



1. North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

Topic: International Relations



North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

['nā-(,)tō]

A political and military alliance of North American and European countries, formed in 1949 as a counterweight to the Soviet Union.

Investopedia

In News: Finland has joined NATO recently, marking a definitive shift in Europe's post World War II alignment and isolating Russia further.

More on the Topic

- To join the US-led North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the small Nordic country, which shares a 1,340-km border with Russia, has ended more than 70 years of military non-alignment.
- In the Cold War years, a policy of neutrality between the Soviet Union and the West was known as 'Finlandisation', and Finlandisation had been one of the options discussed for Ukraine before Russia invaded it.

Why has Finland joined NATO?

- **Russia going to war against Ukraine has made its smaller neighbours crave the powerful military backing the NATO offers**, under whose charter, every member has to defend any one member being attacked.
- Finland and its neighbour Sweden applied for NATO membership soon after the Russian invasion of Ukraine.



- Any new applicant has to be approved by all existing members of the alliance, and while Finland is now the 31st NATO member, Sweden's bid is being held up by Turkey and Hungary.

Significance of Finland joining NATO:

- For Finland, while the country is in a **better position in terms of security**, it is losing out on the significant trade and tourist revenue it was making from Russia, and from its position as the West's gateway to the East.
- For NATO, **the addition of Finland brings in a military trained to repel an attack from Russia**, and, by doubling its border with the country, brings it in a **better position to station weapons, including missile launchpads, closer to Russia**.
- For Russia, Finland's move has brought **NATO closer to its doors**, the very thing it most strenuously opposes, and the prevention of which it had cited as one of the reasons to invade Ukraine.

About NATO:

- NATO was set up after World War II with the express purpose of containing the Soviet Union.
- The members of the alliance include: since 1949, the 12 founding countries of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States; Greece and Türkiye joined in 1952; Germany in 1955; Spain in 1982; Czechia, Hungary and Poland in 1999; Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia joined in 2004; Albania and Croatia in 2009; Montenegro in 2017; North Macedonia in 2020; and finally, Finland.

Source: Indian Express

2. Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

Topic: Disaster Management





In News: The CDRI is hosting the fifth edition of the International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI) in New Delhi.

More on the Topic:

- This event aims to bring "solutions integrating resilience in infrastructure to ensure access, delivery and continuity of essential services to people and communities".
- Disaster resilient infrastructure include vital buildings, public communal facilities, transit systems, telecommunications, and power systems that are strategically designed to withstand the impact of a natural disaster like a flood, earthquake, or wildfire.
- Disaster resilient architecture is one of the pivotal aspects of risk management and disaster preparedness.

Significance of Disaster Resilient Infrastructure:

- According to the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR), upgraded disaster resilience of infrastructure is a foundation for sustainable development.**
- Building an infrastructure system that is resilient to disasters is vital for **economic growth with sustainable development.**
- While India has been hailed for its reduction in the number of human casualties in disasters, the country lags behind in protecting property and infrastructure during natural disasters or extreme weather events.
- The World Bank calculated that the economic losses due to disasters during the late 90s and early 2000s were close to 2% of the GDP.

About Coalition of Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI):

- The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) is a **partnership of national governments, UN agencies and programmes, multilateral development banks and financing mechanisms, the private sector, and knowledge institutions** that aims to promote the resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks in support of sustainable development.
- India announced the creation of a CDRI after the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (2016).
- **Infrastructure Resilience Accelerator Fund** was announced in 2023 acts as a financial resource and is key to the success of initiatives

Source: PIB

3. India Bhutan Relations

Topic: International Relations



In News: His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, the King of Bhutan called on the President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan recently.

More on the Topic:

- Diplomatic relations between India and Bhutan were established in 1968.
- The basic framework of India- Bhutan bilateral relations is the **Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed in 1949** between the two countries and revised in February 2007.
- Government of India has consistently supported the socio-economic development of Bhutan. Hydro-power cooperation between the two countries is an example of win-win cooperation.
- The **720 MW Mangdechhu, 1200 MW Punatsangchhu-I, 1020 MW Punatsangchhu-II** in Inter-Governmental mode are under various stages of implementation.
- India continues to be the principal development partner of Bhutan. For the 12th Five Year Plan, India's contribution of Rs. 4500 cr. will constitute 73% of Bhutan's total external grant component.
- India is Bhutan's largest trading partner.
- In 2020, bilateral trade accounted for 82.6% of Bhutan's total trade.
- A 2,000 strong Indian Military Training Team (IMTRAT) is permanently based in western Bhutan to train the Royal Bhutan Army, while other units regularly cooperate with the Royal Bhutan Army.

