

Today's Prelims Topics

SEC and Hague Service Convention

Context

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has sought assistance from the Indian government under the Hague Service Convention to serve summons on Gautam Adani in a securities and wire fraud case.

About Hague Service Convention (1965)

- It is a **legal treaty signed by 84 countries**, including India and U.S.A.
- It is formally known as the Convention on the Service Abroad of Judicial and Extrajudicial Documents in Civil or Commercial Matters.
- The treaty **ensures that people in one country can be served legal documents properly when they are involved in court cases in another country.**
- The main goal is to ensure that people receive **timely and fair notice of legal proceedings** against them.
- **How Does it Work?**
 - Each country in the treaty **appoints a central authority** to handle legal document requests.
 - The country requesting legal service **must follow the rules of the receiving country.**
 - Legal documents can be sent through **designated authorities, postal services, diplomatic channels, or other approved methods.**

India's Stand on the Hague Convention

- **India joined the Hague Service Convention in 2006** but has **placed restrictions** on how legal notices can be served.
- **India does not allow alternative methods like postal service or direct communication between lawyers or courts** (which some countries permit).
- All legal notices from foreign countries **must go through the Ministry of Law and Justice.**
- **India can reject requests** if they **threaten its sovereignty or security.**
- **How Does it Work in India?**
 - The **Ministry of Law and Justice** receives the legal documents from the foreign country.
 - If there are no objections, it **forwards them to Indian authorities to serve the person.**
 - The process takes **6 to 8 months.** If India rejects the request, it must **provide a valid reason.**

What Happens if India Does Not Cooperate? (Default Judgment)

- A **default judgment** is when a court **issues a decision against someone who does not respond** to legal proceedings.
- Under the Hague Convention, if a country **fails to serve legal documents** properly, the foreign court can **still proceed with the case.**
- **Conditions for a Default Judgment:**
 - The **legal documents must have been sent using proper methods** under the treaty.
 - **At least six months** should have passed after sending the documents.
 - The country (India, in this case) **must have failed to provide proof that the notice was served.**

Source:

- [The Hindu - Hague Service Convention](#)

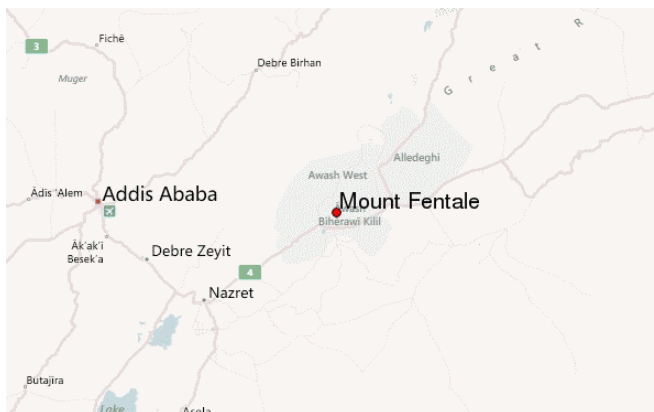
Mount Fentale

Context

An **extraordinary volcanic event** has been recorded at **Mount Fentale**, where the volcano has emitted **vast amounts of methane** into the atmosphere.

About Mount Fentale

- **Location:** Awash National Park in the **Oromia Region, Ethiopia.**
- **Methane emissions** from volcanoes are rare, as volcanic activity generally involves the release of **carbon dioxide (CO₂)** and **sulfur dioxide (SO₂)**.



What are Methane Plumes?

- **Methane plumes** refer to **large, concentrated releases of methane gas** into the atmosphere.
- These plumes can arise from **natural sources** (volcanoes, wetlands, permafrost) or **human activities** (oil drilling, coal mining, livestock farming).
- Methane is **28 times more potent** than CO₂ in trapping heat over a century.
 - Methane is the **2nd-largest contributor to global warming**, responsible for **11% of total global greenhouse gas emissions**.
- Large methane plumes **significantly contribute to climate change** by increasing global temperatures.

Source:

- **Methane Plumes**

One Nation- One Port Process

Context

Union Minister of Ports, Sarbananda Sonowal launched the One Nation-One Port initiative to standardize and streamline port operations across India.

About One Nation-One Port initiative (ONOP)

- ONOP is an initiative launched by the Union **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW)** to standardize and streamline operations across the country's major ports.
- It aims to enhance efficiency, reduce costs and strengthen India's position in global trade.

