3 % value of products will be offered immediately while zero duty on 3.67 % value of products will be offered progressively over 3, 5, 7 and 10 years. India has offered concessions on Tariff lines of export interest to Australia like Coking coal and Thermal coal, Wines, Agricultural products – 7 of them with TRQ (Cotton, Almonds shelled and in shell, Mandarin, Oranges, Lentils, Pear), Metals (Aluminium, Copper, Nickel, Iron & Steel) and Minerals (Manganese Ore, Calcined Alumina). Many sensitive products such as milk and other dairy products, wheat, sugar, iron ore, apple, walnuts and others, have been kept in India's Exclusion list.

Immediate Duty-Free Access is projected to potentially create 10 lakh jobs in India and additional exports of \$ 10 bn from India to Australia in the next five years.

The commitments made by Australia under Trade in Services are the best it has made in trade agreements till now and match its recent FTA with the UK. Australia has committed its schedule in the negative list and has also made wide-ranging commitments in around 135 sub sectors with Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status in around 120 sub-sectors. The Agreement provides for an Annual Quota of 1,800 for Yoga teachers and Indian Chefs. Post study work visa (18 months – 4 years) will be made available for Indian students. This will benefit more than 1,00,000 Indian students in Australia. Along with this, the #IndAusECTA makes an arrangement for Work and Holiday Visa for young professionals.

India is making a commitment to Australia in around 103 Service Sub-Sectors with Most Favoured Nation status in around 31 Service Sub-sectors for the first time. Australia gets commitments in banking, insurance, other financial services, business services. The Agreement opens avenues for investment in computer related services, telecom, construction, health & environmental services.

IPCC's synthesis report



Summary

- This Synthesis Report (SYR) of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) summarises the state of knowledge of climate change, its widespread impacts and risks, and climate change mitigation and adaptation. It integrates the main findings of the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) based on contributions from the three Working Groups, and the three Special Reports.
- This report recognizes the interdependence of climate, ecosystems and biodiversity, and human societies; the value of diverse forms of knowledge; and the close linkages between climate change adaptation, mitigation, ecosystem health, human well-being and sustainable development, and reflects the increasing diversity of actors involved in climate action.
- Human activities, principally through emissions of greenhouse gases, have unequivocally caused global warming, with global surface temperature reaching 1.1°C above 1850–1900 in 2011–2020. Global greenhouse gas emissions have continued to increase, with unequal historical and ongoing contributions arising from unsustainable energy use, land use and land-use change, lifestyles and patterns of consumption and production across regions, between and within countries, and among individuals.

- Widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere have occurred. Human-caused climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe. This has led to widespread adverse impacts and related losses and damages to nature and people. Vulnerable communities who have historically contributed the least to current climate change are disproportionately affected.
- Adaptation planning and implementation has progressed across all sectors and regions, with documented benefits and varying effectiveness. Despite progress, adaptation gaps exist, and will continue to grow at current rates of implementation. Hard and soft limits to adaptation have been reached in some ecosystems and regions. Maladaptation is happening in some sectors and regions. Current global financial flows for adaptation are insufficient for, and constrain implementation of, adaptation options, especially in developing countries.
- Policies and laws addressing mitigation have consistently expanded since AR5. Global GHG emissions in 2030 implied by nationally determined contributions (NDCs) announced by October 2021 make it likely that warming will exceed 1.5°C during the 21st century and make it harder to limit warming below 2°C. There are gaps between projected emissions from implemented policies and those from NDCs and finance flows fall short of the levels needed to meet climate goals across all sectors and regions.
- Continued greenhouse gas emissions will lead to increasing global warming, with the best estimate of reaching 1.5°C in the near term in considered scenarios and modelled pathways. Every increment of global warming will intensify multiple and concurrent hazards. Deep, rapid, and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions would lead to a discernible slowdown in global warming within around two decades, and also to discernible changes in atmospheric composition within a few years.
- For any given future warming level, many climate-related risks are higher than assessed in AR5, and projected long-term impacts are up to multiple times higher than currently observed and projected adverse impacts and related losses and damages from climate change escalate with every increment of global warming. Climatic and non-climatic risks will increasingly interact, creating compound and cascading risks that are more complex and difficult to manage.

