

## International Relations This Week: 01 Feb to 07 Feb 2023

International relations is a very important segment of the [UPSC syllabus](#). In this series, we present an analysis of the most important international issues and developments that occurred over the past week relevant for the IAS exam. In this article, you can learn more about the recent earthquake in Turkey and aid sent by India, the demise of Pervez Musharraf, possibility of alternate payment routes between India and Russia, the IMF and developments in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in West Asia.

Video link: [https://youtu.be/9Kb4Qbge\\_WY](https://youtu.be/9Kb4Qbge_WY)

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### 1. India's assistance to Turkey and Syria

**Context:** Several earthquakes devastated Turkey and Syria on February 06, 2023.

#### Key Details:

- Three [earthquakes](#) measuring 7.8, 7.6, and 6.0 magnitude on the Richter scale have devastated Turkey and Syria, while impacting regions as far away as Cyprus, Lebanon, Israel and Egypt.
- The epicentre of the first quake is located near the city of Gaziantep in south-central Turkey, which houses more than two million people.
- This population also includes thousands of Syrian refugees who fled the raging civil war after 2011.
- At least 40 aftershocks followed the first quake.
- This is the strongest earthquake to shake the region in more than 100 years and has killed more than 10000 people and counting across Turkey and Syria.
- Turkey has announced a Level 4 alert calling for international aid, with the U.S., European Union, Russia, Azerbaijan and India having dispatched aid.
- Rescue efforts are complicated by Turkey's rainy and freezing weather, and Syria's ongoing civil war that has displaced millions of people.
- The Syrian Civil Defence, which operates in the opposition-held portions, has declared a state of emergency, appealing to "the international community to support the rescue of civilians in Syria".

### Turkey, a hotbed of seismic activity:

- Turkey is frequently shaken by earthquakes. In 2020, it recorded almost 33,000 earthquakes in the region, according to the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD).
  - Out of these, 332 earthquakes were of magnitudes 4.0 and higher.
- Turkey is located on the Anatolian tectonic plate, which is wedged between the Eurasian and African plates.
- One fault line — the North Anatolian fault (NAF) line, the meeting point of the Eurasian and Anatolian tectonic plates — is known to be “particularly devastating”.
  - NAF is a ***right-lateral strike-slip structure*** in northern Turkey accommodating much of the translational motion of the Anatolia block westwards with respect to Eurasia and Africa.
- The East Anatolian fault line is the tectonic boundary between the Anatolian Plate and the northward-moving Arabian Plate.
  - It runs 650 kilometres from eastern Turkey and into the Mediterranean.
  - In addition to this, the Aegean Sea Plate, located in the eastern Mediterranean Sea under southern Greece and western Turkey, is also a source of seismic activity in the region.

