

**DAILY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS
ANALYSIS**

 LAKSHYA ACADEMY®

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1 – About Strategic Partnership Council:

GS II

International Issues

- **Context:**

- The inaugural summit-level gathering of the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council (SPC) was co-chaired by Saudi Arabia and India.

- **Information regarding the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council:**

- After the UK, France, and China, Saudi Arabia created a strategic alliance with India in 2019, establishing the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic alliance Council.

- **Aim:**

- The main goal of the Strategic Partnership Council was to create a high-level council to direct Indo-Saudi cooperation.

- **Two SPC pillars are:**

- Political, Security, Social, and Cultural Cooperation Committee

- **Committee on Investments and the Economy:**

- There are four functional levels of engagement for each of the subcommittees:
 - summit level (the Crown Prince and the Prime Minister);
 - Ministerial-level;
 - meetings of senior officials;
 - JWGs, or joint working groups.

- **The importance of SPC:**

- The \$50 billion West Coast refinery project will be implemented more quickly, India and Saudi Arabia have determined.
- The West Coast refinery project entails the construction of a 60 million tonne refinery-cum-petrochemical complex on the Maharashtra coast by Indian and Saudi Arabian businesses.

- The two parties decided to expand their current hydrocarbons agreement into an all-encompassing energy alliance.
- Eight agreements were signed by the two nations to deepen their collaboration in a number of areas, including digitalisation and investment.
- The power, gas, optical, and fibre networks were also discussed by the two parties as potential areas of cooperation.
- *Source → The Hindu*

2 – Details of National disaster tag:

GS III

Disaster Management

- **Context:**
- The chief of Himachal Pradesh has asked the Indian prime minister to declare the devastation brought on by the state's torrential rains a national catastrophe.
- **Why is it needed?**
- This monsoon's rains caused 10,000 crore rupees in losses for Himachal Pradesh.
- A special disaster package must be announced and the catastrophe must be labelled a national disaster.
- **How are states helped in the event of a natural disaster?**
- No official classification of "national disasters" exists.
- Such catastrophes are covered by the 2005 Disaster Management Act.
- It defines a "disaster" as a catastrophe, misfortune, tragedy, or grave event in any area, resulting from natural or human causes, or by accident or neglect, and leading to:
- **Significant suffering or loss of life:**
- destruction and injury to property, or
- environmental deterioration or harm
- It is of a sort or magnitude that is greater than what the local community in the afflicted region can handle.

- **As a result of the Act:**

- the Prime Minister will serve as the head of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), and
- Authorities for managing disasters in each state (SDMAs) are led by their respective Chief Ministers.
- The National Disaster Response Force was another result of the Act.
- It has a number of battalions or teams that are in charge of conducting rescue and relief operations on the ground in several states.

- **Regarding NDRF:**

- The 2005 Disaster Management Act makes reference to the National Disaster Relief Fund (NDRF).
- For state governments to respond to declared disasters, SDRFs serve as the main source of funding.
- In general states and northeastern and Himalayan states, the Central Government contributes 75% and 90%, respectively, to the SDRF.
- The SDRF is only to be used to cover costs associated with giving emergency aid to those affected by notified tragedies such as:
- landslides, avalanches, hailstorms, cyclones, droughts, earthquakes, fires, floods, tsunamis, hailstorms, cloud bursts, pest attacks, and frost/cold waves.
- In the event of a disaster, it is primarily the state government's responsibility to implement rescue, relief, and rehabilitation measures.
- After following the prescribed procedure, these may be reinforced with central help from the National Disaster Response Fund.

- **A national catastrophe:**

- A proposal that a disaster be classified as a national tragedy of rarest severity if it affects one-third of a state's population was looked at by the 10th Finance Commission.
- A calamity of rare severity was not defined, but it was said that each case would need to be evaluated individually based on the calamity's severity.
- When a disaster is deemed to be of a serious nature, federal assistance is given to the state government.
- The Centre takes the NDRF's further support into consideration.
- A Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) is established, and the state and the centre split its corpus three to one.
- When the CRF's resources are insufficient, the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF), which is entirely funded by the Centre, is considered for extra aid.

