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## Current Affairs - 23 September 2024

### INDIA NEEDS A NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

#### Context

- In an increasingly complex global environment, India finds itself at a critical juncture, balancing its ambitions to become a \$4 trillion economy while facing evolving geopolitical challenges.
- As old adversaries grow stronger and new alliances remain tentative, the demand for a comprehensive National Security Strategy (NSS) is becoming more urgent.
- Therefore, it is important to examine the various dimensions of national security, highlighting the complexities involved in creating a robust and comprehensive NSS for India.

#### India's Need for a Comprehensive National Security Strategy

- **Geopolitical Challenges: A Shifting Power Dynamic**
  - One of the most immediate drivers of India's need for an NSS is its volatile geopolitical neighbourhood.
  - India shares borders with two nuclear-armed adversaries, Pakistan, and China, both of which have significant military and strategic capabilities.
  - China has rapidly expanded its influence in South Asia through economic investments, infrastructure projects under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and an assertive military presence along the disputed Line of Actual Control (LAC).
- **The China Factor**
  - The frequent border skirmishes with China such as the 2020 Galwan Valley clash highlight the urgent need for India to rethink its defence strategy, ensuring that it can respond swiftly to military provocations.
  - Beyond these immediate challenges, China's broader global influence poses a long-term strategic threat to India.



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## Current Affairs - 23 September 2024

- China's dominance in economic, technological, and military fields requires India to carefully calibrate its foreign policy, striking a balance between competition and cooperation.
- Without a comprehensive NSS, India risks being overshadowed by China's rise and may find itself reacting to global developments rather than shaping them proactively.
- **India's Precarious Relationship with Pakistan**
  - On the western front, **India's relationship with Pakistan remains fraught with tension**, primarily driven by historical conflicts and ongoing disputes over Kashmir.
  - **While the immediate military threat from Pakistan may have diminished compared to the past**, Pakistan's proxy warfare through non-state actors and its strategic relationship with China complicate India's national security calculus.
  - Moreover, **Pakistan's opaque defence budgeting, its close ties with China**, and its dependence on foreign military assistance mean that India cannot afford to ignore this front.



### GOA MARITIME SYMPOSIUM 2024

The Indian Navy is hosting the fifth edition of the Goa Maritime Symposium at Naval War College, Goa.

- It is a forum for **fostering collaborative thinking**, cooperation, and mutual understanding between **India and key maritime nations** of the **Indian Ocean Region**.
- **Theme:** The theme for the event is **Common Maritime Security Challenges** in the Indian Ocean Region: Progressing Lines of Efforts to Mitigate Dynamic Threats such as illegal and unregulated fishing and other illegal maritime activities.
- It will be participated by the representatives from **12 Indian Ocean Littoral countries**- Bangladesh, Comoros, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Observers from Kenya and Tanzania



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## Current Affairs - 23 September 2024

### Goa Maritime Symposium (GMS)

- It was conceptualised and instituted by the **Indian Navy in 2016**.
- It is a forum for fostering collaborative thinking, cooperation and mutual understanding between India and key maritime nations of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- The symposium is **conducted biennially** by the Naval War College (NWC), Goa.

### INDO-PACIFIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK FOR PROSPERITY



**Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity** is a regional arrangement to build cooperation and economic integration in the Indo-Pacific region. It was launched in **May 2022**.

- It is intended to **advance resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness and competitiveness** for member economies.
- It will seek to complement and build on existing regional architecture and support the global rules-based trading system.
- **Member countries:** It has **14 regional partners** – Australia, Brunei, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, the United States and Vietnam.
- The economic framework broadly rests on **four pillars: Trade, Supply chain resilience, Clean Energy, Decarbonization, and Infrastructure Taxes and anti-corruption measures**
- The IPEF is **not a Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**, but it allows members to negotiate the parts they want to.
- **India and IPEF:**
  - India has been actively participating in the IPEF, but not in all pillars.
  - India has decided to opt out of the trade pillar of the IPEF as most issues promoted by the IPEF do not align with India's trade policies.



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- India ratified the agreement on **supply chain resilience (Pillar II)** in February 2024 and has maintained an observer status in the Pillar-I.
- India signed and exchanged the first-of-its-kind agreements focused on **Clean Economy (Pillar III), Fair Economy (Pillar IV)**.
- The agreement on clean economy intends to accelerate efforts of IPEF partners towards **energy security**, GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions mitigation, developing innovative ways of reducing dependence on fossil fuel energy and promoting technical cooperation.

