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B. GS 2 Related**Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS****1. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine**

Syllabus: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

Mains: The impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the response from the rest of the world.

Context

Russia has launched an all-out attack on Ukraine through land, air and sea.

Details

- The attacks by Russia are considered as the biggest attack by one state against another in Europe since the Second World War.
- Russian missile attacks were reported in the Ukrainian cities, much to the shock of the international community.
- Ukraine reported the arrival of multiple troops across its borders in the Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Luhansk regions, and by sea at the cities of Odessa and Mariupol.

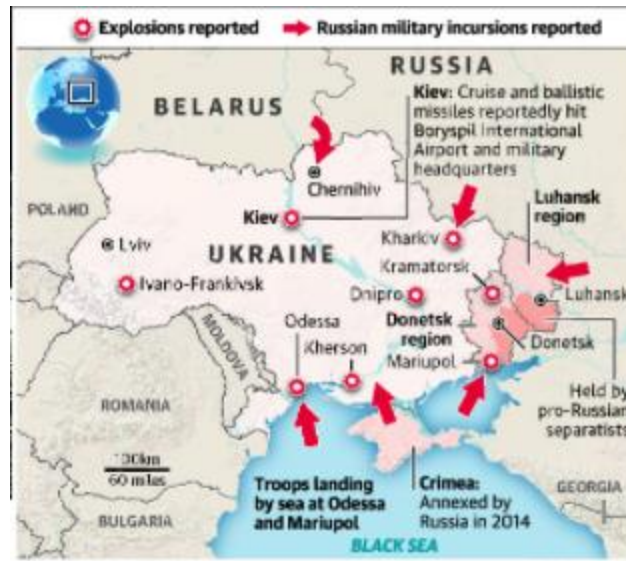


Image source: The Hindu

Russia's Stand

- Russia's President Mr. Putin declared that he has ordered "a special military operation" to protect people, including Russian citizens who had been subjected to "genocide" in Ukraine, "for this we will strive for the demilitarisation and denazification of Ukraine".
- Russia's Defence Ministry said its military destroyed 83 Ukrainian land-based targets and achieved all its goals in Ukraine for the day.

Violations of international laws by Russia

- **The UN Charter**
 - The **principle of non-intervention** is enshrined in article 2(4) of the UN Charter.
 - It demands the states to avoid using force or threat of using force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.
 - The Russian attack on Ukraine is violative of the principle and amounts to aggression under international law.
- **The UN General Assembly Resolution 3314 (1974)**
 - The resolution defines aggression as the use of armed force by a state against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another state.

- Also, allowing one's territory to be used by another state for aggression against a third state, would qualify as an act of aggression.
- Hence, Belarus can also be held responsible for aggression as it has allowed its territory to be used by Russia for attacking Ukraine.
- Aggression is also considered an **international crime** under **customary international law** and the **Rome statute** establishing the **International Criminal Court**.

Ukraine's Response

- Ukraine's President said that Russia aims to destroy his state.
- The Ukrainian Foreign Minister said "This is a war of aggression and Ukraine will defend itself and will win. He also asked for the world to come together and stop Russia".

The principle of self-defence

- In wake of the use of force by Russia, Ukraine has the right to self-defence under international law.
- The **UN Charter** under article 51 authorises states to resort to individual or collective self-defence, until the Security Council takes steps to ensure international peace and security.
- As Russia is a permanent member and has veto powers, it looks impossible for the UNSC to arrive at a decision
- Hence, Ukraine has a right under international law to request assistance from other states in the form of military assistance, supply of weapons etc.

Russia's claims of self-defence

- Russia has also claimed that it is acting in self-defence.
- Russia claims that Ukraine may acquire nuclear weapons with the help of western allies.
- However, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Legality of Threat of Nuclear Weapons case held that mere possession of nuclear weapons does not constitute a threat.
- Even if Ukraine has, or were to acquire nuclear weapons in the future, it does not become a ground for invoking self defence by Russia.
- Further, mere membership in a defence alliance such as NATO cannot necessarily be considered as a threat of aggression against Russia.
- Russia can also not invoke anticipatory self defence as such invocation according to the **Caroline test**.

CAROLINE TEST

- The Caroline test is a 19th-century customary international law, reaffirmed by the Nuremberg Tribunal post the Second World War.
- The law says that the necessity for preemptive self-defense must be "instant, overwhelming, and leaving no choice of means, and no moment for deliberation."