Key Features of ONOP

- **Reduction in Documentation:**
 - Container operation documents reduced by 33% (from 143 to 96)
 - Bulk cargo documents reduced by 29% (from 150 to 106).
- **Sagar Ankalan - Logistics Port Performance Index (LPPI):**
 - A performance benchmarking tool to evaluate port efficiency and competitiveness, focusing on metrics like cargo handling and turnaround time.
- **MAITRI Digital Platform:**
 - Integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Blockchain technologies to automate trade approvals and establish Virtual Trade Corridors (VTC) with countries such as the UAE, BIMSTEC and ASEAN nations.
- **Bharat Global Ports Consortium:**
 - Aims to **expand India's maritime reach** and **strengthen supply chains**.
 - Focuses on **port expansion, efficiency and innovation** to enhance India's global trade.
- **Green and Smart Port Infrastructure:**
 - Promotion of sustainable practices, including low-carbon logistics and modernized port facilities, to reduce environmental impact.

Source:

- **PIB - ONOP**

Places in News

Caspian Sea: Rapidly Declining Water Levels

- The Caspian Sea is undergoing a severe environmental crisis with declining water levels and shrinking coastline.
- In **2003**, the Caspian littoral states signed the **(Tehran) Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea**.



- **Location:** between Europe and Asia, east of the Caucasus Mountains and west of the Central Asian steppe.
- It is the largest enclosed inland body of water on Earth by area. **(world's largest lake)**.
- **Bordered by:** Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, & Iran.
- **Primary Inflows:** Volga River, Ural River, Kura River, Terek River.
- The region is rich in **oil, natural gas and biodiversity**, making it strategically and economically significant.

Source:

- **TOI - Caspian Sea**

News in Shorts

Amazon's Quantum Computing Chip 'Ocelot'

- Recently Amazon announced its first-ever in-house quantum computing chip, 'Ocelot'.

Key Features of Ocelot

- Ocelot is a **nine-qubit chip** that Amazon has **internally fabricated**.
- The chip **incorporates 'cat qubits'** to suppress errors and improve quantum stability.
- Quantum Error Correction:**
 - Ocelot is designed to **reduce quantum error correction costs by up to 90%** compared to conventional methods.
 - This is a major breakthrough, as **error generation is a significant challenge** in quantum computing.
- Scalability and Efficiency:**
 - Ocelot-based quantum computers will require only one-tenth of the resources needed for current quantum systems.



Source:

- [The Hindu - Ocelot](#)

Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI)

- Recently The Animal Welfare Board of India has announced its **Prani Mitra and Jeev Daya Awards**.

About AWBI

- It was established in 1962 under **Section 4 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960**.
- It was started under the stewardship of **Rukmini Devi Arundale** (noted animal rights activist).
- Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.
- Composition:** The Board consists of **28 Members** including **6 Members of Parliament (2 from Rajya Sabha and 4 from Lok Sabha)**.
- Key Functions of AWBI:**
 - Promoting animal welfare initiatives across India.
 - Granting recognition & financial aid to animal welfare organizations.
 - Implementing and ensuring compliance with the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960.
 - Advising the Government on policy formulation and animal welfare laws.



Source:

- [PIB - AWBI](#)

Cholanaikkan Tribe

- Recently Samagra Shiksha Kerala (SSK), has developed 30 audio-visual texts in the Cholanaikkan tribe's language.

About Cholanaikkan Tribe

- Cholanaikkans are a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in **Kerala**.
- They are an **endangered** and **small** tribal community, primarily found in the **Nilambur forests of Malappuram district**.
- They have **minimal interaction** with mainstream society and depend on the forest for survival.
- They are one of the most isolated tribes of India, with a population of less than **400 members**.
- They are also known as the "**Cavemen of Kerala**".

Source:

- [The Hindu - Cholanaikkan Tribe](#)

Battle of Karnal

- The Battle of Karnal, fought on **February 24, 1739**, was a decisive battle that marked the beginning of the Mughal Empire's final decline.

About the Battle of Karnal

- It was fought between **Nadir Shah** (Ruler of Afsharid dynasty, Persia) and the **Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah**.
- The battle took place **near Karnal** (in present-day Haryana) and lasted less than three hours, resulting in a crushing defeat for the Mughals.
- **Outcome:**
 - Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah was taken captive by Nadir Shah.
 - Nadir Shah sacked Agra and Delhi and carried the **Peacock Throne and the Koh-i-Noor** to Persia.

Significance

- **Mughal Empire never recovered** from this defeat and continued to decline.
- **Regional powers (Marathas, Jats, Sikhs and Afghans) gained strength**, while the Mughals lost authority.
- **The British East India Company later filled the power vacuum**, leading to the eventual end of Mughal rule in **1857**.

