

UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES 10-02-2024

INDIAN OCEAN CONFERENCE at Perth.



The Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) 2024, formally known as the 7th Indian Ocean Conference, was held on February 9-10, 2024, in Perth, Australia.

The Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) was held in Perth, Australia, and attended by representatives from 40 countries, including Foreign Ministers from several regional nations.

The Conference aimed to discuss cooperation and solutions for regional security, economic development, environmental protection, and maritime safety in the Indian Ocean region.

The conference was sponsored by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The **theme was "Towards a Stable and Sustainable Indian Ocean."**

Key Discussions

Concerns about growing "great power rivalry" in the region: This includes the increasing presence of warships and submarines from various countries, particularly the US, China, India, Australia, UAE, and Saudi Arabia. This rivalry is seen as shrinking the decision-making power of smaller island nations and increasing instability in the region.

Challenges to international rule of law: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar of India specifically referred to China's actions in the South China Sea and disregard for international agreements like UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) as concerning examples.

Balancing act for smaller countries: Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe highlighted the difficulty for smaller nations to navigate the complex relationships between major powers and avoid being forced to choose sides.

Concerns about freedom of navigation and overflights: This stems from incidents like Sri Lanka's recent moratorium on foreign research ships due to objections from India about "spy ships."

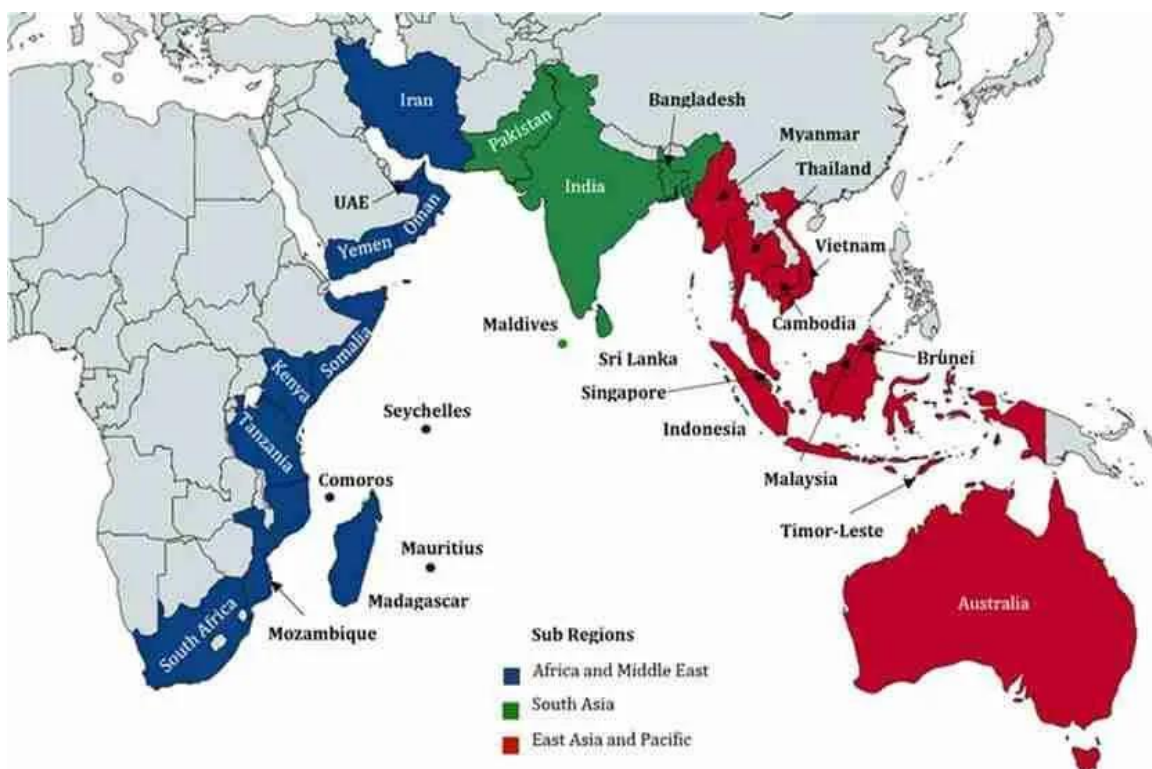
Key Concerns raised

Potential for conflict: The increasing militarization and rivalry between major powers raises concerns about the possibility of armed conflict in the region.