- Once a disaster is deemed "severe," consideration is given to granting new loans to the affected parties on favourable terms or providing relief in loan repayment.
- **What is a serious catastrophe?**
- A tragedy is deemed to be of "rare severity" or "severe nature" based on vague criteria, although other aspects are taken into consideration, including the intensity and scope of the calamity, the amount of help required, etc.
- **How is a catastrophic event categorised?**
- This categorization is based on a particular process where the state government must submit a statement outlining the sector-by-sector harm caused by a disaster and its demand for funding.
- After then, a central inter-ministerial team is formed to assess the damage and determine the amount of funding needed for relief efforts.
- These assessments are examined by particular committees, who then present their reports.
- To be released from the NDRF, a certain amount of immediate relief must be approved by a high-level committee.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs' Disaster Management Division will then support the effort and keep an eye on how the money is being used.
- **How money is allocated:**
- A new mechanism for allocating funds to states based on historical spending, risk exposure (region and population) hazard, and state vulnerability was adopted by the 15th Finance Commission (for 2021–22 to 202–25).
- According to the Finance Commission's recommendation, the annual Central contribution is distributed in two equal installments.
- These are released after the state government submits a report on the operations carried out by SDRF and upon receipt of a Utilisation Certificate for the sum released in the preceding instalment.
- However, recently, due to the urgency caused by the excessive rains in numerous places, these rules were lifted.
- **Source → The Hindu**

3 – About the Ancient Red Sea trade route:

GS II

International Issues

- **Context:**

- The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, which was unveiled during the G20 Summit, is reminiscent of the old red sea trade route that connected the subcontinent and the Roman Empire.

- **Regarding the prehistoric Red Sea trade route:**

- Recent estimates suggest that up to one-third of the revenue for the Roman exchequer came from custom charges on trade over the Red Sea with India, Persia, and Ethiopia.
- The Muziris Papyrus, a contract signed by an Egypto-Roman financier stationed in Alexandria for the purchase of commodities from an Indian trader based in distant Muziris on the coast of Kerala, is the primary source for this startling amount.

- **What was traded along this path?**

- **The Roman Empire saw a high demand for luxury goods from India:**

- the malabathrum plant, which resembled cinnamon and whose leaves were used to make perfume,
- pearls, precious stones, and ivory.
- This era is indicated by a famous ivory sculpture of a voluptuously pouting yakshi fertility spirit that was discovered in the Pompeiian ruins.
- Additionally, there existed a market for exotic items like tigers and elephants.

- **Spices:**

- Pepper, which has been discovered in great quantities during excavations, was by far India's largest export.
- Indian pepper was virtually as widely accessible by the end of the first century as it is today.
- The Roman cookbook of Apicius contained pepper in over 80% of its 478 recipes.

- **Trade between Rome and India:**

- Rome's trade with India was not as extensive.
- The Roman economy faced difficulties as a result of the trade imbalance, which was heavily in India's advantage and was primarily made up of gold.
- According to historical accounts, Indians enjoyed Roman wine.
- Evidence of trade in olive oil and Garum, an ancient Roman fermented fish paste similar to modern Tabasco or garam masala, has been discovered at sites in Kerala and Arikamedu.
- **Before the Common Era, was this route used for trade?**
- Even during Meluha (the Indus Valley Civilization, c. 3300–1300 BCE), there is evidence of an Indian diaspora in the Middle East.
- However, it appears to have been primarily coastal in nature and featured modest amounts of products.
- This developed into a significant commerce network throughout the Roman era, with massive cargo ships travelling directly between the subcontinent and the Roman Empire.
- Romans were wealthy enough to purchase the goods that India had to offer, which helped them industrialise the trade.
- **Trade organisation:**
- The market was really well planned.
- Contracts were drafted between shippers in Alexandria and merchants in Kerala.
- Indians had several roles in this exchange.
- Ajanta contains images of huge double-masted ships.
- Insignia of ships was frequently used on early Indian coinage.
- For instance, the Satavahanas' coins have pictures of ships.
- There is also a tonne of proof that Indian sailors played a significant role in the commerce.
- Recently, Indian sailors' graffiti from this time period—mostly by Gujaratis from Barigaza, now known as Bharuch—was discovered in the Hoq caves on the island of Socotra, a well-liked rest point near the opening of the Gulf of Aden.
- Those travelling from India to the Red Sea ports in Egypt used to frequently stay over on the island of Socotra, which is located at the mouth of the Gulf of Aden.
- From the second to the fifth century CE, there are 219 inscriptions in this location, 192 of which are written in the Indian Brahmi script and one in Bactrian and Kharosthi.
- **They use names that are unmistakably of Indian origin:**
- "Vishnu, son of the Ganja merchant,"
- or "Skandabhuti, the Sea Captain"

