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INDEX

SN.	TOPIC
1	Socialism in India means a welfare state: CJI
2	India-U.S. Ties Have Strong Foundation
3	China-India State of Play
4	National Dolphin Research Centre
5	11th ADMM Meeting-Plus and Buddhism



Socialism in India means a welfare state: CJI

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Syllabus: GS2/ Polity and Governance

Context

- Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna addressed a batch of petitions challenging the inclusion of the words **“socialist, secular” in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution through the 42nd Amendment Act of 1976.**

Key Highlights

- The Chief Justice clarified that the idea of “socialism” in India represents a welfare state that ensures equality of opportunity for all, and does not negate private sector participation.
- He rejected the claim that the Preamble, as adopted by the Constituent Assembly in 1949, could not be amended, stating that the Preamble is part of the Constitution and subject to changes under **Article 368.**
- He also asserted that both **‘socialism’ and ‘secularism’ are integral to the Constitution’s Basic Structure** and cannot be altered.
 - He also dismissed the idea that these terms were undemocratic, pointing out that they were meant to foster a welfare state.

What is Socialism?

- Socialism is an **economic and political ideology** advocating **collective ownership and equitable distribution of resources** to achieve social and economic equality.
- It emphasizes **reducing disparities in wealth and opportunities** through state intervention, public ownership, and welfare policies.

Evolution of Socialism in India

- Socialism in India finds its origins in the freedom movement, where leaders like **Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose** championed a state-driven economy for equitable growth.
- The Constitution, through its Preamble, enshrined **“socialist”** ideals after the **42nd Amendment in 1976.**

Development in India

- **Nehruvian Model:** Adoption of state-led industrialization and planned economic development, exemplified by the establishment of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs).
- **Land Reforms:** Redistribution of land to address feudal inequalities.

- **Social Justice Movements:** Enactment of affirmative action policies like reservations for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes.

Challenges to Socialism in India

- **Economic Disparities:** Wealth concentration persists despite redistributive efforts, exacerbating inequalities.
- **Bureaucratic Inefficiencies:** The public sector mostly suffers from inefficiency and corruption, undermining welfare objectives.
- **Policy Shifts:** The 1991 economic liberalization marked a gradual shift towards a market-oriented economy, diluting socialist ideals.
- **Globalization and Privatization:** These forces have widened income inequalities and challenged the welfare orientation of the state.
- **Resource Constraints:** Limited fiscal space hampers the government's ability to deliver universal welfare programs effectively.

Contemporary Relevance of Socialism

- **Social Security:** Programs like MGNREGA and PM-KISAN uphold the socialist ethos by supporting vulnerable sections.
- **Healthcare and Education:** Initiatives such as **Ayushman Bharat and the National Education Policy (NEP)** aim to democratize access to essential services.
- **Climate Justice:** Socialism now intersects with environmental concerns, advocating equitable access to natural resources and sustainable development.
 - Developed nations honor commitments like the **Green Climate Fund** to help developing nations tackle climate change impacts.
- **Technological Equity:** The digital divide necessitates policies that promote digital literacy and access for all.

Way Forward

- Strengthen **social security nets** to protect marginalized populations.
- Improve **public sector efficiency** through transparency and accountability.
- Promote inclusive growth by balancing **market reforms** with redistributive justice.
- Embrace **participatory governance**, ensuring that citizens have a voice in policy making.

Concluding remarks

- Socialism in India reflects the collective aspiration for equality, justice, and dignity.
- While challenges persist, it continues to serve as a guiding principle for achieving a just and inclusive society.

India-U.S. Ties Have Strong Foundation

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Syllabus: GS2/ International Relations

Context

- The White House recently reaffirmed the strong foundation of India-U.S. bilateral relations amidst the controversy of bribery allegations against Indian businessman Gautam Adani.

Overview of India and US Bilateral Relations

- Since India's independence, ties with the United States have weathered the **Cold War era** distrust and **estrangement over India's nuclear program**.
 - Relations have **warmed in recent years** and cooperation has strengthened across a range of economic and political areas.
- **Bilateral Trade:** The bilateral trade between the two countries has risen by **72 percent** between 2017-18 and 2022-23.
 - The US accounted for **18 percent** of the gross **FDI inflows** into India during **2021-22**, ranking second behind Singapore.
 - US is the largest trading partner of India with overall bilateral trade in goods and services of \$190.1 billion for calendar year 2023
- **Defense and Security:** India and the US have signed a troika of "foundational pacts" for deep military cooperation, beginning with the **Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) in 2016**, followed by the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (**COMCASA**) after the first 2+2 dialogue in 2018, and then the **Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA)** in 2020.
 - In **2016**, the United States elevated India to a **major defense partner**.
- **Space: Artemis Accords** signed by India established a common vision for the future of space exploration for the benefit of all humankind.
- **Multilateral Cooperation:** India and the United States cooperate closely in multilateral organizations and forums, including the **United Nations, G20, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization**.
 - Together with Australia and Japan, the United States and India convene as the **Quad**, a diplomatic network, to promote a **free and open Indo-Pacific**.