Impact on smaller countries: The concerns of smaller nations losing their decision-making power and getting caught in the crossfire of larger powers were emphasized.

Disregard for international law: Actions like China's activities in the South China Sea were seen as undermining established international agreements and norms.

Uncertainty and instability: The overall situation creates uncertainty and instability in the region, impacting trade, security, and regional cooperation.



Indian Ocean Conference

What is Indian Ocean Conference (IOC)?

- The Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) is an annual event dedicated to fostering dialogue and cooperation between countries bordering the Indian Ocean.
- **Initiated by the India Foundation in 2016**, the IOC has seen consistent growth in participation, attracting delegates from over 40 countries, including government officials, academics, think tanks, and industry leaders.
- Initially held in Singapore, the conference has rotated locations, hosting editions in Sri Lanka, the United Arab Emirates, Bangladesh, and currently, Australia (2024).

Significance:

- **Regional Cooperation:** The IOC fosters dialogue and cooperation on a wide range of issues, including maritime security, climate change, the blue economy, and sustainable development. It promotes collective action towards shared regional goals like security and prosperity.
- **Strategic Engagement:** The conference brings together key stakeholders, including government officials, academics, business leaders, and civil society representatives, facilitating a multi-layered approach to regional challenges.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** The IOC provides a valuable platform for knowledge exchange and best practice sharing on critical issues, enabling countries to learn from each other's experiences and develop effective solutions.
- **Strengthening Ties:** The conference fosters diplomatic relations and builds bridges between countries in the region, promoting peace and stability.

Way Forward

- **Strengthening Regional Institutions:** Investing in stronger regional institutions and organizations can facilitate collective action and ensure the effective implementation of agreed-upon solutions.
- **Promoting Inclusive Dialogue:** Engaging all stakeholders, including civil society and marginalized communities, is crucial for developing sustainable and equitable solutions.
- **Investing in the Blue Economy:** Sustainable development of the blue economy, encompassing maritime resources and ocean-based industries, can provide economic opportunities while safeguarding the marine environment.

- **Climate Action:** Collaborative efforts to mitigate climate change and adapt to its impacts are essential for the long-term sustainability and prosperity of the region.
- **Upholding International Law:** Adherence to international law and norms governing the maritime domain is crucial for maintaining peace and security in the Indian Ocean.

Supreme Court Collegium



The Supreme Court recently quashed an Andhra Pradesh High Court order that voiced strong disapproval over the apex court Collegium transferring two Chief Justices and castigated the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister for his apparent attempts to undermine it.

About Supreme Court Collegium

It is a system under which appointments and transfers of judges are decided by a forum of **the Chief Justice of India and the four senior-most judges of the Supreme Court (SC)**.

It has no place in the Indian Constitution.

What does the Constitution actually prescribe?

Article 124 deals with the appointment of SC judges. It says the appointment should be made by the President after consultation with such judges of the High Courts and the Supreme Court as the President may deem necessary. The CJI is to be consulted in all appointments, except his or her own.



Article 217 deals with the appointment of High Court judges. It says a judge should be appointed by the President after consultation with the CJI and the Governor of the state. The Chief Justice of the High Court concerned too should be consulted.

Evolution of the Collegium System:

Since the Constitution mandates consultation with the CJI is necessary for appointments to the judiciary, the collegium model evolved.

It has its genesis in a series of three judgments that are now clubbed together as the Three Judges Cases.

First Judges Case (1982):

The SC held that "consultation" of judges does not mean concurrence.

Hence, it gave primacy in the appointment of judges to the Executive.

Second Judges Case (1993):

The court reversed its earlier ruling by changing the meaning of "consultation" to concurrence.

With this, the advice tendered by CJI became binding. However, the CJI would have to take into account the views of two of his senior most colleagues.

Third Judges Case (1998):

The court gave primacy to the opinion of CJI in the matter of the appointment of Judges. However, the CJI must consult four seniormost judges of SC. Opinion of all members of the collegium should be in writing.