- Limiting human-caused global warming requires net zero CO₂ emissions. Cumulative carbon emissions until the time of reaching net-zero CO₂ emissions and the level of greenhouse gas emission reductions this decade largely determine whether warming can be limited to 1.5°C or 2°C. Projected CO₂ emissions from existing fossil fuel infrastructure without additional abatement would exceed the remaining carbon budget for 1.5°C (50%).
- If warming exceeds a specified level such as 1.5°C, it could gradually be reduced again by achieving and sustaining net negative global CO₂ emissions. This would require additional deployment of carbon dioxide removal, compared to pathways without overshoot, leading to greater feasibility and sustainability concerns. Overshoot entails adverse impacts, some irreversible and additional risks for human and natural systems, all growing with the magnitude and duration of overshoot.
- Prioritising equity, climate justice, social justice, inclusion and just transition processes can enable adaptation and ambitious mitigation actions and climate resilient development. Adaptation outcomes are enhanced by increased support to regions and people with the highest vulnerability to climatic hazards. Integrating climate adaptation into social protection programs improves resilience. Many options are available for reducing emission-intensive consumption, including through behavioural and lifestyle changes, with co-benefits for societal well-being.

Same sex marriages – updated



The Centre has opposed in the Supreme Court a batch of petitions seeking legal validation of same-sex marriages, claiming they will cause a “complete havoc” with the delicate balance of

personal laws and accepted societal values. In an affidavit filed before the apex court, the government submitted that despite the decriminalisation of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, the petitioners cannot claim a fundamental right for same-sex marriage to be recognised under the laws of the country.

The Supreme Court has decided that a batch of petitions demanding legal validation for same-sex marriages will be decided by a Constitution bench even as the Union government, while opposing the plea, said that the apex court now carries the “grave responsibility” of determining how society will be shaped in future.

Synchronized vulture survey



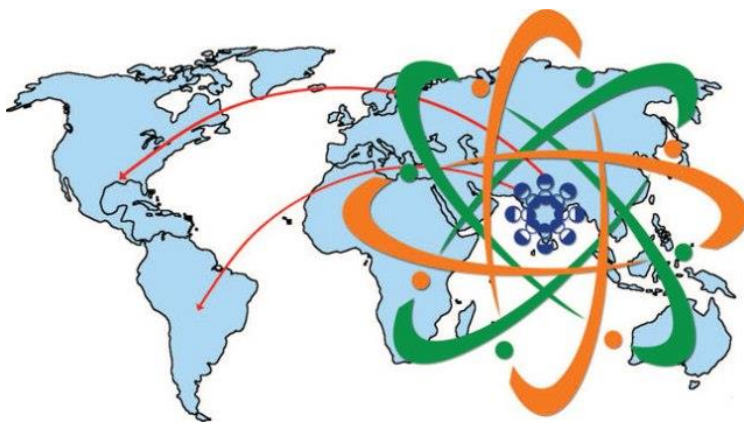
The first-ever synchronised vulture survey that concluded on February 26 in select regions of the Western Ghats spread over the three South Indian States of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu recorded a considerable population of vultures. The three-day survey was organised by the Forest departments of the three States with technical support from the Vulture Conservation Working Group South India (VCWG-SI).

As many as 107 sightings of vultures, including the White-rumped vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*) and Red-headed vulture (*Sarcogyps calvus*), were recorded in Kerala’s part of the forest, including in the three forest divisions of the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, North Wayanad and South Wayanad. The survey was conducted in 15 select locations in the forest divisions, of which vultures were recorded in 12.

The synchronised survey was proposed in the South Indian landscape by a VCWG-SI meeting held at Bandipur in 2018 to monitor the population of critically endangered vultures. The working group was formed in 2017 to coordinate the vulture conservation activities in the region with the State Forest departments concerned.

Four species of vultures such as the White-rumped vulture, Red-headed vulture, Indian vulture (*Gyps indicus*), and Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) were reported in the landscape.

Liberalized Remittance Scheme (LRS)



Liberalized remittance scheme (LRS) was introduced in India in 2004 by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). It is a scheme that enables Indian residents to remit funds abroad for certain specified purposes. The scheme has been one of the most important instruments for promoting international trade and investment, as well as for facilitating capital flows into and out of India. Prior to this, the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) 1999 had imposed several restrictions on the transfer of funds from India to other countries. Under the new scheme, individuals were allowed to remit up to USD 25,000 per financial year for eligible transactions. The amount was subsequently increased to USD 50,000 in 2007 and further increased to USD 250,000 in 2013. The primary objective of the liberalized remittance scheme is to liberalize the existing foreign exchange regulations and facilitate the smooth transfer of funds abroad by Indian residents. The scheme also aims to promote and encourage non-residents to invest in India and promote outward remittances from India.

One of the major advantages of the scheme is that it enables individuals to make investments in international financial markets without having to go through the cumbersome process of

obtaining permission from the RBI. This helps them to diversify their investment portfolios and get access to a wider range of financial instruments.