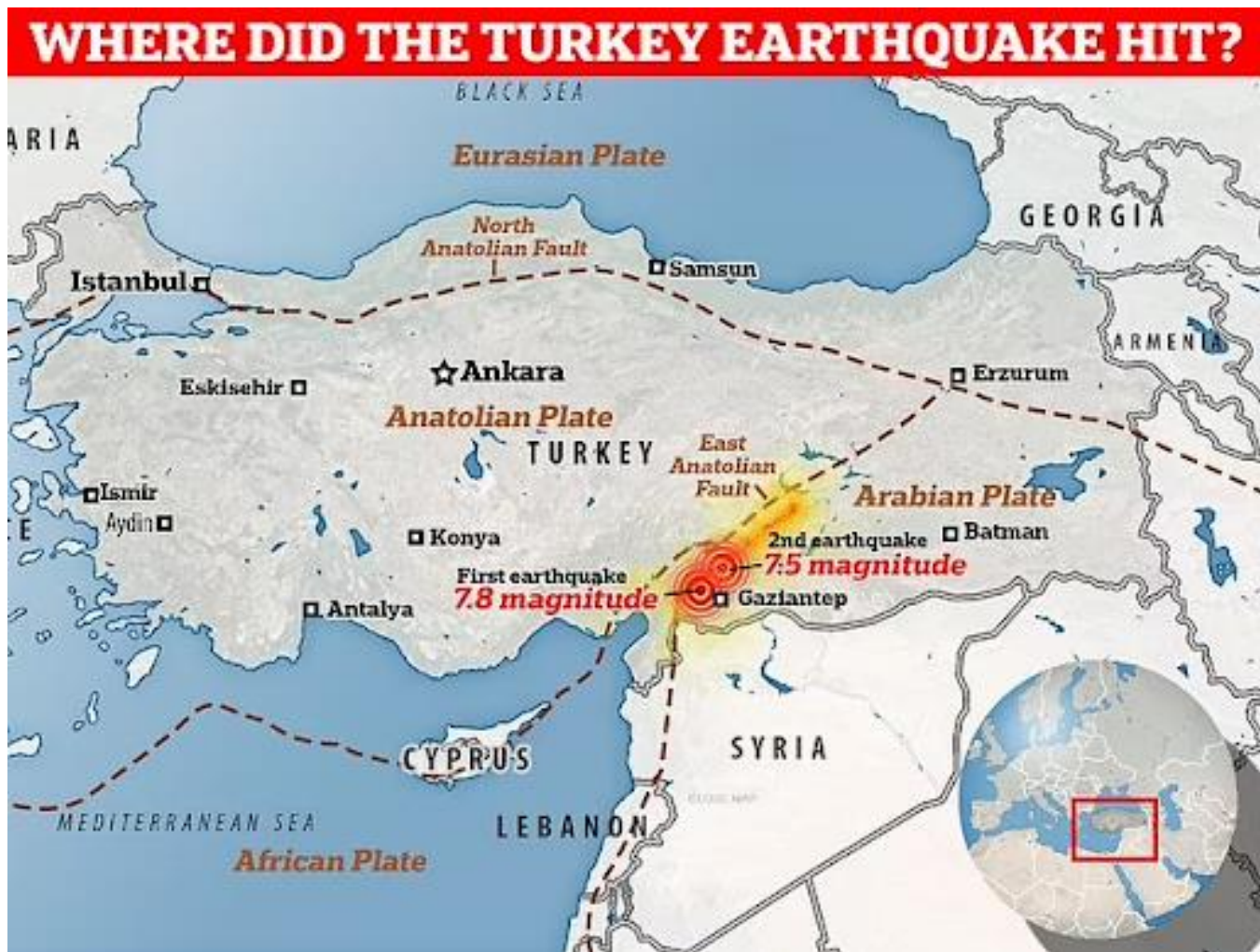


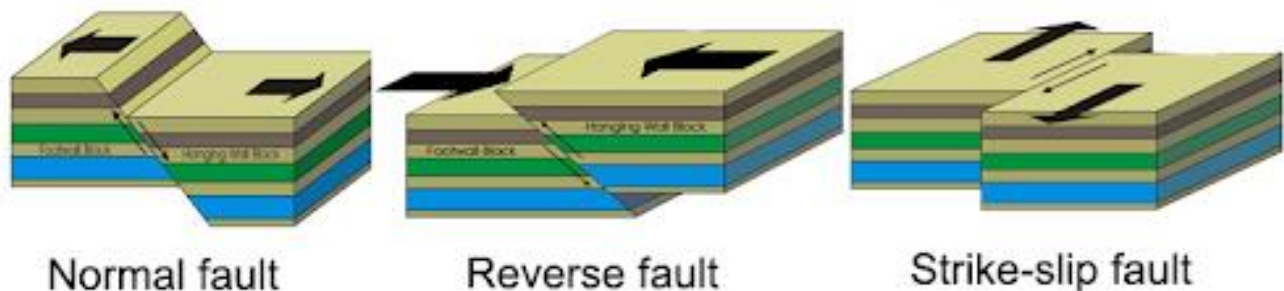
Image Source: Daily Mail

- In the region of Turkey, Syria, and Jordan, tectonics are dominated by complex interactions between the African, Arabian, and Eurasian tectonic plates, and the Anatolian tectonic block.
- Dominant structure in these regions which contributes to the frequent earthquakes are:
  - Red Sea Rift, the spreading centre between the African and Arabian plates;
  - Dead Sea Transform, a major strike-slip fault that also accommodates Africa-Arabia relative motions.
  - Cyprian Arc, a convergent boundary between the African plate and the Anatolian block.
- According to one estimate, almost 95% of the country's land mass is prone to earthquakes, while about a third of the country is at high risk, including the areas around the major cities of Istanbul and Izmir and the region of East Anatolia.
- In 2021, in a "catastrophic projection", an expert panel warned that 2,00,000 buildings in Istanbul stand at risk of medium- or high-level damage, jeopardising the lives of three million residents in the city.