In case of difference of opinion, the majority view will prevail.

Even if two judges in the collegium give an adverse opinion of a person for appointment as the SC judge, the CJI should not send the recommendation to the government.

These three cases established that the collegium headed by the Chief Justice of India will have primacy in the appointment of judges to the higher judiciary.

This collegium makes recommendations to the government for appointment of judges to the SC and of Chief Justices of High Courts, and the transfers of HC judges.

Executive role:

Judges of the higher judiciary are thus appointed only through the collegium system, and the government has a role only after names have been decided by the collegiums.

The government's role is limited to getting an inquiry conducted by the Intelligence Bureau (IB) if a lawyer is to be elevated as a judge in a High Court or the Supreme Court.

The government can also raise objections and seek clarifications regarding the collegium's choices, but if the collegium reiterates the same names, the government is bound to appoint them.

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY)



Cabinet approves Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY).

Approved by the Union Cabinet, PM-MKSSY is a **Central Sector Sub-scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)**.

It aims to formalize the fisheries sector and support fisheries micro and small enterprises with an **investment exceeding Rs. 6,000 crores over the next four years from FY 2023-24 to FY 2026-27 in all States/Union Territories**.

Expenditure Involved:

- The Sub-scheme will be implemented with an estimated outlay of Rs. 6,000 crore, with 50% financed publicly including external financing, and the **remaining 50% anticipated from beneficiaries/private sector leverage**.



Intended Beneficiaries:

- Fishers, fish farmers, fish workers, fish vendors, and others directly engaged in fisheries value chain.
- Micro and Small enterprises including proprietary firms, partnerships, companies, cooperatives, federations, village-level organizations, and startups involved in fisheries and aquaculture value chains.

Major Impact and Employment Generation:

- Creation of a National Fisheries Digital Platform to provide work-based identities to 40 lakh small and micro-enterprises.
- Gradual formalization of the fisheries sector and enhanced access to institutional credit, supporting 6.4 lakh micro-enterprises and 5,500 fisheries cooperatives.
- Gradual shift from conventional subsidies to performance-based incentives in fisheries.
- Improvement in value chain efficiency and safety of fish by supporting 55,000 targeted micro and small enterprises.
- Promotion of environment and sustainability initiatives, facilitation of ease of doing business, and transparency.

Aims and Objectives of PM-MKSSY:

- Formalization of the unorganized fisheries sector through self-registration and creation of work-based digital identities.
- Facilitating access to institutional financing for fisheries sector micro and small enterprises.
- Providing one-time incentives for purchasing aquaculture insurance.
- Incentivizing adoption and expansion of fish and fishery product safety and quality assurance systems.

Implementation Strategy:

- The Sub-scheme consists of four major components focusing on formalization, aquaculture insurance, value chain efficiencies, and safety and quality assurance systems.
- Each component has specific objectives and activities aimed at achieving the desired outcomes in the fisheries sector.



Background:

- Despite significant achievements in the fisheries sector, challenges such as informality, lack of crop risk mitigation, poor access to credit, and sub-optimal safety and quality persist.
- PM-MKSSY aims to address these challenges and further improve the fisheries sector's performance with a total outlay of Rs. 6,000 crore over four years.

This scheme reflects the government's commitment to promoting the growth and sustainability of the fisheries sector while enhancing the livelihoods of stakeholders involved.

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)

About PMMSY:

- PMMSY is a flagship scheme initiated by the Government of India to foster sustainable development in the fisheries sector. Launched as part of the AatmaNirbhar Bharat Package, the scheme spans five years from FY 2020-21 to FY 2024-25, with an estimated investment of Rs. 20,050 crores.

Features of PMMSY:

Funding Allocation:

- Varies by region:
 - North Eastern and Himalayan States: 90% central share, 10% state's contribution.
 - Other states: 60% central share, 40% state's share.
 - Union Territories: 100% funding from the central government.

Implementing Agencies:

- Implemented through Central Government entities, including the National Fisheries Development Board. State and Union Territory Governments, along with State Fisheries Development Boards, are actively involved.

Objectives:

- Boost production and productivity, develop essential infrastructure, modernize the sector, and strengthen the value chain.