- **Nuclear Cooperation: Civil Nuclear Deal** was signed in **2005**, under the agreement, India agreed to separate its civil and military nuclear facilities and place all its civil resources under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.
 - In exchange, the United States agrees to work toward full civil nuclear cooperation with India.
- **New initiatives:** Several new initiatives have been announced like **GE-HAL deal** to manufacture jet engines in India and the **initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET)**, to bring revolution between the relations of the two nations.

Divergence in relations

- **Limited Utility:** India's utility to the US in an Indo-Pacific conflict, such as a Chinese invasion or naval blockade of Taiwan, is likely limited.
 - In the event of US military involvement in Taiwan's defense, India would likely avoid entanglement in such a US-China conflict.
- **The US seeks greater alignment from its allies against Russia:** India is viewed by the US and the West as opportunistically buying more oil from Russia amid the war.
- **Defence Relations with Russia:** The US is concerned about India's acquisition of arms like the S-400 air defense system, as it strengthens Russian power.
- **Trade Protectionism:** India's high tariffs and the U.S.'s emphasis on intellectual property rights strains the trade relations.
- **Human Rights and Democratic Norms:** The U.S. has raised concerns over India's press freedom and religious tolerance, which is viewed as interference in internal matters of India.

Concerns for India

- **Economic Stability:** Issues like the Adani controversy highlight vulnerabilities in India's corporate governance that have the possibility to deter U.S. investors.
- The **Russia-Ukraine conflict** has shifted the focus of the US away from China, and has, therefore, contributed to considerably eroding the strategic convergence between India and the US.
- Further, the **war in the Middle East** has diverted US attention away and Indo-Pacific in general and India, in particular, have suffered neglect.

Concluding remark

- India-U.S. relations are multifaceted, marked by both cooperation and divergence.
- However, the strategic convergence in addressing global challenges underscores the resilience of this partnership.

China-India State of Play

Context

- Recent developments have highlighted the delicate balance trying to maintain in the relationship between China and India which is complex and multifaceted, marked by cooperation and conflict by both countries.

Historical Context

- The China-India relationship has been historically strained, primarily due to border disputes.
- The most notable conflict **occurred in 1962**, and tensions have periodically flared up since then, most recently with the **Galwan Valley clash in 2020**, which resulted in casualties on both sides.
- Since then, both countries have engaged in numerous rounds of diplomatic and military talks to de-escalate the situation, but with limited success.

Line of Actual Control (LAC)

- The LAC is the demarcation that separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory.
- India considers the LAC to be 3,488 km long, while the Chinese consider it to be only around 2,000 km.
- It is divided into **three sectors**:
 1. the **eastern sector** which spans Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim;
 2. the **middle sector** in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, and;
 3. the **western sector** in Ladakh.
- LAC in the eastern sector consisting of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim is called the **McMahon Line** which is 1,140 km long.

