GS II

SYLLABUS: INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD- RELATIONS.

INDIA-BANGLADESH RELATIONS

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 6.

News: "The Sheikh Hasina extradition demand, India's options."

Bangladesh plays a *pivotal role* in India's *Neighbourhood first and Act East Policy.* Both countries are part of important regional organisation like *SAARC, BIMSTEC, IORA, ASEAN etc.*

Both share significant and multifaceted partnerships in South Asia as follows:

Historical and cultural Ties:
- **Shared culture:** Bengali language, literature etc
- **Historic events:** Partition of Bengal 1905, 1971 liberation war.
- 16th December 1971 celebrated as *Vijay Diwas in India.*

Economic cooperation:
- *India's largest trading partner in South Asia,* bilateral trade reaching 18billion USD in 2022.
- *Connectivity projects* Eg. Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal *(BBIN)* Motor Vehicle Agreement.
- Bangladesh imports ~1500MW of power from India.
- *Border Haats (markets):* to improve livelihood of border communities.
- **Issues:**
  - River Water Sharing of Teesta; Farakka barrage over river Ganga issue etc.
  - Stalled state of proposed transit projects.

Security:
- India shares longest land border(4096km) with Bangladesh.
- **Defence and Security:** Eg. *SAMPRITI (joint military exercise).*
- **Issues:**
  - **Longstanding Border Issues:** over regions of Assam and Tripura.
  - **Insurgency:** Eg. United Liberation Front of Assam*(ULFA)* running camps while residing in Bangladesh against India.

Migration & Rohingya Refugees crisis:
- *Illegal immigration* into Indian states of Assam, West Bengal etc.
- National Register of Citizens*(NRC)* and the *Citizenship Amendment Act* have added complexity to the issue

Growing Chinese Influence:
- Increasing Investments by China Eg. Chittagong port, road projects etc.

Current Situation & impacts on India.

- **Political Crisis:** Fall of Ex-PM S.Hasina from power.
- **Current Govt. of Bangladesh:** Headed by M.Yunus backed by army.
- **International Impact:**
  - U.S.A and China influencing the events in Bangladesh to *secure strategic foothold in South Asia.*
  - *Potential Islamist Radicalism:* rising influence of radicals could destabilise the region and pose security challenges to India.
  - *India Security concerns:* Eg. Restrengthening of organisations like ULFA and NSCN.

- *Democratic Dilemma for India:* to maintain balance of democratic values while ensuring regional security.

ECONOMY

PRE-CONTEXT

EXCHANGE RATE

THE HINDU, PG.NO: 6.

News: "Currency concerns."

About Exchange Rate:
Evolution:
- **Par Value system till 1971:** Govt. Fixes external value.
- **Pegged Regime 1971-1992:** Rupee was pegged to US dollar.
- **LERMS (1991- 1993):** Partial Convertibility.
- **Floating Exchange Rate since 1993:**
  - India delinked itself from Fixed exchange Rate system & made it *floating exchange rate.*
  - Although exchange rate is **market determined,** *RBI can intervene as stabiliser.*
  - Mr. Manmohan Singh was the finance minister.

Types:
- **Nominal Effective Exchange Rate (REER):**
  - NEER *measures the strength of a country's currency against a weighted average of several other currencies.*
  - **If India's NEER increases,** it means the Indian Rupee has strengthened against the basket of other currencies, *making imports cheaper and exports more expensive.*
  - Increase in NEER indicates appreciation of country's currency.

- **Real Effective Exchange Rate (REER):**
  - Values of NEER is *adjusted to inflation.* This provides a more accurate picture of a country's currency competitiveness.
  - Increase in REER indicates real appreciation of country's currency.

Factors influencing Exchange Rate:
- **Interest Rates:** The RBI's interest rate decisions significantly influence the INR. Higher rates tend to attract foreign portfolio investment (FPI), strengthening the INR.
- **Inflation**: Persistent inflation in India can erode the INR's value.
- **Economic Growth:** India's robust GDP growth has generally supported the INR, making it attractive for foreign investors.
- **Political Stability:** Relative political stability in India has been conducive to foreign investment,
- **FDI & FPI:** High levels of FDI and FPI inflows have appreciated the INR, while any capital flight can exert downward pressure.

IR
Pre-context
ROHINGYA REFUGEES
THE HINDU, PG.NO: 8.

News: *"On India's obligations towards the Rohingya."*

About Rohingya Refugees:
- The Rohingya people *(who are a predominantly Muslim ethnic minority from Myanmar)*, the world's largest stateless population, number around 2.8 million. Denied citizenship and persecuted for decades, most have fled due to genocidal violence.
- According to the *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*, nearly 22,500 Rohingya refugees currently reside in India.
- *The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol:*
  - Enshrines the principle of non-refoulement:
    - Customary *international law which prohibits States from expelling individuals under their jurisdiction* when substantial evidence suggests they would face persecution, torture, or other severe human rights violations upon return.
    - *This principle is a cornerstone of human rights*, humanitarian, and refugee law.
    - It imposes *binding obligations* on states *(including those not parties to the Refugee Convention 1967 Protocol)* regardless of formal assent.