- Introduce innovative elements such as fishing vessel insurance and support for vessel upgrades.
- Promote aquaculture in challenging environments through a cluster-based approach.

Cluster-Based Approach:

- Fosters strong linkages across the fisheries value chain, promoting collaboration and shared resources. Focuses on generating employment opportunities through activities like seaweed and ornamental fish cultivation.

Quality and Diversification:

- Prioritizes improvements in brood, seed, and feed quality. Encourages species diversification and critical infrastructure development to support quality enhancement.

Significance of PMMSY:

Fish Production Boost:

- Aims to increase fish production from 13.75 million metric tons in 2018-19 to 22 million metric tons by 2024-25.

Annual Growth Rate:

- Targets an annual growth rate of around 9% in fish production, contributing significantly to the sector's Gross Value Added (GVA).

Export Earnings:

- Aims to double India's export earnings in the fisheries sector to approximately Rs. 1,00,000 crores by 2024-25.

Aquaculture Productivity:

- Aims to raise national average aquaculture productivity from 3 tons per hectare to about 5 tons per hectare.

Post-Harvest Loss Reduction:

- Aims to reduce post-harvest losses from 20-25% to around 10%, ensuring effective utilization of fish resources.

Income Doubling:

- Aims to double the incomes of fishers and fish farmers, directly benefiting those engaged in the sector.

Employment Generation:

- Expected to generate approximately 15 lakh direct employment opportunities and three times that number of indirect employment opportunities.

Private Investment and Entrepreneurship:

- Actively encourages private investment and entrepreneurship in the fisheries sector to boost overall development and economic growth.

CHILE



Situated along the western seaboard of South America.

A long, narrow country, it has an average width of only about 110 miles.

Area wise it **ranked 38th** in the world.

Share territorial border with Argentina (6,691 km), Bolivia (942 km), Peru (168 km) 6,893 m (22,615 ft)

- Chile exercises sovereignty over Easter Island, the Juan Fernández Archipelago, and the volcanic islets of Sala y Gómez, San Félix, and San Ambrosio, all of which are located in the South Pacific.
- Chile's relief is for the most part mountainous, with the Andes range dominating the landscape. Highest point Ojos del Salado in Andes of Atacama Region. Lowest point Pacific Ocean, 0 m

- Because of the country's extreme length it has a wide variety of climates, from the coastal desert beginning in the tropical north to the cold subantarctic southern tip.
- Chile is also a land of extreme natural events: volcanic eruptions, violent earthquakes, and tsunamis originating along major faults of the ocean floor periodically beset the country. Fierce winter storms and flash floods alternate with severe summer droughts.

10 Highest volcanoes of Chile

| | |
|----|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Ojos del Salado |
| 2 | Llullaillaco |
| 3 | Incahuasi |
| 4 | Tupungato |
| 5 | Parinacota |
| 6 | Pular |
| 7 | El Solo |
| 8 | Aucanquilcha |
| 9 | San Pedro |
| 10 | Sierra Nevada de Lagunas Bravas |

Longest river Loa River, 440 km

Largest lake General Carrera Lake

Variety of Climates: Chile experiences a wide range of climates, including desert, Mediterranean, temperate, and subpolar. This diversity is primarily influenced by its geography, which includes the Andes Mountains, the Pacific Ocean, and the Atacama Desert.



Atacama Desert: The Atacama Desert, located in northern Chile, is one of the driest places on Earth. Some parts of the desert have not received rainfall for centuries, making it an extreme arid environment.

Mediterranean Climate: Central Chile, including the capital city Santiago, has a Mediterranean climate characterized by hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters. This region is known for its fertile valleys and is a major agricultural area.

Rainforests in the South: Southern Chile is home to temperate rainforests, with abundant rainfall throughout the year. This region experiences relatively mild temperatures and lush vegetation, including dense forests and numerous lakes.

Andean Influence: The presence of the **Andes Mountains** affects Chile's climate by creating a rain shadow effect. As moist air from the Pacific rises over the mountains, it releases precipitation on the western slopes, leaving the eastern slopes much drier.