### KEY FACTS ABOUT GREATER ONE-HORNED RHINO



- The greater one-horned rhino, also known as **Indian rhinoceros**, is the **largest of the three Asian rhinos** and, together with African white rhinos, is the largest of all rhino species.
- Scientific Name: *Rhinoceros unicornis*
- **Distribution:**
  - It can be found in **India and Nepal**, particularly in the foothills of the Himalayas.
  - In the past, Greater one-horned rhinos roamed freely in the floodplains and forests alongside the Brahmaputra, Ganges, and Indus River valley.
  - **Kaziranga National Park in Assam, India, contains the largest population (2,401).**
- **Habitat:** Greater one-horned rhinos are **semi-aquatic** and often take up residence in **swamps, forests, riversides**, and anywhere that is near nutritious mineral licks.
- **Features:**
  - The largest of the Asian rhinos, male Indian rhinos weigh approximately 2,200 kg (nearly 4,840 pounds) and range in height from 170 to 186 cm (67 to 73 inches) and are 368 to 380 cm (145 to 150 inches) long.

## Current Affairs - 23 September 2024

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- It is identified by a **single black horn** about 8-25 inches long and a **grey-brown hide with skin folds**, which gives it an **armor-plated appearance**.
  - The species is **solitary**, except for females with small calves. Males maintain loosely defended territories.
  - The rhino is **primarily a grazer**. Its **diet** consists **almost entirely of grasses**, but it also eats leaves, branches, fruit, and aquatic plants.
  - **Conservation Status:**
    - **IUCN Red List: Vulnerable**
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### VISIT OF PM MODI TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

#### Why in news?

PM Modi is on official visit to the United States of America. During this visit, he met with the President of the USA, Joseph Biden on the sidelines of the Quad Summit in Delaware.

In a special gesture, President Biden hosted the meeting at his home in Wilmington.

#### Key highlights of the visit

- During the meeting, the following documents were adopted:
  - **Joint Fact Sheet:** The United States and India Continue to Expand Comprehensive and Global Strategic Partnership
  - **Roadmap For U.S.-India Initiative to Build Safe and Secure Global Clean Energy Supply Chains**

#### Key highlights of the Joint Fact Sheet

- **India to launch national security semiconductor fabrication plant**
  - Under a transformative collaboration with the United States, India is set to launch its inaugural national security semiconductor fabrication plant.
  - This plant is designed to produce chips for military applications and critical telecommunications.



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## Current Affairs - 23 September 2024

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- It will be supported by the India Semiconductor Mission and involves a strategic technology partnership between Bharat Semi, 3rdiTech, and the US Space Force.
- Named 'Shakti', the fab will concentrate on producing infrared, gallium nitride, and silicon carbide semiconductors.
- **Establishment of the GF Kolkata Power Centre**
  - Both the leaders acknowledged efforts to build resilient and secure semiconductor supply chains, which includes establishment of **GlobalFoundries'** (GF).
  - **GF Kolkata Power Center** will contribute to semiconductor supply chains and innovation in zero/low-emission vehicles, AI, and connected devices.
- **NASA and ISRO to conduct scientific research onboard the International Space Station**
  - The Leaders welcomed the first joint NASA-ISRO research project aboard the International Space Station planned for 2025.
- **Establishment of the U.S.-India Global Challenges Institute**
  - The establishment of the U.S.-India Global Challenges Institute, mobilizing \$90+ million over five years, will support high-impact R&D partnerships between U.S. and Indian universities.
  - Seventeen new awards for research in AI and quantum technology were announced through the U.S.-India Science and Technology Endowment Fund.
- **Joint Funding Initiatives in Science and Research**
  - A combined \$15 million in funding was announced to support U.S.-India joint research in next-gen telecommunications, semiconductors, AI, and sustainable technologies.
- **Next Generation Defense Partnership**
  - Both the leaders praised progress in U.S.-India defense ties, including India's procurement of 31 MQ-9B drones and co-production deals for jet engines and munitions. The Leaders applauded the enhancing the mutual supply of defense goods and services.



