

US-CHINA Relationship

- The most consequential outcome was the decision to restore **military to military communications** between the two nuclear weapons states, critical to prevent **potentially catastrophic miscalculations**.
- The respective defence forces will now resume regular exchange of information under the **Military Maritime Consultative Agreement** that started in 1998.
- A self ruled island state, **Taiwan's status remains a bone** of contention between the world's biggest superpowers, with **China pursuing the goal of its reunification into the mainland**.
- Under the **"one China" policy**, Washington accepts Beijing as the only legitimate government of China and acknowledges, but does not endorse, Taiwan as part of that country, and provides concrete security guarantees under the Taiwan Relations Act.
- More specifically, Washington and Beijing are leveraging their own areas of strength to inflict maximum damage on the other.
- A case in point is the sweeping controls the Biden administration enacted in October 2022, further extended in October 2023, on exports of advanced computer chips for the manufacture of semiconductors.
- The rationale behind the export bans is to undercut Beijing's strides in AI and supercomputing, which have

powered its supersonic and nuclear weapons capability, which Washington views as detrimental to its security interests.

- On top of the ban on tech exports comes the executive order Biden issued in August prohibiting **U.S. investments in the high-tech arena**.
- **China has hit back in kind, clamping a ban in July on gallium and germanium exports, raw materials used in the production of microchips and weapons systems.**
- These are the items listed in the **U.S. inventory of materials critical for economic and national security**.
- Additionally, curbs were imposed in October on exports of various types of graphite, a vital mineral for the production of electric vehicle batteries, where **China enjoys dominance in the global supply chain**.
- The Hindu

Ethics committee and privilege committee

What is the role of ethics committee?

- The ethics committee was constituted in 2000, to **oversee the moral and ethical conduct of members** and examine cases of 'unethical conduct' referred to it.
- The Committee examines **complaints filed against members of the House by other members; outsiders through a member; or referred by the Speaker.**
- The Committee makes a prima facie inquiry before **deciding to examine a complaint and presents its report to**

Current Affairs 7th December 2023 by Saurabh Pandey

the Speaker, who places it before the House for consideration.

- It must be noted that the term 'unethical' is not defined.
- It is left to the Committee to decide whether any act is unethical or not.

What are privileges committees?

- The privileges committee or special inquiry committee examines the more serious accusations against a member.
- In 1951, a special committee found a member guilty of promoting a business interest by putting questions in return for financial benefits.
- It was again a special committee that inquired into the 'cash for query' scam of 2005 where 10 MPs of Lok Sabha were recommended for expulsion

Is an expulsion constitutional?

- The Constitution under Article 101 lists down the grounds for vacation of a seat by an MP.
- It includes voluntary resignation, disqualification and continuous absence from the House for 60 sittings.
- Expulsion is not mentioned explicitly in the Constitution. However, the Supreme Court has provided conflicting judgments in this regard.
- In **Raja Ram Pal versus Hon'ble Speaker (2007)**, it upheld the power of Parliament to expel its members for breach of privilege by interpreting

Article 101 to include expulsion as a ground.

- But in **Amarinder Singh versus Special committee, Punjab Vidhan Sabha (2010)**, the Supreme Court held expulsion by the State Assembly as unconstitutional.
- It held that such scenarios would frustrate the objectives of Parliamentary democracy

How to reconcile privileges of the House and democratic representation?

- The privileges of the House developed in medieval Britain to protect the House of Commons from an authoritarian King.
- It is important to preserve the dignity and privilege of the House.
- It is equally imperative, if not more in a modern democracy, to ensure that democratic representation is not prejudiced for political reasons.
- It must be noted that Parliamentary Committee proceedings are not as detailed as a judicial case that is conducted as per the Evidence Act.

The Hindu

Conflict in Myanmar

- Conflict intensifies between armed resistance groups and the Myanmar military in the Chin, Shan and Sagaing provinces, India reminded Myanmar to return to the path of federal democracy.
- Following intense fighting, thousands of Myanmarese nationals including

Current Affairs 7th December 2023 by Saurabh Pandey

former military personnel recently sought refuge in India

- “The Indian side said it continued to support people centric socio-economic developmental projects, including connectivity projects and projects under the Rakhine State Development Programme and Border Area Development Programme for the benefit of the people of Myanmar.

The Hindu

Garba in Unesco

- Gujarat’s traditional dance form ‘Garba’ was on Wednesday included in the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
- The popular dance form is the 15th cultural item from India to make it to the UNESCO list. Kolkata’s Durga Puja was the last one added two years ago.
- The inclusion has been made under the provisions of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.
- The international cultural body described the ‘Garba’ as a ritualistic and devotional dance performed in India.
 - **Climate change and Health**
- **Heat stress. Lung damage from wildfire smoke.**
- The spread of disease carrying mosquitoes into new regions as temperatures rise.

- These are just some ways public health has been compromised by climate change a focus for the first time ever at the annual U.N. climate summit COP28

- From 2030, experts expect that malnutrition, malaria and dengue, diarrhoea, and heat stress will push global death tolls up by 250,000 per year, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

- Mosquitoes that carry viruses including dengue, malaria, West Nile, and Zika are shifting into new parts of the world as warmer temperatures and heavy rains create more hospitable conditions for them to breed.

- Climate change is also having an unpredictable impact on malaria, with 5 million more cases registered in 2022.