Vostro accounts and how they facilitate trade



A vostro account is an account that domestic banks hold for foreign banks in the former's domestic currency, in this case, the rupee. Domestic banks use it to provide international banking services to their clients who have global banking needs. It is an integral offshoot of correspondent banking that entails a bank (or an intermediary) to facilitate wire transfer, conduct business transactions, accept deposits and gather documents on behalf of the other bank. It helps domestic banks gain wider access to foreign financial markets and serve international clients without having to be physically present abroad. The SRVA is an additional arrangement to the existing system that uses freely convertible currencies and works as a complimentary system

The exchange rate between the currencies of the trading partner countries would be market-determined. To conclude, the final settlement also takes place in Indian National Rupee (INR). The authorised domestic dealer banks (those authorised to deal in foreign currencies) are required to open SRVA accounts for correspondent banks of the partner trading country. Domestic importers are required to make payment (in INR) into the SRVA account of the correspondent bank against the invoices for supply of goods or services from the overseas seller/supplier. Similarly, domestic exporters are to be paid the export proceeds (in INR) from the balances in the designated account of the correspondent bank of the partner country.

The Economic Survey (2022-23) had argued that the framework could largely reduce the “net demand for foreign exchange, the U.S. dollar in particular, for the settlement of current account related trade flows”.

Importance of Malabar multilateral naval exercise



Historically, naval exercises have enhanced interoperability between navies and facilitated the dissemination of best practices in the maritime realm. Such exercises have also resulted in better training, improved readiness, and evolution of standard operating procedures (SOPs) as well as facilitated joint operations and increased the trust quotient among participating sides.

Though the Indian Navy has been carrying out exercises with Sri Lanka (SLINEX), Singapore (SIMBEX), France (VARUNA), Australia (AUSINDEX), United Kingdom (KONKAN), and South Africa and Brazil (ISAMBAR), to name a few, the Malabar exercise has always generated a higher level of interest and attention, especially amongst stake holders in this region.

Naval exercises between India and the US (Malabar) has been an ongoing affair since 1992. After a brief interlude due to India’s 1998 nuclear tests and the imposition of sanctions, the exercise became an annual feature since 2002. Initially pitched at a basic level of naval drills between the US and India, Malabar 2005 involved the participation of the aircraft carriers of both navies for the first time. In Malabar 2006, a complete US expeditionary strike group and Coast

Guard ships of both navies participated in anti-piracy drills, pollution control, search and rescue, visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) techniques, all of which were in consonance with the prevailing and perceived maritime threats.

In 2015, India took the bold move of including Japan as a permanent member of the Malabar exercises. This was significant because the same move had earlier triggered an outcry from China in 2007 when the exercises were expanded from the bilateral format.

In January 2017, Australia requested that its naval assets be allowed to attend Malabar exercises as an 'observer'. This was reiterated by the Australian Defence Minister Marise Payne during her visit to Tokyo in April 2017, when she said that Australia was 'very interested in a quadrilateral engagement with India, Japan and the United States'.

In the midst of the standoff with China in Eastern Ladakh, **Australia was admitted as a permanent member of Ex Malabar in 2020**

Malabar's last edition was held in Japan in November 2022, marking the 30th anniversary of the exercise, which began in 1992 as a bilateral exercise between India and the United States

What is Quad?

- It is a four-nation alliance formed in 2007 by India, Australia, the United States, and Japan.
- The idea was proposed for the first time by former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.
- It is frequently referred to as a "Asian" or "mini" North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and is seen as a counterweight to China's military and economic clout in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Interestingly, the QUAD, which was previously known as the quadrilateral security dialogue, is now known as the quadrilateral framework, indicating that it has progressed beyond a narrow security dialogue

New START treaty - update



In the wake of the ongoing war in Ukraine, Russia is suspending its participation in the New START, the last remaining major military agreement with the United States.

The name START comes from the original “Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty”, known as START-I, which was signed between the US and the erstwhile USSR in 1991, and came into force in 1994. START-I, which capped the numbers of nuclear warheads and intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) that each side could deploy at 6,000 and 1,600 respectively, lapsed in 2009, and was replaced first by the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT, also known as the Treaty of Moscow), and then by the New START treaty. The New START, officially, the “Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms”, entered into force on February 5, 2011, and placed new verifiable limits on intercontinental-range nuclear weapons.

Since the New START Treaty’s entry into force, as of February 1, 2023, the two parties have conducted 328 on-site inspections, exchanged 25,311 notifications, held 19 meetings of the Bilateral Consultative Commission, and held 42 biannual data exchanges on strategic offensive arms subject to the treaty.

According to the reports , Russia had announced in August 2022 that it was suspending US inspectors’ access to its nuclear arsenal, and in November, it had cancelled a diplomatic meeting of the bilateral commission.