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- **Catalyzing the Clean Energy Transition**
    - Both sides celebrated U.S.-India collaboration on clean energy, launching a roadmap to expand safe energy supply chains.
  - **Empowering Future Generations and Promoting Global Health and Development**
    - Both sides celebrated the new U.S.-India Drug Policy Framework for the 21st Century and its accompanying Memorandum of Understanding.
      - This will deepen collaboration to disrupt the illicit production and international trafficking of synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals, and deepen a holistic public health partnership.
  - **Repatriation of 297 Indian antiquities from the U.S. to India in 2024**
    - In July 2024, the U.S. and India signed a **Cultural Property Agreement** to implement the 1970 Convention on preventing the illicit import, export, and transfer of cultural property.
    - This marked the culmination of years of collaboration between the two nations. As part of this effort, 297 Indian antiquities were repatriated from the U.S. to India in 2024.
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### INDIA'S DATA CENTRE AMBITIONS

A **data centre** refers to a designated space within a building or a set of architectural configurations designed to accommodate computer systems and their associated components, including networking and storage systems.

#### **The Indian Data Centre Sector:**

- **Data centre segments in India:** It is categorised into two main segments: captive and outsourced (including colocation and hosting), and further divided by IT infrastructure type, which includes servers, storage, and enterprise networking.
  - **Market overview:**
    - The Indian data centre market is currently in a **dynamic phase**, marked by impressive growth and substantial government support.
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## Current Affairs - 23 September 2024

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- **In 2023**, India's data centre market achieved **revenues** of approx. US\$7.44 billion, with network infrastructure emerging as the dominant segment, valued at US\$5.09 billion.
- **In 2022**, the **data centre capacity in India** was at **637 MW**. India is ranked the **13th largest data centre market** in the world with 138 data centres.
- Additionally, 45 new data centres with a combined 13 million square feet and 1,015 MW of capacity are scheduled to be developed by the end of 2025.
- **Government support:**
  - **Data centre policy:** To encourage investment and accelerate India's current rate of data centre expansion, the Indian government is formulating a data centre policy.
  - **Salient provisions of the policy:**
    - Incorporating data centres under the Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA), Creating Data Centre Facilitation Units (DCFU),
    - Creating Data Centre Economic Zones, and
    - Creating a special category code for data centres under the **National Building Code of India**.
- **Outlook:**
  - India's data centre sector is set for growth, driven by a thriving digital economy, widespread internet access, and the transition to **5G networks** from 4G.
  - However, **emerging regulatory frameworks require data localisation**, which will impact demand in the data centre market.
- **According to the S&P Global research,**
  - India currently has a leased **data centre capacity of 1-3 GW**, which is the highest compared to other emerging markets like Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.
  - India is already home to data centres set up by big tech companies like **Google, Microsoft, and Amazon**.





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## Current Affairs - 23 September 2024

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### WHAT IS PASHMINA SHAWL?



- **Originating from Kashmir**, these shawls are known for their exceptional craftsmanship and the **use of fine Ladakhi Cashmere wool**.
- The word "Pashmina" is derived from the Persian word "Pashm," which means "soft gold" or "soft wool."
- A **cashmere wool** itself is **obtained from the undercoat of the Changthangi goat** (*Capra aegagrus hircus*), also known as the **Pashmina goat**, which is **native to the high altitudes of the Himalayas** in regions like **Ladakh in India, Nepal, and Tibet**.
- These goats develop a **unique undercoat to withstand the harsh winters**, and it is this undercoat that is meticulously collected to create Pashmina shawls.
- **Kashmir's Pashmina** has earned **G.I certification or G.I Tag** due to the unique traditional process used by local artisans in the Kashmir valley.

#### **Process:**

- **Cashmere wool**, known for its **exceptional fineness and warmth**, is spun into yarn using traditional spinning wheels, a practice that has been passed down through generations.
  - **Once the yarn is ready**, skilled artisans begin the intricate **process of weaving**, either by handloom or traditional wooden looms.
  - **Each shawl is meticulously crafted**, with patterns ranging from delicate floral motifs to intricate paisley designs, reflecting the rich cultural heritage of Kashmir.
  - The **weaving process can take weeks or even months** to complete, depending on the complexity of the design and the skill of the artisan.
  - **Natural dyes from plants and minerals** in the region **decorate the shawl** with captivating colours.
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