## What is a Strike Slip Earthquake?

- Two tectonic plates move horizontally past each other in a strike-slip earthquake which occurs along transform boundaries such as the San Andreas Fault in California.
- Strike-slip faults are widespread, and many are found at the boundary between obliquely converging oceanic and continental tectonic plates.
- Strike-slip fault earthquakes are mainly caused due to the movement of the two plates against one another and the release of built-up strain.
- Strike-slip fault is also called transcurrent fault, wrench fault, or lateral fault.

## What are the three main types of faults?



www.GeologyPage.com

Image Source: Geology Page

## India's Assistance:

- India has dispatched relief materials which include a 30-bed field hospital and rescue and medical personnel as part of Humanitarian And Disaster Relief efforts to assist the earthquake-hit region.
- Further, dog squads, Search and Rescue Equipment (SAR), and extrication tools such as drilling machines and vehicles were also dispatched.
- According to defense officials, India dispatched four C-17 Globemaster aircraft of the IAF to Turkey and one C-130 transport aircraft with medical supplies to Syria.
- Agra-based 60 Para Field Hospital has dispatched a 99-member medical team equipped with X-ray machines, ventilators, an oxygen generation plant, cardiac monitors and associated equipment to establish a 30-bed medical facility.
- The Turkish and Syrian ambassadors appreciated India's offer of help at this critical juncture.
- The Syrian Ambassador has also said that "Whenever Syria needed something, India responded soon" describing India's support as a sign of South-South solidarity.



- In the last 15 years, India has carried out several disaster relief operations and emerged as a leading actor during such emergencies, especially in its neighbourhood.
  - For instance, India delivered 25 tonnes of relief supplies for Hurricane Katrina victims to Arkansas in 2005. The relief supplies comprised 3,000 blankets, bed sheets, tarpaulins and personal hygiene items.
  - After the 2004 Tsunami, the Indian government announced a composite package worth five crore rupees to the Maldives. Under “Operation Castor”, 50 sorties were undertaken and four aircraft and two Naval ships were engaged in relief operations.
  - India sent its forces to carry out rescue operations, called “Operation Rainbow”, in Sri Lanka after the Tsunami struck the country on December 26, 2004.
  - India sent 125.5 tonnes of relief material, including medicines, clothing, utensils, water tanks, tents and tarpaulin to Myanmar after cyclone Nargis in 2008 killed at least 20,000 people.

### India-Turkey Relations:

- Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Turkey in 1948, political and bilateral relations have been usually characterised by cordiality, although some sporadic tensions remain due to Turkey's support for Pakistan on several issues.
- Turkey's deepening bilateral military-security cooperation with Pakistan makes it harder for India to take a positive view of Turkey.
  - Pakistan and Turkey were part of the Central Treaty Organisation that was set up in 1955 by the British. Although CENTO eventually wound up in 1979, Turkey and Pakistan remained close partners in a number of regional organisations and international forums like the [Organisation of Islamic Cooperation](#).
- Turkey's Islamist internationalism has inevitably led to its deeper alliance with Pakistan, greater meddling in South Asia, and a sharper contraction with India.
- Turkey has become the most active international supporter of Pakistan on the Kashmir question.
  - The Government of India put off a proposed visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Ankara, as a part of a number of measures showing its displeasure over Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's UNGA speech in 2019 where he criticised India's move on [Article 370](#) in Jammu and Kashmir.
  - This came in the aftermath of India's decision to cut its defense exports to Turkey, which included dual-use weaponry such as explosives and detonators. From then on, India also significantly reduced its imports from Turkey.
- To further consolidate its offensive during this period, India entered into a defence agreement with Armenia, Turkey's traditional rival in the region and agreed to supply four SWATHI weapon-locating radars developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- India has also joined the chorus of opposing global voices that condemn Ankara's cross-border offensives against Kurdish-led forces in Syria.

- However, despite the recent tension between Ankara and New Delhi, India prioritises humanitarian relief efforts as both share deep civilizational bonds.

Read more on [India-Turkey Relations](#).

## 2. Troubled Legacy of Pervez Musharraf

**Context:** General Pervez Musharraf passed away in Dubai.

### Introduction:

- Pakistan's former president General Pervez Musharraf died aged 79 on 05 February 2023 in Dubai after a long illness.
- He was Pakistan's president between 2001 and 2008.
- Musharraf was charged with high treason and sentenced to death in Pakistan after Nawaz Sharif, who Musharraf earlier ousted in a coup, came to power.

