



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 02-07-2025

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A triangular dynamic in South Asia's power politics

Syllabus: GS-2; International Relations

Context

- The complex US-India-Pakistan triangle reflects South Asia's evolving power dynamics, where strategic interests, ideological clashes, and historical baggage shape contemporary geopolitics.
- This triangular relationship remains crucial as all three nations navigate shifting alliances amid growing US-China rivalry and regional security challenges.

Introduction: The Triangular US-India-Pakistan Relationship

- The relationship between the **US, India, and Pakistan** is shaped by **strategic necessity, political ideologies, and historical legacies**.
- **President Trump's recent engagement** with Pakistan's Army Chief, **Asim Munir**, signals a **return to transactional diplomacy**.
- The US is shifting from **long-term strategic partnerships** to **short-term gains**, affecting its ties with India.

America's Pronounced Shift in Policy

- **Trump's first term** saw **strong criticism of Pakistan's dual policy** on terrorism, aligning with India's stance.
- **In his second term**, the US has **resumed security aid to Pakistan** (\$397M for F-16s), calling it a "**phenomenal partner**".
- The US now views Pakistan as a **strategic interlocutor** due to:
 - **Economic incentives**
 - **Personal rapport with Pakistan's military**
 - **Leverage in Afghanistan & China's regional influence**
- **India is concerned** as this shift undermines **counterterrorism cooperation** and **long-term US-India strategic alignment**.

India's Doctrinal Departure: From Restraint to Retaliation

- After the **Pahalgam terror attack**, India launched '**Operation Sindoor**', marking a shift from **strategic restraint** to **military retaliation**.
- **PM Modi's "new normal"** signals **willingness to cross previous thresholds** in responding to Pakistan-backed terrorism.
- India aims to **globally isolate Pakistan** and hold it accountable for supporting anti-India terror groups.

- **China's close ties with Pakistan** add to India's fears of a **two-front confrontation**.

Pakistan's Dual-Track Strategy

- **Military Consolidation:** Promotion of **Asim Munir** to **Field Marshal** reinforces **military dominance** in Pakistan's security policy.
- **Diplomatic Engagement:** Pakistan seeks to **revive international focus on Kashmir** and **strengthen ties with the US**.
- **Economic Maneuvering:** Pakistan is offering **trade deals, rare earth minerals, and business partnerships** to attract US interest.
- **Geopolitical Leverage:** Pakistan uses its **strategic location** (bordering Iran, Afghanistan, China) to remain **relevant to US interests**.

The US's Deliberate Ambivalence

- The US is **prioritizing trade and tariffs**, reducing focus on **India's role in the Indo-Pacific**.
- **India rejects third-party mediation** in Kashmir, while **Pakistan seeks US involvement** to keep the issue alive.
- Any US attempt to **"hyphenate" India and Pakistan** would **undermine India's global power aspirations** and **US-India strategic ties**.

What Drives Pakistan's Continued Relevance?

- **Geographic Advantage:** Pakistan's location near **Afghanistan, Iran, and China** makes it **strategically valuable** for US interests.
- **Personal Diplomacy:** Strong **military-to-military ties** with the US ensure continued **political and material support**.
- **Perception Management:** Pakistan projects itself as **indispensable** despite its **economic and military limitations**.

Conclusion: The Delicate Balancing Act

- The US must **navigate carefully** between **idealism, realism, and transactionalism** in South Asia.
- **India seeks principled partnerships**, while **Pakistan leverages short-term gains**.
- **Personality-driven US politics** may risk **long-term strategic ties with India**, favoring **transactional relations with Pakistan**.

Kombucha

Syllabus: GS-3: General Science –Health Science.

Context:

Kombucha can rebalance gut ecosystem in people with obesity.

Kombucha and Its Health Benefits

What is Kombucha?

- A **fermented, effervescent tea-based beverage** known for digestive and probiotic benefits.
- Classified as a **functional food**—supports **gut, metabolic, and immune health**.

Composition:

- **Base Ingredients:** Sweetened black/green tea + **SCOBY** (*Symbiotic Culture of Bacteria and Yeast*).
- Contains:
 - **Probiotics** (live bacteria & yeast)
 - **Polyphenols** (flavonoids & phenolic acids)
 - **Organic acids**, vitamins, antioxidants
 - **Trace alcohol** (by-product of fermentation)

Key Characteristics:

- **Tangy and naturally carbonated**
- **Shelf-stable** probiotic source
- **Adaptable** to local gut microbiota
- Increasingly **marketed in India** as a health drink

Health Benefits (As per Recent Study):

Gut Microbiome Modulation in Obesity:

- ↑ **Beneficial Bacteria:**
 - *Akkermansiaceae*: Linked to **insulin sensitivity**
 - *Prevotellaceae*: Associated with **lower inflammation**

➤ ↓ **Harmful Microbes:**

- *Ruminococcus gnavus*, *Dorea*: Linked to **metabolic disorders**

Fungal Balance:

- ↓ *Rhodotorula*, *Exophiala*: Fungi associated with **obesity and gut dysbiosis**

Gut Barrier & Immunity:

- Polyphenols **stimulate mucus secretion** → enhances **gut lining integrity**

Anti-inflammatory Potential:

- Microbiota changes linked to **reduced chronic low-grade inflammation**

INS Tamal

Syllabus: GS-3: Science and Technology – Defence Technology.

