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Qatar signs world's 'longest' gas supply deal with China

Relevance: Prelims & GS Mains II; International Relations

Why in news?

- QatarEnergy announced a 27-year natural gas supply deal with China on Monday, calling it the "longest" ever seen as it strengthened ties with Asia at a time when Europe is scrambling for alternative sources.
- Asian countries led by China, Japan and South Korea are the main market for Qatar's gas, which is increasingly being sought by European countries since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
- Negotiations with European countries have struggled as Germany and others have baulked at signing the sort of long-term deals made with Asian nations.

Details of deal

- The state energy company will send four million tonnes of liquefied natural gas annually from its new North Field East project to China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (Sinopec).
- China is the first country to seal a deal for North Field East.
- Qatar is the world's largest LNG supplier and China is the world's largest LNG importer.

Other facts

- The Chinese company's chairman revealed that it had also requested a full share of the North Field South project that is dominated by Western energy giants.
- TotalEnergies of France, Shell of Britain and U.S. giant ConocoPhillips will share the 25% foreign stake in the field.

India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (Ind-Aus ECTA)

Relevance: Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations



Why in news?

- IndAus ECTA was signed on 2 April 2022. It is undergoing the ratification by legislatures in both the countries.
- The Agreement will enter into force shortly, on a mutually convenient date once both the sides have completed their domestic processes.

Benefits expected

- Duties on 100 percent tariff lines would be eliminated by Australia under the landmark India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (Ind-Aus ECTA).
- The ECTA would give a big boost to several sectors of the economy, especially textiles, gems and jewellery and pharmaceuticals.
- Major gain is expected in Pharmaceuticals sector, where Drugs approved in other developed jurisdiction will get fast track approval for patented, generic and biosimilar medicines.
- Moreover, since the labour-intensive sectors will be benefitted, it is expected to create an additional employment of at least 10 lakhs jobs in India.
- The Agreement would also open new opportunities for the service sector in India and would immensely benefit students by offering them an opportunity to work in Australia. Annual Visa quota of 1800 is to be instituted for India Yoga teachers and Chefs.

Benefits expected (Contd.)

- Around 96% of Australia's exports are raw materials and intermediate products which will allow many Indian industries to get cheaper raw materials and make them competitive.
- ECTA provides for an institutional mechanism to encourage and improve trade between the two countries.
- It is expected that with this agreement, the total bilateral trade will cross US\$ 45-50 bn in 5 years from existing US\$ 31 bn. India's Merchandise Exports is likely to increase by 10 billion by 2026-27.

Indian Government to assume the Chair of Global Partnership on AI (GPAI)

Relevance: Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Orgs.



Why in news?

- India will take over the chair of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), an international initiative to support responsible and human-centric development and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- AI is expected to add USD \$967 Bn to Indian economy by 2035 and USD 450–500 billion to India's GDP by 2025, accounting for 10% of the country's USD 5 trillion GDP target.

About GPAI

- GPAI is a congregation of 25 member countries, including the US, the UK, EU, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, and Singapore.
- India had in 2020 joined the group as a founding member.
- The Minister of State for Electronics & Information Technology and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar represented India at the GPAI meeting held in Tokyo on November 21, 2022 for the symbolic takeover from France, which is the outgoing Council Chair.
- In the election to the Council Chair, India had received more than a two-third majority of first-preference votes.

About GPAI

- GPAI is a first-of-its-type **initiative for evolving better understanding of challenges and opportunities around AI** using the experience and diversity of participating countries, the alliance will look to bridge the gap between theory and practice by supporting advanced research and applied activities on AI-related priorities.
- It **works in collaboration with partners and international organisations, leading experts from industry, civil society, governments, and academia to collaborate to promote responsible evolution of AI** and guide the responsible development and use of AI, grounded in human rights, inclusion, diversity, innovation, and economic growth.

INDO-PACIFIC REGIONAL DIALOGUE 2022 (IPRD)

Relevance: Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Orgs.



Why in news?

- The IPRD is an apex level international annual conference of Indian Navy, and is principal manifestation of Navy's engagement at the strategic-level.
- The fourth edition of IPRD is scheduled to be held from 23 to 25 Nov 22. The theme of IPRD-2022 is 'Operationalising the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)'.

About IPRD

- The National Maritime Foundation (NMF) is Navy's knowledge partner and chief organizer of each edition of the event.
- The first two editions of IPRD were held in 2018 and 2019 respectively at New Delhi. IPRD 2020 was cancelled due to Covid-19 outbreak. The third edition of IPRD was held in 2021 in online mode.
- The IPRD seeks to foster exchange of ideas and promote deliberations on regionally relevant maritime issues.
- Being a Track 1.5 event that aims to encourage discussions on public policy, the IPRD endeavors for a balanced representation from government and non-government agencies and institutions.

About NMF

- Located in India's capital, **New Delhi**, NMF is amongst India's foremost **think-tanks**.
- It is unique because it is the **only think-tank in India** that concentrates **solely upon India's maritime domain**.
- However, the **focus of its research is holistic and comprehensive** and is NOT restricted to 'military maritime security' (hard security) alone.
- Instead, its research-faculty examines and analyses **the entire gamut of issues relevant to India's holistic maritime security**, seeking to provide India with freedom from manmade- and natural threats, as well as those that result from a combination of these — any or all of which could arise in-, from-, or through- the sea.
- Thus, in addition to military maritime security, its research also addresses a wide range of important economic-, socio-economic-, socio-cultural-, scientific-, legal-, and historical issues, all of which are critical to 'maritime India'.
- As a '**Track 1.5**' institution, it is a healthy mix of highly-qualified and experienced practitioners (by way of serving officers of the Indian Armed Forces) and civilian scholars.