- Along with prayers to Radha and Krishna and invocations to the Buddha, there are also depictions of gigantic three-masted Indian ships, Shaivite tridents, swastikas, Syrian Christian crosses, and Buddhist stupas.
- **When compared to the Silk Road:**
- Despite being widely known today, the concept of a Silk Road—a mythical overland commerce route that connected Xian, in China, with Antioch, in Turkey—was unheard of in ancient or mediaeval times.
- There is not a single ancient record—Chinese or Western—that mentions its existence.
- In fact, not a single reference of the Silk Road is made by Marco Polo, the person who is currently most strongly connected with it.
- The Prussian geographer Baron von Richthofen, who was tasked with coming up with a route for a railway connecting Berlin to Peking, first used the phrase in 1877.
- It most definitely existed during the Mongol era (the 13th and 14th century CE), when a single Mongol Empire ruled the entire region between China and the Mediterranean.
- Regarding the Roman era, however, there is no proof that China and Europe were aware of one another's existence outside of tradition.
- Rome appears to have received Chinese silk during this time via Indian ports.
- For instance, one may travel overland across the Kushana region of northern India to reach the ports of Gujarat and the Indus River's mouth.
- *Source* → *The Hindu*

4 – Details of the Special Campaign 3.0:

GS II

Government Policies and Interventions

- **Context:**
- Maintaining the Special campaign 2.0's momentum, the Dept. Biotechnology was able to reduce the amount of time that numerous issues were in limbo, moving the Special campaign 3.0 forward.
- **Key information**
- **Among the best practises used in the campaign are:**

- the opening of the BioRRAP (Biological Research Regulatory Approval Portal)
- It serves as a central hub for the regulatory approval of all biological research across all scientific Ministries and Departments.
- ensuring deliberation when it comes to departmental decision-making.
- **Upgrading to version 7.0 of e-office:**
- Attempt to have all Department files and receipts be electronic.
- *Source → The Hindu*

5 – About the Transformative Programs to Empower Individuals with Disabilities:

GS II

Social Issues

- **Context:**
- Transformative Programmes to Empower Individuals with Disabilities are introduced by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD).
- **Key information:**
- Five Groundbreaking Projects by DEPwD to Promote Inclusivity and Empower People with Disabilities:
- **Agreement with the Council of Architecture:**
- In order to include universal accessibility courses in Bachelor of Architecture programmes, DEPwD has partnered with the Council of Architecture (COA).
- This partnership includes the creation of a recognised course for architects and civil engineers that will provide them the knowledge and abilities to perform accessibility audits in constructed environments, assuring adherence to accessibility requirements.
- **Release of UDID Anonymized Data:**

- The Unique Disability ID (UDID) portal's anonymous data release by DEPwD for research reasons marks a significant advancement in the disability sector's use of data-driven decision-making.
 - At many levels, our effort offers priceless insights that facilitate a deeper understanding and inform targeted solutions.
 - The Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi Portal is for PM Daksh.
 - The PM Daksh-DEPwD Portal, a comprehensive digital platform created to support people with disabilities in their quest of skill development and employment possibilities, is now available thanks to DEPwD.
- **The portal provides:**
 - straightforward registration using UDID,
 - access to opportunities for location-based skill training,
 - a broad range of job postings from India,
 - administrative procedures that are simplified.
- **The Courts on Disability Rights' Pathways to Access:**
 - In a thorough pamphlet, DEPwD has collated significant rulings on disability rights from India's Supreme Court and High Courts.
 - The people with disabilities and other stakeholders in the disability sector can use this resource as a helpful reference manual.
- **CCPD's online case monitoring portal:**
 - A cutting-edge application has been used by the Chief Commissioner for Persons with impairments (CCPD) to handle complaints made by people with impairments.
 - With the help of this project, the entire procedure is streamlined, effective, and paperless.
- *Source → The Hindu*