### Pervez Musharraf's Early Years & Rise:

- Musharraf was born in Delhi in August 1943. Following [India's partition](#) at the end of British rule in 1947, his family shifted to Pakistan.
- Musharraf joined the Pakistan Military Academy at the age of 18. He was part of the Pakistani Army during the 1965 war and the 1971 war with India.
- Musharraf served for seven years in Pakistan's special service commando group.
- He was promoted to the rank of general and named army chief in October 1998 under then-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.
- He was believed to have played a key role in attempting an infiltration of Kashmir in May 1999 following the Lahore summit that had aspired to promote a vision of peace and stability among the countries, as well as progress and prosperity for the citizens.
  - This intrusion led to the [Kargil War](#) in 1999.
- Musharraf seized power from Sharif in October 1999 in a bloodless coup, after Sharif attempted to sideline him.
  - Following the coup, he suspended the constitution and appointed himself as the Chief Executive, while holding on to the post of Chief of Army Staff.
  - He coerced supreme court judges into endorsing his actions and granting him executive and legislative authority for three years by invoking the infamous "doctrine of necessity".
- In June 2001, Musharraf won a referendum extending his rule for five more years.

### Pervez Musharraf as President:

- Musharraf's posture towards India fell in two phases. First, he gave full play to the Pakistan army's animosity against India in the form of the Kargil incursion, the Indian Airlines aircraft hijacking and an uptick in terror, culminating in attacks on the J&K Assembly and the Indian Parliament. His rigid stance resulted in the failure of the Agra summit in July 2001.
- He changed his stance towards India in response to the pulls and pressures brought on by 9/11 and the necessity for international legitimacy to sustain his authority.
- This resulted in the LoC ceasefire of November 2003 and his assurance not to permit the use of any territory under Pakistan's control to support terrorism.
- During the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit in 2004 in Islamabad, along with Indian PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the two leaders gave a Joint Statement that set the ground for Composite Dialogue Process, under which discussion on eight issues, including Kashmir and terrorism, was agreed upon.
- The statement was implicit in the admission that terrorism against India emanated from Pakistan.
- From 2004 to 2007, there was also fruitful backchannel discussion on Kashmir, which led to practical and forward-thinking understandings that would have been a significant step towards a non-territorial resolution.
  - However, Musharraf's mounting internal issues and removal from office in 2008 prevented him from applying these understandings to a logical conclusion.

### **Criminal charges and later life:**

- He lived mostly in self-imposed exile in London and Dubai after 2008.
- He also attempted a political comeback in 2012 but it ended with his disqualification due to a lack of support.
- He was arrested and put under house arrest for his previous attempts to fire Supreme Court judges that led to treason charges.
- Pakistan allowed him to leave the country on bail to Dubai in 2016 for medical treatment, where he had remained since, even as he appealed against the cases levelled at him.
- In late 2018, his health started rapidly deteriorating due to amyloidosis, a rare disease that occurs when an abnormal protein builds up in organs and interferes with normal functioning.
- He was convicted in absentia on charges of high treason and sentenced to death but in January 2020, the special court that issued the sentence was ruled unconstitutional, and his conviction was overturned.

### **3. Payment routes between India-Russia**

**Context:** India and Russia continue discussions to resolve the payment crisis.

## Introduction:

- India could not process bilateral payments as Russia has been hit by stringent sanctions since its war with Ukraine.
- India and Russia are expected to hold bilateral financial meetings under the framework of the Inter-Governmental Commission in the last week of February as part of ongoing efforts to iron out a mechanism.
- Finding cargo carriers and their insurance outside the purview of sanctions is another major issue that needs to be resolved.
  - Insurance and reinsurance are under discussion, as well as efforts to avoid cargo ships under sanctions.

## Background:

- Following [Russia's invasion of Ukraine](#), it is banned from using the global SWIFT system for money transfers.
- This prompted India and Russia to conduct payments through the rupee-rouble arrangement. However, this has led to an accumulation of Indian rupees in Russian banks, given the large volume of payments.
- India faced a similar dilemma in clearing Russian payments in 2018, when India signed the [S-400](#) deal with Russia—a year after the United States passed the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).
  - India, however, managed to process Russian payments for defence-related supplies through the Indian branches of two Russian banks VTB and Sberbank by disbursing the dollar equivalent in Indian rupees.
  - However, these, too, were placed under sanctions after the Russia-Ukraine war broke out.
- Therefore, both sides are discussing ways to enhance Russian sourcing from India.