Response by UN

- The United Nations Secretary General at a Security Council meeting, asked Russia to stop the attack on Ukraine and to "give peace a chance."

Response by the West

- **The U.S.** – The President said that America and its allies would respond decisively and unitedly. He also said that the world will hold Russia accountable and will announce further consequences on Russia in the coming days.
- **France** – Said that the country strongly condemns the attacks and asked Russia to immediately put an end to its military operations.
- **The U.K.** – Said that Russia has chosen a path of bloodshed and destruction by launching the attack.
- **Sanctions** – the U.S. along with the NATO and European Commission leadership vowed to impose “severe sanctions” on Russia that will overlay prior economic penalties imposed on Russian entities.
 - Sanctions are expected to include cutting off top Russian banks from the financial system, halting technology exports, and directly targeting the Russian President.

Impact on India

- **Indian diaspora** – thousands of Indian students, especially medical students are stranded in Ukraine. The attack by Russia threatens their lives.
- **Economy** – following the attacks, India’s benchmark S&P BSE Sensex dropped by about 2,700 points, the highest drop in two years.
- **Rise in oil prices** – Oil prices surged to over a seven-year high of \$103 a barrel. The Brent crude rose to \$103.78 a barrel, the highest since August 14, 2014. India relies on imports for 85% of its fuel requirements.
- **Indian tea exports** – Russia is a significant market for Indian tea. Russia imports about 40 million kg from India. Ukraine is also a major importer of Indian tea.
- **Wheat exports** – The Russia-Ukraine crisis might give India an opportunity to export more wheat in the global markets as about 25% of the world’s wheat export comes from Russia and Ukraine.

India’s Response

- The Indian Prime Minister appealed for an immediate ceasefire and a return to dialogue in a telephonic conversation with the Russian President.
- The PMO said that the safe exit of Indian citizens from the region is India’s highest priority.
- India’s Foreign Minister met several European leaders who asked India to change its position (which has so far not criticised Russia’s actions) and support the UNSC resolution to be brought by the NATO allies, affirming the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Nut Graf

Russia’s incursion into Ukraine after weeks of military troop build-up on the borders has raised tensions drastically in the region with wider ripple effects across the world. In this regard, the pressure is mounting on India to change its stance on the issue, as only few countries in the world could influence Russia and India is one among them.

2. Indus Waters Treaty

Syllabus: India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Prelims: Facts about Indus Water Treaty

Mains: Key provisions of the treaty and the past objections raised under the treaty.

Context

Delegation from India is scheduled to visit Pakistan, to attend the 117th meeting of the Permanent Indus Commission.

The Indus Water Treaty

- The Indus river basin consists of six rivers namely, Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej.
- In 1947, the line of partition, for delineating geographical boundaries for India and Pakistan, cut the Indus river system into two.
- Since both the countries were dependent on water from the river basin there was a need for equitable distribution of water.
- On the recommendations of the UN, the World Bank came up with the agreement in 1954 that was eventually signed in 1960.

To read more about – [Indus Water Treaty](#)

Key Provisions

- According to the treaty,
 - India got control over the three eastern rivers, namely:
 - Ravi
 - Beas
 - Sutlej
 - Pakistan got control over the three western rivers, namely:
 - Indus
 - Chenab
 - Jhelum
 - It also required both the countries to establish a **Permanent Indus Commission** constituted by permanent commissioners on both sides. The functions of the commission include,
 - Serving as a forum for exchange of information on the rivers, for continued cooperation
 - Act as the first stop for the resolution of conflicts.
 - The treaty provides a three-step dispute resolution mechanism, under which
 - Issues can first be resolved at the **commission level**.
 - If the above step fails, either side can approach the World Bank to appoint a **Neutral Expert (NE)**.
 - Finally, if either party is still not satisfied, matters can be referred to a **Court of Arbitration**.

Past objections raised under the treaty

- Pakistan's objections to India's **Kishanganga Hydro Electricity Project (KHEP)**
 - Kishanganga is a tributary of the Jhelum river.
 - The works started in 2007, to build a dam on the Kishanganga, for diverting its water for a 330 MW hydropower plant in Kashmir's Bandipora.

