India – U.S Ties on Indo-Pacific Region

Why in news?

Donald Trump's inauguration as US President is a significant event in American political history and global geopolitics, especially in the Indo-Pacific region.

What is Indo-Pacific region?

- The ***Indo-Pacific region*** is a geostrategic area encompassing the Indian and Pacific Oceans, bordering countries, ***East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and parts of Oceania,*** including key regions.



Indo-Pacific Nations Overview

- **East Asia -** China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan
- **Southeast Asia -** Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Philippines.
- **South Asia-** India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh.
- **Oceania -** Australia**,** New Zealand, Pacific Island nations**.**
- **Other Stakeholders -**US, European nations for strategic interests.

What are the significance of the Indo-Pacific Region?

- **Hosts world's largest economies**- China, India, and Japan. Contains vital global trade routes like the South China Sea and Strait of Malacca.
- **Rich in natural resources** - Fisheries, energy reserves, and minerals.
- **Strategic Importance** - Center of power competition, especially between the U.S.

and China. Home to major military flashpoints.
- Focuses on countering security challenges and promoting a free, open, rules-based Indo-Pacific.
- **Maritime Security** - Priorities include ensuring freedom of navigation and addressing piracy, illegal fishing, and environmental threats.
- **Technological and Political Dynamics** - Hub for technological innovation and infrastructure development.
- Nations often align with U.S. or China in strategic alliances

What are the Major Agreements and Frameworks for the Indo-Pacific?

Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)

- **Origin** - Proposed by Japan, adopted by US.
- **Core Principles** - Promote free, open, rules-based order.
- Commitment to freedom of navigation and overflight in international water.
- Ensures sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- Addresses disputes peacefully under international law (UNCLOS)

Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)

- **Launched -** In 2022 by the US.
- **Involves 14 countries**- India, Japan, Australia & Southeast Asia.
- **Key Pillars**- Trade, Supply Chain Resilience, Clean Energy, Decarbonization, Taxation, Anti-Corruption.
- **Aims** - To establish modern economic framework without traditional free trade agreement.

Quad Security Dialogue

- **Members -** US, India, Japan, Australia.
- **Aims** - To counter China's influence.
- **Key focus areas** -Maritime security, infrastructure, vaccine production, cybersecurity, critical technologies, climate change.

ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific (AOIP)

- **Initiated**- By Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).
- **Focus areas** - Maritime, connectivity, sustainable development.
- **Aligns**- With international laws like UNCLOS.
- **Significance** - Encourages a central role for ASEAN amid U.S.-China rivalry.

Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements

- **AUKUS** - A trilateral security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, focusing on defense technology, including nuclear-powered submarines.
- **India-Japan-Australia Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)** - Aimed at reducing dependency on China by diversifying supply chains in critical industries.

What is India's Role in Indo-Pacific Cooperation?

- **Participated in Quad** - (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) with members from India, U.S., Japan, and Australia.
- **Advocates peaceful initiatives -** While countering aggressive regional postures.
- **Aligns with ASEAN's Outlook on** - The Indo-Pacific (AOIP) for inclusivity and cooperation.
- **Secures critical sea**- Lanes for global trade and operates Information Fusion Centre (IFC-IOR).
- **Collaborates** - With Japan, Australia, and U.S. on infrastructure, maritime security, renewable energy, defense ties, and IPEF cooperation.

U.S. Strategy in Indo-Pacific: Key Pillars

- **Rules-Based Order** - Advocates for freedom of navigation and peaceful dispute resolution under international law.
- **Strengthening Alliances** -Focuses on security, infrastructure, and emerging technologies.
- **Countering China** - Opposes militarization of the South China Sea and BRI.
- **Economic Engagement** - Builds resilient supply chains, clean energy, and fair trade practices through IPEF.
- **Security and Defense**- Advances defense through AUKUS and increased naval deployments.
- **Sustainable Development**- Promotes climate adaptation, sustainable energy, and transparent infrastructure projects.

Major Initiatives

- **Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)** - Ensures transparency and sovereignty through partnerships with Quad nations.
- **Blue Dot Network** - Certifies sustainable infrastructure with Japan and Australia.
- **Malabar Exercises** - Naval drills with Quad members for maritime security.

What are the Major Challenges In Indo-Pacific?

- **Geopolitical Tensions**- China's rise raises territorial disputes, freedom of navigation, and military build-ups. Territorial disputes between China and neighboring countries remain unresolved.
- **Security Concerns-** Military rivalries, nuclear proliferation ((notably North Korea) and terrorism and extremism.
- **Economic Disparities and Competition-** Rapidly growing economies and significant poverty. Trade disruptions like the U.S.-China trade war.
- **Climate Change** - Rising sea levels, extreme weather, and environmental degradation threaten infrastructure and biodiversity.
- **Human Rights and Governance**- Criticism for human rights violations and ongoing humanitarian crises.
- **Regional Cooperation and Multilateralism -** Competing alliances like the U.S.-led Quad and China's SCO increase regional tensions.

- **Technology and Cybersecurity -**Cybersecurity threats and competition in 5G and AI.

What lies ahead?

- The Indo-Pacific region is crucial for global stability, security, and prosperity.
- Addressing its challenges requires a comprehensive, collaborative approach, including diplomacy, multilateral cooperation, and investment in sustainable development and technology, balancing competing interests and promoting peace and mutual growth.

Reference

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