- Similarly, after decades of progress against cholera, an intestinal infection spread by contaminated food and water, case numbers are rising again, including in countries that had all but extirpated the disease.

- Diarrhoea also receives a boost from climate change, via increasingly erratic rainfall. It’s the world’s second leading cause of death among children under 5, claiming the lives of more than half a million kids every year.

- Heat stress is projected to impact hundreds of millions of people as temperatures continue to climb through the next few decades.

The Hindu

Current Affairs 7th December 2023 by Saurabh Pandey

Trade and agriculture product and environment impact

- **increasing demand for agricultural products is leading to significant social and environmental consequences worldwide.**
- The expansion of international trade has created global supply chains, directly linking consumers to geographically distant impacts, including carbon emissions, biodiversity loss, freshwater depletion, soil degradation and labour rights issues all of which have local, regional, and global relevance.
- Due to its vast size and consumer market, India is a global anchor of the trade in agricultural products.
- This has led to an **increasing demand as well as supply of these products.**
- **Large land areas in India** are used to service the international demand for grains, fruits, and vegetables, among other products, which puts pressure on national soil and water resources.
- At the same time, India's vast consumer market means that large amounts of land, even outside its borders, are used to satisfy domestic demand

Food based impact accounting

- The expansion of such imports has contributed to increasing the environmental pressure in the exporting countries.
- Recent studies have shown that a substantial share of the total ecological impact is due to the

displacement of environmental damage through international trade.

- The current paradigm in measuring impacts and allocating responsibility is based on a **production based accounting method**: it measures impacts in the place where the products are produced.

Consumption based accounting

- Consumption based accounting accounts for **impact at the point of consumption**, attributing all the social and environmental impact that occurred during production and trade to the final products and to the eventual consumers.
- That is, the approach urges the consumer (whether social groups or countries) to **accept responsibility for the embodied or 'virtual' impacts of the product that is being consumed.**

What is the supply perspective?

- From a supply perspective, the proponents of consumption based accounting claim that it can encourage cleaner production since producer countries are implicitly encouraged to implement strategies that lower the environmental footprint of their exports.

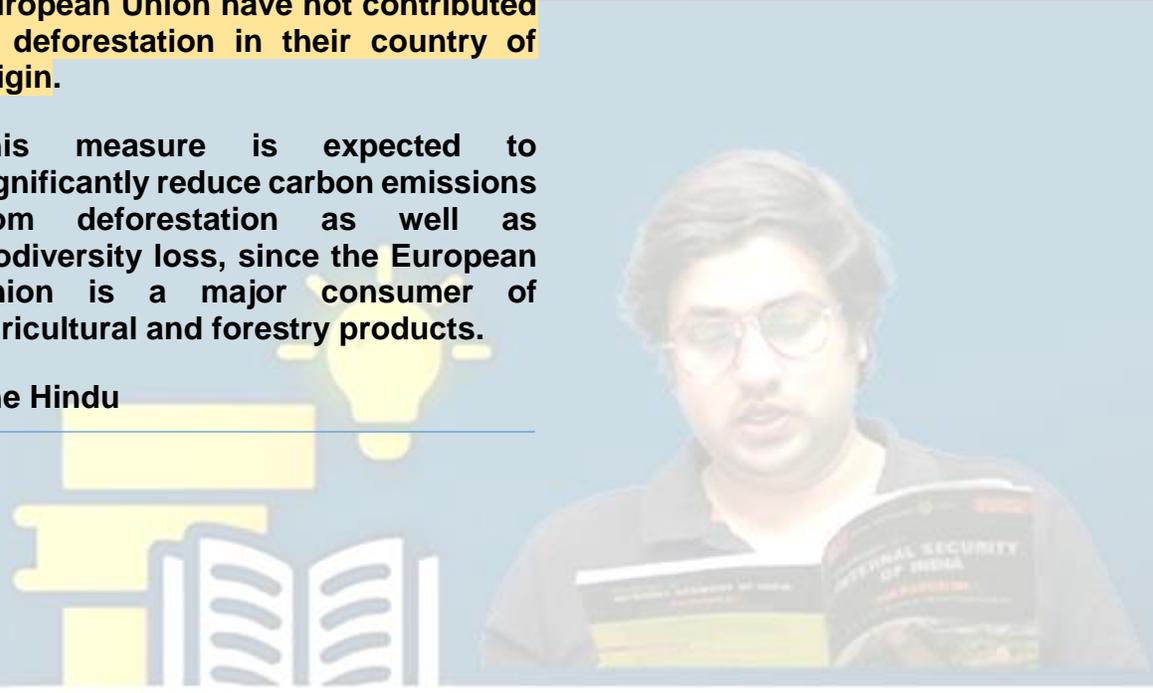
Benefits of environmental action?

- The application of this approach to **estimate carbon emissions, in the form of embodied emissions, and water use, in the form of virtual water**, has also been around in the scientific literature for some time, but has only recently made inroads into policymaking.

Current Affairs 7th December 2023 by Saurabh Pandey

- For example, the European Commission recently initiated steps to ensure products consumed in the European Union have not contributed to deforestation in their country of origin.
- This measure is expected to significantly reduce carbon emissions from deforestation as well as biodiversity loss, since the European Union is a major consumer of agricultural and forestry products.

The Hindu



SAURABH PANDEY

— CSE —

(CIVIL SERVICES EXAMINATION)

FROM BASICS TO UPSC BRILLIANCE