- Pakistan raised objections regarding the height of the dam, fearing it would mean increased water storage for India.
- India agreed to lower its height from 97 metres to 37 metres.
- In 2010, Pakistan took the matter to the International Court of Arbitration, objecting to the diversion of water from Kishanganga.
- The Court gave its final ruling in December 2013, giving India a green signal for the project, subject to conditions.
- Pakistan again approached the World Bank in 2016 and in 2018, objecting to the design. Pakistan also tried to stop the construction of the dam in 2016 by firing shells near the dam site.
- The project was inaugurated in 2018, despite continued protests from Pakistan.
- Pakistan had objected to the **Salal dam project** in 1970 over design concerns, negotiations for which ended in 1978.
- Pakistan also opposed the **Baglihar Hydropower project** in the 2000s, which involved the construction of a 150m tall dam on Chenab.
 - The matter was eventually referred to a Neutral Expert who upheld some of Pakistan's objections while denying others.

Recent developments

- Post the attack on Uri army camp in 2016, PM Modi had said, "Blood and water cannot flow simultaneously," after which, the Permanent Indus Commission talks were suspended for the year by India.
- In 2019, when the suicide attack was carried out in Pulwama, India had threatened to cut off water supply to Pakistan from the Indus River System, which would essentially mean walking out of the treaty.

Conclusion

In recent years, the Treaty has been brought up during geo-political tensions between India and Pakistan, threatening its suspension. However, the treaty does not have a unilateral exit provision and will remain in force unless both countries ratify a mutual agreement pact.

Nut Graf

Although the Indus Water treaty has been internationally regarded as a successful diplomatic effort that managed to withstand three wars and multiple military impasses, the recent geopolitical tensions between the two countries have threatened the existence and functioning of the treaty.

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: ECONOMY

1. Ploughing a new channel for India's food systems

Syllabus: Issues of food security

Prelims: Green Revolution, POSHAN Abhiyan

Mains: Transformative reforms that are necessary for the enhancement of food security of the country.

Context: The transformation of food systems in India would require interfaces between the areas of science, society and policy that intend to focus on sustainability, resource efficiency and circularity.

A blend of Science and Policy:

- A tripartite association between science, society and policy is necessary for transforming the food systems in the country addressing the issues of hunger, malnutrition and poverty.
- The instance of [Green Revolution](#) in the 1960s, can set a suitable example of the collaboration between science and technology with policy measures of the government. This involved extensive agricultural research and technology transfer at the national, regional, state and local levels.
- The Training and Visit system that was developed with assistance from the [World Bank](#) acted as a key to the science and society interface through which a cadre of agricultural specialists was provided at the local level.

Food security in India: The Present scenario

- In a large scale measurement, India is now self-sufficient in the production of food grains. However, it harbours a considerable number of people who have poor or no access to food security.
- In order to ensure food security for all, a caloric target has been set by ICMR (Indian Council for Medical Research) which is 2400 Kcal in rural areas and 2100 Kcal in the urban areas.
- It becomes essential to establish a food system which is inclusive in nature to achieve the caloric target for the growing population of the country.
- As time progressed, the nutrition indicators have shown marginal improvement with policy interventions like the [POSHAN Abhiyan](#).
- The macro and micronutrient malnutrition have increased to 18.7% in women and 16.2% in men. This reflects an alarming fact that a considerable group of the population cannot access sufficient food to meet the nutritional demands.
- The fifth National Family Health Survey ([NFHS](#)) revealed that 32% of children below five years are underweight.
- India ranked 101 out of 116 countries in the Global Hunger Index([GHI](#)), 2021 which provides a comprehensive index to measure and track hunger at global, regional and national levels.
- All these estimates raise significant concerns about growing poverty and malnutrition.
- The present hour determines a dual challenge for the country of achieving nutrition security as well as addressing declining land productivity and land degradation.

Read more about [Food Security of India](#) in the linked article

Ways Suggested for a sustainable future:

- There is a need for transition from the isolated approach of agriculture meeting the food security demands to sustainable food systems for better nutrition, enhanced food production, aggregation, processing, distribution and consumption with a firm engagement with the socio-economic and physical context.

- Scientific interventions, in order to give effect to social outcomes, have to be planned and executed within the theory of change. This was perhaps the important takeaway from the Green Revolution.
- Adoption of new seeds and practices which were introduced by the Training and Visit system enabled science to drive the process of change. The intensification of economic, environmental and climate change issues can be tackled by a transition that includes spatial, social and scientific dimensions along with policy incentives and mechanisms for achieving a sustainable, resilient and food secure agriculture.
- Review of the agro-climatic zones at regular intervals can open up avenues of profit for smallholders farming with increased agricultural efficiency, socio-economic development and sustainability.
- The policies pertaining to the food systems of the country must prioritise strengthening and shortening of food supply chains, reinforcing the regional food systems, food processing, agricultural resilience along with enormous emphasis on research and investments.
- A suitable ecosystem for infrastructural development is expected to boost agri-preuners and agri micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) accompanied by institutional support. This will play a central role in ensuring an inclusive and sustainable network of food security in the country.