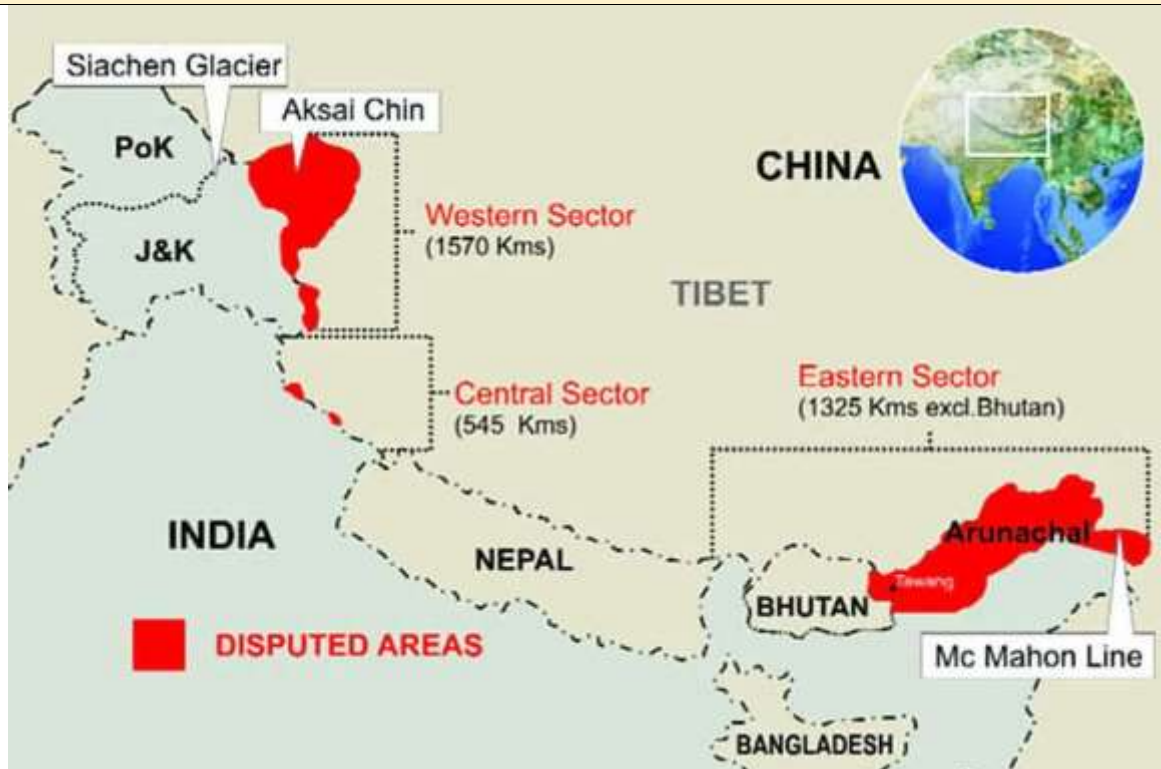
Major friction points along the India-China border

- Depsang Plains:** This area is located in the northernmost part of Ladakh and has seen incursions by Chinese troops in the past.
- Demchok:** This area is located in eastern Ladakh and has seen disputes over the boundary between India and China.
- Pangong Lake:** This area has been a major flashpoint between the two countries, with Chinese troops attempting to change the status quo on the LAC in the region.
- Gogra and Hot Springs:** These two areas are located in eastern Ladakh and have seen standoffs between Indian and Chinese troops in recent years.
- Arunachal Pradesh:** This northeastern Indian state is claimed by China as part of its territory and has been a major point of contention between the two countries.

How is the LAC different from the Line of Control with Pakistan?



- The LoC emerged from the 1948 ceasefire line negotiated by the UN after the Kashmir War.
- It was designated as the LoC in 1972, following the Shimla Agreement between the two countries. It is delineated on a map signed by DGMOs of both armies and has the international sanctity of a legal agreement.
- The LAC, is only a concept and it is not agreed upon by the two countries, neither delineated on a map or demarcated on the ground.



Recent Diplomatic Engagements

- The recent meeting of heads of states of **India and China** on the sidelines of the **BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia**, marking their **first bilateral talks in five years**.
- Both leaders emphasised the importance of **maintaining peace along the LAC** and agreed on the need for **mutual trust, respect, and sensitivity** in their interactions.
- The recent agreement, as reported, involves the **restoration of patrolling rights** in the **Depsang Plains and Demchok in Ladakh**, areas that have been flashpoints in the ongoing conflict.
- It is seen as a **first concrete step** towards restoring the **pre-2020 status quo ante**. Additionally, agreements have been reached in other sectors along the LAC, including Arunachal Pradesh.

Significance

- **Border Stability:** The situation along the India-China border remains a critical issue. Despite recent diplomatic engagements, the border situation is described as 'generally stable' but still requires careful management.

- Both countries have agreed to put the boundary issue in an 'appropriate position' and promote its transition to 'normalised management'.
- **Economic and Strategic Interests:** Beyond the border disputes, China and India have significant economic and strategic interests that necessitate cooperation.
 - Both countries are key members of the **BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)**, and their cooperation is vital for regional stability and economic growth.
 - It opens up diplomatic space for India as it navigates its relationships with major global powers, including Russia and the West.
- **Political Engagement:** A potential meeting between Indian Prime Minister and Chinese President on the sidelines of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** summit could further solidify this agreement and outline future political and economic engagements.

Challenges Ahead

- **Implementation:** The disengagement process must be followed by de-escalation and de-induction, which will be a slow and complex process requiring constant vigilance.
- **Trust Deficit:** The relationship between India and China has been marred by a significant trust deficit. Building confidence and ensuring compliance with the agreement will be critical.
- **Broader Issues:** The border issue is just one aspect of the complex India-China relationship. Broader issues, including trade imbalances and geopolitical rivalries, need to be addressed to achieve lasting peace and stability.
 - Since the 1980s, India and China have sought peaceful resolution of their boundary dispute. **Informal summits** between leaders, like those in **Wuhan (2018) and Chennai (2019)**, emphasised **strategic communication and cooperation**.
 - The unresolved boundary issue remains a point of contention, leading to occasional tensions.