## India's Options:

- India imports oil and weapons from Russia. India has outstanding Rouble payments worth around Rs 28,000 crore against weapons delivered by Russia.
- With most of India's military hardware being of Russian origin, there have been concerns in the government about Russia's ability to meet delivery schedules of critical spares and equipment if payments are further delayed.
  - This also affects the Indian military's planned capital expenditure for this year.
- India is currently considering three options to clear Russia's dues for the weapons it has supplied, one of which is initiating Rouble payments in Chinese Yuan and UAE Dirham.
  - Indian refiners have started paying in United Arab Emirates Dirhams instead of US Dollars for Russian oil purchased through Dubai-based traders.



- India has apprehensions about paying through the foreign currency of a third country because of the “sensitive” nature of most defence deals.
- The government is also exploring the option of making the Rouble payments through a hybrid form of sovereign bonds, a debt instrument issued by the government in which the government will commit to paying a fixed amount later, inclusive of face value and interest.
  - It is being discussed if the dues to Russia can be shifted to a separate account in India and a sovereign guarantee issued over such deposits.
- A third option being discussed is to offer some stakes to Russia in government-owned enterprises, which can be liquidated in the future.
- Some of the contracts with Russia include long-range surface-to-air missile system S-400, two Tushil class ships being built in Russia, Smerch Multiple Rocket Launch Systems, rocket projectiles and Russian-made X-31 missiles, among other missiles, aside from spares for several weapon systems and equipment in the military’s inventory.

#### 4. International Monetary Fund

**Context:** IMF placed new bailout conditions on Pakistan while the Paris Club of creditors has given financing assurances to support the International Monetary Fund's approval of an extended fund facility for Sri Lanka.

##### **Bailout of Pakistan:**

- In 2019, the [International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#) agreed in principle to support Pakistan with a loan of \$6 billion, to be disbursed over 39 months.
- Recently, the IMF has set several conditions for resuming the bailout, including an increase in power tariff, restoration of unrestricted imports and raising the petroleum development levy on diesel.
- The IMF views the poor performance of the power sector, whose circular debt has reached Rs 2.9 trillion, as a major threat to the economy.
- The IMF funding is critical for Pakistan, which is left with only around \$3.10 billion in foreign exchange reserves that can only manage to cover three weeks of imports.

Read more on [Pakistan’s Economic Crisis](#)

##### **Assistance to Sri Lanka:**

- The [Paris Club](#) of creditors has given financing assurances to support the International Monetary Fund’s approval of an extended fund facility for Sri Lanka.

- The assurances are crucial to unlocking a \$2.9 billion deal from the IMF, which is still pending executive board approval.
- China, Japan, and India are Sri Lanka's three largest bilateral lenders and in order to secure a US\$ 2.9 billion bailout package from the IMF, obtaining financial assurances from these three major creditors is the requisite for Sri Lanka.
- India gave its financial assurances to the IMF on the 16th of January, becoming the first bilateral creditor of Sri Lanka to formally support its crucial debt restructuring programme.

Read more on [Sri Lanka's Economic Crisis](#)

## 5. West Bank and Gaza Strip

**Context:** Tensions between Israeli forces and Palestinians are high after recent attacks on Gaza Strip and West Bank.

### Gaza Strip:

- The Gaza Strip is a Palestinian exclave on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea.
- The smaller of the two Palestinian territories, it borders Egypt on the southwest and Israel on the east and north border. Together, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank make up the State of Palestine, while being under Israeli military occupation since 1967.
- The territories of Gaza and the West Bank are separated from each other by Israeli territory.
- Both fall under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority, but the Strip is governed by Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), a militant, fundamentalist Islamic organisation, which came to power in the last-held elections in 2006.
  - Since then, Gaza has been under a full Israeli-led land, sea and air blockade.

## PALESTINE

### How big is Gaza?

The Gaza Strip has a population of **2.1 million people** and is one of the **most densely populated areas in the world**. Since 2008, Israel has waged **four wars** on the **Palestinian territory**, killing thousands of people, mostly civilians.



Image source: Al Jazeera

### West Bank:

- The West Bank is a landlocked territory bordered by Jordan and the Dead Sea to the east and by Israel to the south, west, and north.

- Under Israeli military occupation since 1967, its area is split into 165 Palestinian "islands" that are under total or partial civil administration by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), and 230 Israeli settlements.
- The West Bank includes East Jerusalem.



Read more on the [Israel-Palestine Conflict](#).