Significance of India Bhutan Relations:

- Bhutan **shares** Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal and Sikkim.

- Security of Bhutan's present borders especially its western border is very important for India.
- Bhutan serves as a **buffer between India and China**.
- Bhutan provides a **market for Indian commodities** and is a **destination for Indian investment**.
- Bhutan is a rich source of **hydropower**.

Challenges:

- China's continuous claims to important border areas such as **Chumbi valley and Doklam** and its continuous efforts for establishing strong diplomatic and economic relations with Bhutan have been continuous source of concern for India.
- At times India has been **accused of meddling in Bhutan's internal affairs**.
- A politically unstable and restive Bhutan can provide a **safe haven to anti-India activities and anti-India militant groups**.

Source: Indian Express

4. 'Basohli Painting'

Topic: Art and Culture



In News: The world-famous Basohli paintings from Kathua district have obtained the Geographical Indication (GI) tag following approval of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, Jammu.

More on the Topic:

- The Pahari School of Art developed in the mountainous regions of **Basohli, Kulu, Guler, Kangra, Jammu, and Garhwal between the 17th and 19th centuries**.

- The first centre of the Pahari school materialized at Basohli with its own bold and flamboyant style.
- The characteristic features of these paintings were the use of bright and bold colours like red, yellow, and blue in the borders, as well as for the generally flat background.
- The other distinguishing part was the facial features- **a prominent nose and lotus-shaped eyes.**
- The female figures can be categorised into three types according to their attire.
- The dressing style of both males and females resemble the clothes worn in the Mughal or Rajput courts.
- **Depiction of flora was not unusual in Basohli paintings.** The artists' favourite was the bright red flowers of rhododendron.
- The most distinctive feature of these paintings was, however, the portrayal of jewellery- embossed white paint was used for pearls and the wing-case of beetles for emerald green.

Source: Indian Express

5. Prosopis chilensis

Topic: Environment and Ecology



In News: An alien invasive plant, Prosopis chilensis is threatening to pulverise native vegetation across 21 islands in the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve (GoMBR).

More on the Topic:

- Prosopis chilensis, **a drought-resistant plant native to the arid regions of four South American countries** — Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, and Peru — is not the only trouble for these islands divided into the Tuticorin, Vembar, Kilakkarai, and Mandapam groups.

- Corals, seagrass, and mangroves are among the three unique ecosystems present on the islands.
- The GoMBR, **India's first marine biosphere reserve**, is one of the important habitats for coastal birds migrating as far as the Arctic Circle. The area is of particular significance as the 21 islands also serve as resting places for birds migrating to and from the nearby Sri Lankan islands.
- The highest number of water bird species, inclusive of waders, ducks, terns, gulls, egrets, and herons, was recorded on Manoli island of the Kilakkarai group. But 19 species of shorebirds were recorded compared to 26 listed in a 1990 study.

Source: Business Standard

6. Anti Spyware Declaration

Topic: Science and Technology



In News: The US and 10 other nations issued the first-ever significant anti-spyware declaration.

More on the Topic:

- It recognized **the threat posed by the misuse of commercial spyware.**
- It seeks to realize the importance of stringent domestic and international controls on the proliferation and use of this technology.
- **Spyware is a type of malicious software or malware that is installed on a computing device without the end user's knowledge.**
- Due to the fact that many countries' intelligence and law enforcement agencies require such tools to combat terrorism, organised crime, and drug lords, nations had been unwilling to take a firm stance against spyware up until now.
- Too often, such powerful and invasive tools have been used to target and intimidate perceived opponents and facilitate efforts to curb dissent; limit freedoms of expression,

peaceful assembly, or association; enable human rights violations and abuses or suppression of civil liberties; or track or target individuals without proper legal authorisation, safeguards, or oversight.

Source: Business Standard

7. Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

Topic: International Relations



In News: The Ministry of External Affairs has hit out at the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), terming its comments on the recent violence during the Ram Navami processions in different parts of the country, as a reflection of its “communal mindset”.

More on the Topic:

- The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, formerly the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, is an intergovernmental organization founded in 1969, consisting of 57 member states, with 48 being Muslim-majority countries.
- Its official languages are Arabic, English and French.
- The membership spans roughly 1.81 billion people.
- The organisation was set up to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslims in the world and also to promote international peace and harmony among various people of the world.

Source: Business Standard