Conclusion and Way Ahead

- The India-China agreement to restore patrolling rights and begin the disengagement process is a welcome step towards breaking the stalemate.
- It reflects the patience and fortitude of India's diplomatic and security establishments.
- While recent diplomatic efforts have shown promise, the path to a stable and cooperative relationship will require **sustained dialogue, mutual respect, and a commitment** to resolving longstanding issues.

National Dolphin Research Centre

The **National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC)** in Patna has faced inactivity months after its inauguration, underscoring significant challenges and initiatives in conserving the **Gangetic River Dolphin**.

- Despite its establishment, the center remains non-operational due to a lack of necessary equipment and skilled personnel.
- **NDRC** was inaugurated in 2024 and dedicated to researching and conserving the Gangetic River dolphin.
 - It is located strategically near the **Ganga River** and aims to facilitate studies on dolphin behaviour, habitat, and conservation threats.
- **Initiatives for Gangetic Dolphin Conservation:**
 - **Project Dolphin**
 - **Conservation Action Plan for the Gangetic Dolphin:** It was prepared by the **National Ganga River Basin Authority**, detailing specific actions for habitat protection, community involvement, and mitigation of human-dolphin conflicts.
 - The plan includes conducting surveys to assess dolphin populations and threats while promoting awareness among local communities.
 - **Protection Status:**
 - **IUCN: Endangered**
 - **Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972: Schedule I**
 - **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES): Appendix I**
 - **Convention on Migratory Species (CMS): Appendix I**

11th ADMM Meeting-Plus and Buddhism

Why in News?

Recently, India's Defence Minister addressed the **11th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) forum** held in **Vientiane, Lao PDR**.

- He emphasised the role of **Buddhist principles** in resolving conflicts and celebrated a decade of **India's Act East policy (AEP)**.

What are the Key Highlights of the 11th ADMM Meeting-Plus?

- **Freedom of Navigation:** India highlighted the need for adherence to the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982** for freedom of navigation and overflight in the **Indo-Pacific region**.
 - India advocated for a **Code of Conduct** that protects the **rights and interests** of nations that remain consistent with **international law**.
- **International Order:** India called for greater adoption of **Buddhist principles** of peaceful coexistence in a world that is increasingly **polarised into blocks and camps**.
- **Advocacy for Dialogue:** India's approach to **border disputes, trade agreements**, and other challenges demonstrates its belief in **open communication** to foster trust, understanding, and cooperation.
- **Asian Century:** India described the **21st century as the "Asian Century,"** emphasising ASEAN's economic dynamism and its **vibrant trade, commerce, and cultural exchanges**.
- **Decade of the Act East Policy:** India Highlighted the success of **India's Act East Policy**, which has strengthened ties with **ASEAN and Indo-Pacific nations** over the past decade.
 - The Act East Policy was launched in **November 2014** at the **12th ASEAN-India Summit 2014** held in Myanmar capital **Naypyidaw**.
- **Climate Change and Defence:** India proposed the development of an **ADMM-Plus Defence Strategy on Climate Change** to tackle interlinked security and environmental challenges.
- **Global Commons:** India underscored the importance of safeguarding **Global Commons**, which include **shared natural resources** beyond national boundaries.
 - Global Commons include **High Seas, Atmosphere, Antarctica and Outer Space**.

Note:

India quoted **Rabindranath Tagore's 1927 remark** during his Southeast Asia visit: "**I saw India everywhere, yet I couldn't recognise it.**"

- The statement symbolises the **deep and widespread cultural & historical ties** between India and SouthEast Asia.

What is ADMM-Plus Forum?

- **About:** It is a multilateral defence cooperation framework that brings together the defence ministers of the **10 ASEAN** member states, **8 Plus countries (dialogue partners), and Timor Leste**.
 - **ASEAN Members** include Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam.
 - **8 Dialogue partners** include **India**, China, **Russia**, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and the **US**.
- **Establishment:** The Inaugural ADMM-Plus was convened in **Ha Noi, Viet Nam, on 12th October 2010**.
 - Since **2017**, the ADMM-Plus **meets annually**, to allow enhanced dialogue and cooperation among **ASEAN and the Plus Countries**.
- **Focus Area:** The ADMM-Plus currently focuses on **seven areas** of practical cooperation, namely
 - Maritime security (MS)
 - Counter-terrorism (CT)
 - Humanitarian assistance and disaster management (HADR)
 - Peacekeeping operations (PKO)
 - Military medicine (MM)
 - Humanitarian mine action (HMA)
 - Cyber security (CS)
- **Experts' Working Groups (EWGs):** EWGs have been established to facilitate cooperation in these areas.
 - The EWGs are each **co-chaired** by **one ASEAN Member State** and **one Plus Country**, operating in a **three-year cycle**.