Coastal Influence: The Pacific Ocean has a moderating effect on Chile's coastal regions, helping to maintain more moderate temperatures compared to inland areas. Coastal cities like Valparaíso and Concepción experience cooler summers and milder winters.

Climate Change Vulnerability: Chile is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including water scarcity, glacier retreat, and desertification. The country is actively working to mitigate these effects and transition to renewable energy sources.

Recent Wild life Fire in Chile

At least 131 people have died in the wildfire that ravaged Chile in February 2024. Making it Five of the top 10 deadliest wildfires globally since 1900.

This makes it the country's deadliest wildfire since record-keeping began in 1900, according to the **United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)**.

The recent wildfires fall under the category of “large wildfires” with at least 26,000 hectares of area burnt.

Jeff Masters

2,372 posts

Following

The Chile wildfire death toll of 112 makes it Earth's 5th-deadliest wildfire since 1900. Five of the top-10 deadliest wildfires globally since 1900 (shown in red below) have occurred since 2018. Increased exposure, climate change, and fire-prone invasive plants are all factors.

| Deadliest Wildfires Globally Since 1900 | | | |
|---|--|------|--------|
| Rank | Location | Year | Deaths |
| 1 | Minnesota, U.S. (Cloquet Fire) | 1918 | 1,000 |
| 2 | Indonesia | 1997 | 240 |
| 3 | China/Soviet Union (Black Dragon Fire) | 1987 | 191 |
| 4 | Australia (Black Saturday Bushfires) | 2009 | 180 |
| 5 | Chile | 2024 | 112 |
| 6 | Mauli, Hawaii, U.S. | 2023 | 100 |
| 7 | Kabylia, Algeria | 2021 | 90 |
| 8 | Attica, Greece | 2018 | 87 |
| 9 | California, U.S. (Camp Fire, Paradise) | 2018 | 85 |
| 10 | Landes, France | 1949 | 80 |
| 11 | Australia | 1983 | 75 |
| 12 | Cochrane, Ontario, Canada | 1911 | 73 |
| 13 | Australia | 1939 | 71 |

Notes: Data is from EM-DAT, except for the 2018 Camp Fire (CalFire). EM-DAT lists 88 deaths for this fire. EM-DAT omits data for the Great Fire of 1910 in Idaho/Montana (87 deaths) and Kuraha-2 Fire of 1935 in the Soviet Union (250+ deaths).
Background image: 2022 Portugal fires, July 13, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2022_Portugal_wildfires#/media/File:ImagemdeNoticiasAoMinuto.jpg

Is there a link with climate change?

- The recent fire is happening six years after the historic 2017 fire season and have started at a time when extreme **heatwaves** ravaged Chile and other parts of South America.
- There was a heatwave in central Colombia, central-southern Chile and central Argentina from January 21 to 25. The temperature in Santiago de Chile reached 98.1°F, the third-highest in 112 years.
- Colombia, which saw the hottest January in three decades, recorded dozens of blazes amid high temperatures last month. The month, known for torrential rains in the country, recorded widespread wildfires.
- The unusual intense and extreme wildfires forced the Colombia to declare a national disaster. This unusual event in Colombia in January was linked to high temperatures and drought, exacerbated by the climate phenomenon known as **El Nino**.



- Similarly, central Chile, including the Valparaíso region most affected due to the wildfires, recorded not only very high temperatures but also very low humidity and long severe droughts.
- The recent wildfires in Chile which began on February 2, 2024 may also be linked to climate change and **El Nino**, if the warnings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the scientific studies and recent statements by the WMO and scientists are considered.
- In recent weeks, central Chile has had near-record warm temperatures, reaching as high as 42.9 degrees Celsius (109°F). These conditions have fuelled the fires. **Extreme drought** and extremely dangerous fire conditions have been brought about by the concomitant lack of rainfall.
- The burnt area nationwide due to wildfires has approximately tripled from 1981–2010 and 2014–2023, with notable increases in the majority of central Chile, according to a new study released January 2024.
- In February 2023, the concurrence of a severe drought and persistent heatwaves resulted in extreme fire weather conditions in central Chile.
- It is among the deadliest wildfire tragedies in South American history and a state of emergency was declared.