India Stance
International obligations:
- *India is not a signatory* to the Refugee Convention 1967 Protocol.
  - India continues to *detain* Rohingya refugees under domestic legal frameworks, *Foreigners Act, 1946, and the Passport Act, 1967.*
  - These legislations enable authorities to categorise Rohingya refugees as *"illegal migrants."*
- **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:**
  - *India is a party.*
  - Art.7 of the covenant *implicitly obligates member states under to refrain from refouling individuals* to places where they may face torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

Domestic Laws:
- India lacks a domestic refugee law, the Supreme Court in landmark rulings such as *Vishaka guidelines 1997 and NALSA 2014:* In the *absence of domestic legislation on a matter, international conventions and norms must be applied* by municipal courts to ensure the dignity of human life.
- *Art.51(c) of the Indian Constitution:* mandates that the state must strive to promote respect for international law and treaty obligations.
- Currently, groups such as the *Tibetans, Sri Lankans, and Afghans are granted refugee certificates or long-term visas* by the government, most Rohingya refugees — despite being registered with the UNHCR — often face arbitrary detention and criminal imprisonment.

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TECHNOLOGY
Pre-context
UPI
THE HINDU, PG.NO: 7.

News: *"UPI duopoly's rise and market vulnerabilities."*

About Unified Payments Interface (UPI):
- UPI is a *mobile-based payment system* that allows users to transfer funds between bank accounts in *real time*. *Users can transfer money to a recipient's UPI ID,* which can be a mobile number, QR code, or Virtual Payment Address.
- UPI is *regulated by RBI.*
- *Developed by National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI)* in 2016.
  - A not-for-profit organization founded by th*e Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Indian Banks' Association (IBA).*
- UPI is built on Immediate Payment Services *(IMPS)* and Aadhar-Enabled Payment System *(AEPS)* architecture.
- The *standard limit is ₹1 lakh per transaction per day.* However, banks can set their own limits; which can be made in *20 transactions.*
- UPI can be used on *BHIM, a first-party app.* It can also be accessed *via third-party platforms* such as *Google Pay, PhonePe, BharatPe, etc.*
- Unlike a credit or debit card payment, there is *no charge involved in UPI payment.*
- *UPI Lite by NCPI:*
  - Which *does not require a PIN or internet* to make transactions.
  - It limit of Rs 500 per transaction and Rs 4,000 limit per day.
- **UPI used outside of India:** Nepal, Bhutan, Srilanka, Maldives, Mauritius, Singapore, UAE and France.

Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):
- DPI refers to digital platforms that *enable the efficient delivery of public services to citizens* in a secure, inclusive, and interoperable manner.
  - **Digital identity systems:** India's Aadhaar system.
  - **Digital payment systems:** Unified Payment Interface (UPI), BHIM etc.
  - **India Stack:**
    - **e-KYC:** owned by *UIDAI.*
    - **e-Sign:** maintained by *Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.*
    - **Digilocker**: Owned by *Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.*
    - **UPI:** owned by *NPCI.*

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P.T.O

News: "NASA probe flies closer to-the sun than any spacecraft."

About Parker Solar Probe:
- Launched in 2018 by **NASA**, to *deepen scientific understanding of our star (Sun)* and help forecast space-weather events that can affect life on the earth.
- "Right now, the Parker Solar Probe is **flying closer to our Sun than anything has ever been before**," at 6.1 million kilometres away,

Aditya L1:
- This is *first* Indian Space based mission to study Sun.
- **Rocket:** PSLV placed Aditya L1 spacecraft into **LEO**.

Objectives of Aditya L1:
- *Study of Solar upper atmospheric* (chromosphere and corona) dynamics. Eg. Ionised Plasma, *Coronal Mass Ejection (CME)*, Flares Magnetic field topology etc.
- Physics of **solar corona** and its heating mechanism.
- **Orbit:** Halo orbit around Lagrange point 1 of Sun-Earth system.
- **Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC)** aboard Aditya-L1 predicted the onset time of a CME on the sun.
- Using data obtained with the VELC, the team could precisely arrive at the onset time of a CME on the sun on 16 July 2024.

About Lagrangian points:
- Of these five Lagrange points, three **(L1, L2, L3) are unstable** and two **(L4, L5) are** *stable.*
- Stable Lagrange Points, form the apex of two equilateral triangles.

Features on Sun:
- **Sunspots:** Cool areas on Sun.
- **Solar flares:** intense bursts.
- **Coronal Mass Ejection:** *Large magnetised plasma eruptions*, can damage the electronics in satellites in near-Earth space and disrupt radio communication networks on the Earth.

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Thank you!