Spread of Buddhism to Southeast Asia

- **Cultural Crossroads:** Indian **traders, sailors, and monks** helped spread Buddhism to Southeast Asia, with ports like **Srivijaya (Sumatra, Indonesia) and Champa (Vietnam)** serving as key centres for learning and cultural exchange from the **7th to 13th centuries**.
- **Legitimacy of Rulers:** Southeast Asian rulers adopted Buddhism to strengthen their authority, aligning with figures like **Buddha or Hindu deities** to **legitimise their rule**.

- The **Srivijaya Empire**, centered in **Sumatra**, was a key player in the spread of **Buddhism**.
- **Fusion of Hinduism and Buddhism:** In Southeast Asia, **Buddhism** often **blended** with local beliefs and **Hinduism**.
 - Buddhist and Hindu temples in Southeast Asia, like **Angkor Wat (Cambodia)** and **Borobudur (Indonesia)**, showcase this fusion.
- **Cultural Diffusion:** Buddhism influenced the local cultures of places like **Bali and Java**, seen in their **dance, rituals, and temple architecture**.

What is the Role of Buddhist Ideals in Conflict Resolution?

- **Buddhist Perspectives:** Three vital **Buddhist perspectives** that can help us resolve or minimise conflict.
 - Everyone is a **Buddha**, worthy of **utmost respect**.
 - Dialogue is the **most powerful** means of creating **understanding and respect** among people.
 - Our **inner transformation** is the key to changing the world (reducing the **poison of anger** which includes **greed (lobha), hatred (dvesha), and delusion (moha)**).
- **Adhikaraṇasamathadhamma:** Buddhist text **Vinaya Pitaka** outlines **adhikaraṇasamathadhammā**, principles for **resolving monks' conflicts**.
 - It provides detailed guidelines for monks on **confession, reconciliation, resolving disputes, and healing splits** in the Sangha.
 - It applies to anyone seeking reconciliation of differences, whether **personal or political**.
- **Middle Path (Madhyam Marg):** Advocating **balanced policies** that consider all stakeholders' needs, fostering **equitable solutions** while avoiding extremes.
- **Interdependence (Pratītyasamutpāda):** Promoting **mutual understanding and shared responsibility** among nations to address global issues like **climate change and resource conflicts**.
- **Karuna (Compassion):** Prioritising **humanitarian aid** and addressing the root causes of suffering in conflict zones, such as **poverty and inequality**.

What is India's Act East Policy (AEP)?

- **About:** India's **AEP** is a strategic initiative aimed at strengthening India's engagement with the countries of **Southeast Asia, East Asia, and the broader Indo-Pacific region**.
 - It evolves from the **Look East Policy, 1992**, focusing on **proactive engagement** to boost economic growth, regional security, and cultural exchanges.



- **Strategic Partnerships:** India has upgraded its relations to **strategic partnerships** with several key countries in the region, including **Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Australia, and Singapore.**
- **Regional Engagement:** India is actively involved in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), **East Asia Summit (EAS), the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC),** Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), **Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC),** and **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).**
- **Infrastructure, and Connectivity:** Major infrastructure projects include the **Kaladan Multi-modal Transit Transport Project, India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project, Rhi-Tiddim Road Project, and Border Haats.**
- **Security Cooperation:** There is a shared commitment between India and ASEAN to upholding **international maritime laws** and norms and promoting regional stability.
- **Northeast India:** Efforts focus on improving connectivity between **Northeast India and ASEAN** through trade, cultural exchanges, and infrastructure development.
 - **India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway (Asian trilateral highway)** will connect **India (Moreh, Manipur) and Thailand (Mae Sot)** via Myanmar and is planned to be extended to **Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.**



India - Myanmar - Thailand Trilateral Highway



Conclusion

India's participation in the **11th ADMM-Plus** highlights its commitment to **regional peace, security, and cooperation**. Emphasising **Buddhist principles for conflict resolution**, the Act East Policy's success, and climate change defence strategies reflect India's broader vision for a **peaceful, integrated, and sustainable** Indo-Pacific region.