Nut Graf

An effective interface involving the tripartite association of science, society and policy will play a pivotal role in transforming the food systems of the country. This will require the active participation of institutions in the food value chain and other stakeholders to adopt a holistic and multidisciplinary approach along better policy design, management and behavioural change.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Shaking up Europe's security architecture

Syllabus: *Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries*

Prelims: NATO

Mains: *Necessity to consider Russia's concern by the European order for a sustainable security architecture.*

Context: The article provides an insight on the diminishing effectiveness of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) to trigger the European ambitions for strategic autonomy from the sole superpower and to counter Russia's resurgence.

An Overview of the Issue:

- The entire context surrounding NATO emerges from the recent military action executed by Russia on Ukraine.
- In 2021, the US President and his Russian counterpart took an attempt to reverse the discontent that has been existing for a long time by engaging in a negotiation talk. This was conveying a signal of geopolitical rebalancing by the US.
- Russia perceived this rebalancing act as an opportunity to expand its economic interests and freedom of political action globally.
- Despite Russia's cooperative agreement towards the rebalancing proposal of the US, the former stands firm on its decision pertaining to its territorial integrity prohibiting any external interference through [NATO](#).

Weakening of NATO:

- The ideological solidarity of NATO which aimed for a free world against communist expansion and an existential military threat has dissolved with the collapse of communism.
- America's leadership in many instances has increased differences among various regions but the growing ambitions of other countries have been posing difficulties in America's geopolitical interests.
- The recent crisis in Ukraine exposed the limitations of the ability of the US to resolve the issues. There has been pressure imposed on NATO by the US to recognise Ukraine as a member and its encouragement for a change of government in Kyiv in 2014, led to the annexation of Crimea by Russia.

The Minsk Accord :

- The Minsk Accord of 2014-15 gave special status to the Donbas region of Ukraine as a result of an armed separatist movement in the region.
- Ukraine considered this to be unfair whereas some of the European countries were in favour of this agreement.
- France and Germany showed immense interest in the revival of normal relationship with Russia which serves their economic interests.

Read more about the Minsk Agreements in [CNA](#) dated February 22, 2022.

Recent Developments:

- The geopolitical interests of the US have divided NATO on the grounds of energy security as Germany derives its cheapest source of gas from the Nord Stream 2(NS2), the Russia-Germany gas pipeline.
- This has increased the dependence of Europe on Russia to which Ukraine is also not an exception as it fears the diminution of gas transit revenues and if the gas transit declines, it will lose support from Europe in its dispute with Russia.
- On the other hand, European countries that oppose NS 2 are ramping up their LNG (Liquified Natural Gas) import from the US. This has been in the wake of legislative reform by the US to export LNG to Europe accompanied by the reinforcement of sanctions against companies building gas pipelines from Russia.
- The harsh sanctions imposed by NATO countries against Russia will not be a sustainable approach in the long run and keep those countries united, raising a major concern.

Signal for India:

- The confrontation between Russia and the West has been gathering momentum with the progress of time along with an intensified engagement of the US administration with European countries.
- Consequently, Europe is likely to dilute its focus on the Indo-Pacific causing India to make some tactical calibration of actions in its neighbourhood.
- India will have to move ahead with a balanced approach to buffer the pressure from its strategic partners.

The way ahead:

- It is envisaged that the ongoing crisis within NATO has resulted from a broken security architecture in Europe.
- There needs to be a sustainable security order that attends to the core of realities such as a shift for the Cold War order and address the present needs of international relations along with enormous acumen expected from the European countries without any external interference.

- Therefore, Europe, as a geopolitical power, must control its destiny at its will and retain its military sovereignty that should not be guided entirely by the norms of NATO. This was asserted by the President of France.
- A sign of positivity has been conveyed by the President of France towards the opening up of dialogue with Russia managing the misgivings of post-Soviet countries.
- The European order must consider Russia's concerns through negotiations for its long term stability.
- The dynamics of geopolitics involved in the US-China rivalry can possibly result in the reopening of the question of Russia's alignment in the European security order.

Read more about the issue in [CNA](#) dated 24th February, 2022.

Nut Graf

The strategic autonomy and a stable security architecture of Europe can be retained by considering Russia's concerns through proper channels of negotiations.

F. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

G. Tidbits

1. U.S. group hacked Indian research institutes: China firm

- A new report from a China-based cybersecurity firm said hackers linked with the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) were found to have inserted "covert backdoors" that may have given access to sensitive information in countries, including India, Russia, China and Japan.
- The list of compromised websites from India include,
 - The Institute of Microbial Technology (IMTech) under CSIR
 - The Indian Academy of Sciences in Bengaluru
 - Banaras Hindu University
- The report said, "The Shadow Brokers" published two batches of hacking files claimed to be used by 'The Equation Group' of NSA in hacking files.
- It also found the private key that can be used to remotely trigger the backdoor **Bvp47**
- **Bvp47** is a hacker tool belonging to 'The Equation Group' that allows a top-of-the-line backdoor or a secret cyber entrance.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to PM-DevINE Scheme:

1. The scheme will fund infrastructure and social development projects in the spirit of PM GatiShakti in the Naxal-affected states
2. It will not be a substitute for existing Central or State Schemes

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both
- d. None

Answer: b

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, The Scheme will fund infrastructure, in the spirit of PM GatiShakti, and social development projects in the **North-East States**.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, The Scheme will enable livelihood activities for youth and women, filling the gaps in various sectors and **it will not be a substitute for existing central or state Schemes**.

Q2. With respect to endosulfan, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is a widely-banned pesticide with hazardous effects on human genetic and endocrine systems
2. It is listed by the Stockholm Convention as a Persistent Organic Pollutant (POP) and targeted for global elimination

Options:

- a. a) 1 only
- b. b) 2 only
- c. c) Both
- d. d) None

Answer: c

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, In 2011 Supreme Court ordered a ban on the production and sale of **endosulfan** as it is highly toxic, has a large potential for bioaccumulation and It is also an endocrine disruptor.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, the Stockholm Convention initiated a global ban on the manufacture and use of this chemical because of its threats to the environment and human health.
- To read more about – [Endosulfan](#)

Q3. Which of the following statements with respect to Indian National Army (INA) is/are incorrect?

1. It was formed in 1942 by Subhas Chandra Bose
2. They had participated in operation U-Go, the 1944 Japanese campaign towards British India

Options:

- a. 1 only

- b. 2 only
- c. Both
- d. None

Answer: a

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, The Indian National Army (Azad Hind Fauj) was an armed force formed by Indian Nationalists under **Mohan Singh** in 1942, through the patronage of the Imperial Japanese Army, to secure the Independence of India.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, The INA had participated in operation U-Go, the 1944 Japanese campaign towards British India
- Read more about – [INA](#)

Q4. Which of the following statements is/are incorrect?

1. Article 323 A contemplates establishment of tribunals for public service matters only, Article 323 B contemplates establishment of tribunals for certain other matters.
2. Tribunals under Article 323 A can be established only by Parliament, tribunals under Article 323 B can be established both by Parliament and state legislatures with respect to matters falling within their legislative competence.
3. Under Article 323 A, only one tribunal for the Centre and one for each state or two or more states may be established. There is no question of hierarchy of tribunals, whereas under Article 323 B a hierarchy of tribunals may be created.

Options:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

-
- All the above statements are correct
- Difference between Article 323 A and Article 323 B

Article 323 A	Article 323 B
Contemplates the establishment of tribunals for public service matters only	Contemplates establishment of tribunals for certain other matters

Tribunals under Article 323 A can be established only by Parliament	Tribunals under Article 323 B can be established both by Parliament and state legislatures with respect to matters falling within their legislative competence.
Only one tribunal for the Centre and one for each state or two or more states may be established. There is no question of hierarchy of tribunals	A hierarchy of tribunals may be created.
Q5. Among the following, which one is the least water-efficient crop? (UPSC CSE 2021)	

- a. a) Sugarcane
- b. b) Sunflower
- c. c) Pearl millet
- d. d) Red gram

Answer: a

Explanation:

- Sugarcane is a highly water intensive crop.
- The oilseeds, pulses and coarse grains are less water intensive crops and have a higher water use efficiency compared to other crops.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. What are the major provisions of the Indus Water Treaty? Why are some of these provisions seen as being unfavorable towards India? (250 words; 15 marks)[GS-2, International Relations]
2. For far too long, we have made the mistake of seeing agriculture only as a way to ensure 'food security'. Discuss. (250 words; 15 marks)(GS-3, Agriculture]