Source:

- [Indian Express - Battle of Karnal](#)

Editorial Summary

U.S.-India defence ties

Context

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the United States was marked by significant advancements in U.S.-India defence cooperation.

Major Defense Agreements and Initiatives

- **Defence Acquisitions & Co-production:** India is proceeding with the **purchase and co-production** of the **Javelin Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM)** and **Stryker Infantry Combat Vehicles (ICVs)**, boosting domestic manufacturing.
 - Agreement to **acquire six more P-8I maritime patrol aircraft** to enhance India's **Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)**.
- **New 10-Year Defence Framework:** India and the U.S. will sign a **10-year Framework for the U.S.-India Major Defense Partnership**, ensuring long-term cooperation.
- **Autonomous Systems Industry Alliance (ASIA):** This is an initiative for **Underwater Domain Awareness (UDA)**.
- **Future Possibilities:**
 - Potential collaboration on **undersea systems and fifth-generation fighter aircraft**.
 - Accelerated engagement in **space, air defence, and anti-tank missiles**.
- **Regulatory Reforms in Defence Trade:**
 - India and the U.S. will review **arms transfer regulations** for smoother defence trade.
 - Negotiations for a **Reciprocal Defence Procurement (RDP) agreement**, aligning acquisition mechanisms and fostering mutual defence supply.

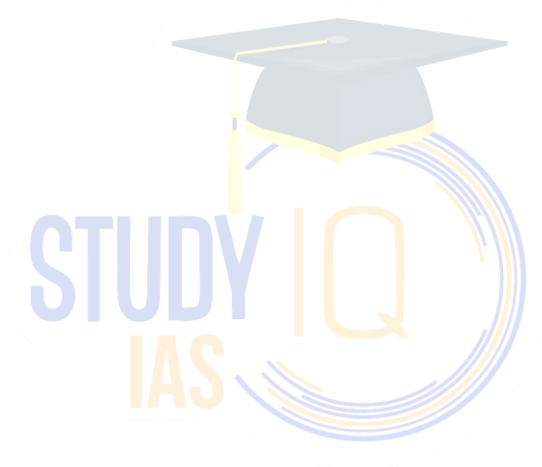
Hurdles in the Defence Partnership

- **Lack of Clarity on Jet Engine Transfers:** No mention of urgent delivery of **GE F-404 engines** for Tejas-Mark 1A fighter aircraft.
 - Uncertainty over **80% Transfer of Technology (ToT)** for **GE F-414 engine** to power Tejas Mark-II.
- **Challenges with F-35 Fighter Jet Offer**
 - **High integration costs** due to India's diverse aircraft fleet.
 - **Potential restrictions** on operational use by the U.S.
 - **Absence of co-production or ToT** for F-35 jets.
- **Indian Air Force's Fighter Jet Shortage**
 - IAF's fighter squadrons may fall **below 30**, requiring urgent induction of new jets.
 - **Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) project** for 114 fighters still unresolved.
- **Past Setbacks in Defence Deals**
 - **Dassault Rafale deal** faced issues due to France's reluctance in ToT.
 - India previously settled for 36 Rafale jets instead of the initially planned 114 due to cost concerns.

Conclusion

The recent India-U.S. defence deals mark a significant step in strengthening bilateral security ties, focusing on **co-production, advanced technologies, and strategic cooperation**. However, key challenges remain, particularly in **fighter aircraft procurement, technology transfer, and operational independence**. Overcoming these hurdles will require both nations to **streamline regulatory processes, ensure timely deliveries, and address India's defence capability gaps** to achieve a truly robust and self-reliant military partnership.

Source: [The Hindu: Trump 2.0 and the new matrix of U.S.-India defence ties](#)



Detailed Coverage

India And EU

Context

Recently, European Commission led by President Ursula von der Leyen visited New Delhi.

Areas Of Cooperation

- **Historical Ties**
 - Diplomatic relations established in 1962 with the European Economic Community.
 - Upgraded to a Strategic Partnership in 2004 at the 5th India-EU Summit.
- **Institutional Cooperation**
 - 15 India-EU Summits held so far, first in 2000 (Lisbon).
 - India-EU Strategic Partnership: Roadmap to 2025 adopted in 2020.
 - India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) established in 2022, focusing on trade, technology, and security.
- **Trade & Investments**
 - EU is India's largest trading partner in goods.
 - **Bilateral trade (FY 2023-24):**
 - **Goods:** \$135 billion (Exports: \$76B, Imports: \$59B).
 - **Services:** \$53 billion (Exports: \$30B, Imports: \$23B).
 - **EU FDI in India (April 2000 - Sept 2024):** \$117.4 billion (16.6% of total FDI).
 - **Indian FDI in the EU:** \$40.04 billion (April 2000 - March 2024).
 - Ongoing Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations.
- **Technology Cooperation**
 - Science & Technology Cooperation Agreement (2007).
 - India-EU Intent of Cooperation in High-Performance Computing (HPC) (2022).
 - Semiconductor R&D MoU signed in 2023.
 - EU participation in the Global Partnership on AI Summit (2023).
- **Green Energy Collaboration**
 - India-EU Green Hydrogen Cooperation Initiative.
 - India was the exclusive partner at the European Hydrogen Week (2024).
 - European Investment Bank pledged €1 billion for India's hydrogen projects.
- **People-to-People Ties**
 - 20% of EU Blue Cards (2023-24) issued to Indian professionals.
 - 6,000+ Erasmus scholarships awarded to Indian students in 20 years.
 - 2,700+ Indian researchers funded under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions.
- **Defence & Security**
 - Maritime security cooperation under ESIWA+ programme.
 - First joint naval exercise (2023) in the Gulf of Guinea.
 - Collaboration on global security, piracy, counterterrorism, and disaster relief.
- **Space Cooperation**
 - ISRO launched EU's PROBA-3 mission (Dec 2024).
 - ISRO-ESA cooperation in Chandrayaan-3 and Aditya-L1 missions.
 - Signed MoU for Gaganyaan mission cooperation.

Challenges in India-EU Relations

- **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM):** The EU's carbon tax on imports from high-emission industries (like steel) has raised concerns for India, which views it as a **trade barrier**.
 - This could **impact 0.05% of India's GDP** (Centre for Science and Environment).

- **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR):** India's data protection laws differ significantly from the EU's stringent GDPR framework, affecting cross-border data flows.
 - India's demand for data localization and digital sovereignty has created friction with the EU's open internet policies.
- **Prolonged FTA Negotiations:** Differences on digital regulations, bilateral investment treaties, dispute resolution mechanisms, and investor protection have delayed the Free Trade Agreement (FTA).
 - The **Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA)** negotiations (2007-2013) remained dormant until 2021.
- **Divergences in Geopolitical Perspectives:**
 - **Ukraine Conflict:** The EU has strongly opposed Russia's invasion of Ukraine, while India has maintained a neutral stance due to its energy and defense ties with Russia. This divergence affects strategic trust.
 - **China Policy Differences:** While both India and the EU view China's rise with caution, the EU's economic engagement with China remains significant, creating a strategic gap in Indo-Pacific cooperation.
- **Defense and Security Cooperation Limits:** Unlike India's deep defense ties with the US, France, and Russia, EU-India defense cooperation remains underdeveloped due to the EU's decentralized defense policies.
 - **Maritime Security Gaps:** While the EU has increased its presence in the Indo-Pacific, it lacks a unified defense policy, making security cooperation with India less effective.
- **Visa and Mobility Restrictions:** The EU's restrictive visa policies for Indian professionals, especially under the Blue Card scheme, limit mobility despite India's skilled workforce demand in Europe.
 - While scholarships like Erasmus exist, **bureaucratic hurdles** often deter Indian students from studying in EU countries.
- **Lack of Cohesion in EU Policies:** The EU operates as a bloc of 27 member states, each with its own policies. India often finds it easier to **engage bilaterally with key European nations** (France, Germany) rather than with the EU as a whole.
- **Ethical Disparities:** Divergences on labour laws, human rights, and environmental standards create hurdles for EU investments in India.
 - **E.g.,** India's strategic autonomy, such as restrictions on Amnesty International, has also been a point of contention.

Way Forward for Strengthening India-EU Relations

- **Fast-Track FTA Negotiations:** Both sides should resolve differences on digital regulations, investment protection, and trade barriers to finalize the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) for boosting economic ties.
- **Enhance Green & Technology Cooperation:** Strengthening collaboration in renewable energy, green hydrogen, and high-tech sectors can align with the EU's sustainability goals and India's technological ambitions.
- **Deepen Security & Maritime Collaboration:** Expanding joint naval exercises and structured defense dialogues can enhance India-EU cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Facilitate Talent & Mobility Exchange:** Simplifying visa rules under the EU Blue Card scheme and improving work-study opportunities for Indian professionals and students can strengthen people-to-people ties.
- **Strengthen Bilateral Engagements Within the EU:** While engaging with the EU as a bloc, India should deepen strategic partnerships with key EU nations like France and Germany to accelerate trade and investment cooperation.

Source: [The Hindu: Indian- EU Partnership](#)