Context:

INS Tamal commissioned in Kaliningrad, marks end of foreign-built Indian Navy warships.



INS Tamal: Overview

- **Class & Series:**

- 8th stealth multi-role frigate in the *Krivak class* series from Russia.
- 2nd ship in the *Tushil class* – upgraded successors of *Talwar* and *Teg* class frigates (each having 3 ships).
- **Indian Indigenisation:**
 - Two similar ships of the *Tripur class* being built at Goa Shipyard Limited with *transfer of technology* and *design assistance* from Russia.
- **Motto:** '*Sarvada Sarvatra Vijaya*' – “Victorious Always Everytime”.

Key Features of INS Tamal

- **Specifications:**
 - Length: *125 meters*
 - Displacement: *3900 tonnes*
 - Stealth design for reduced radar signature.
- **Built by:** *Yantar Shipyard*, Kaliningrad, Russia.
 - *26% indigenous components* in construction.

Advanced Armaments & Equipment

- **Missiles & Weapons:**
 - Vertically Launched Surface-to-Air Missiles.
 - *BrahMos long-range cruise missile* – capable of targeting sea and land.
 - *Heavyweight torpedoes* for anti-submarine warfare.
 - *Urgent-attack anti-submarine rockets*.
- **Detection & Surveillance Systems:**
 - *Surface Surveillance Radar Complex*.
 - *HUMSA NG Mk II sonar*.
- **Aerial Support:**
 - Equipped to operate *Air Early Warning* and *Multi-Role Helicopters* from its deck.

Symbolism & Identity

- **Name Significance:**

- *Tamal* – named after the mythical sword used in combat by *Indra*, King of Gods.
- **Mascot:**
 - Represents a fusion of:
 - *Jambavant* – the Immortal Bear King from Indian mythology.
 - *Eurasian Brown Bear* – Russia's national animal.
 - Crew identifies as “*The Great Bears*”.

Operational Role

- **Deployment:**
 - Assigned to the *Western Fleet* under the *Western Naval Command* – known as the “Sword Arm” of the Indian Navy.

Begonia nyishiorum

Syllabus: GS-3; Biodiversity

Context

- A new species of flowering plant, *Begonia nyishiorum*, was discovered in Arunachal Pradesh’s **East Kameng district**, highlighting the Eastern Himalayas' rich but underexplored biodiversity.

Habitat and Features

- **Altitude Range:** Grows on moist, shaded mountain slopes between 1500 to 3000 metres
- **Endemism:** Endemic to Arunachal Pradesh, currently known only from two forest sites in East Kameng
- **Unique Trait:**
 - Petioles or leaf stalks have dense crimson fringed scales
 - This indumentum or hair-like covering has not been observed in any Asian begonia before



Importance of the Name

- The species is named nyishiorum in honor of the **Nyishi tribe**
- The Nyishi are the largest indigenous community in Arunachal Pradesh
- The name recognizes their traditional role in forest conservation

Significance of the Discovery

- Highlights the rich biodiversity of the **Eastern Himalayas**
- Reinforces Arunachal Pradesh's role in plant speciation and endemism
- The state adds more than ten new plant species to science each year
- Among over 2150 accepted begonia species globally, this one stands out due to its unique petiole fringe

Animal Discoveries and Plant Discoveries 2024

Syllabus: GS-3: Environment and Ecology – New Species discovery.

Context:

India added 683 new species to its fauna in the year 2024, which included 459 new species and 224 species new records.

Animal and Plant Discoveries – 2024 (India)

Overview

- **Fauna:** India added **683 new faunal species** in 2024.
 - **459** – New species
 - **224** – New records
- **Flora:** India added **433 taxa of flora**.
 - **410** – Species
 - **23** – Infra-specific taxa (subspecies/varieties)

Faunal Discoveries – State-wise Highlights

State/UT	New Discoveries (Total)	New Species	New Records
Kerala	101	80	21
Karnataka	82	68	14
Tamil Nadu	63	50	13
Arunachal Pradesh	72	42	30
Meghalaya	42	25	17
West Bengal	56	25	31
Andaman & Nicobar	43	14	29

Floral Discoveries – Highlights

- **Total Flora Added:** 433 taxa
- **Top States for Plant Discoveries:**

- **Kerala** – 58 species
- **Maharashtra** – 45 species
- **Uttarakhand** – 40 species

Breakdown of New Plant Discoveries (2024)

- **Angiosperms:** 154
- **Pteridophytes:** 4
- **Bryophytes:** 15
- **Lichens:** 63
- **Fungi:** 156
- **Algae:** 32
- **Microbes:** 9

Key Plant Species Discovered

- **Orchids:** *Bulbophyllum gopalianum*, *Coelogynetripurensis*, *Gastrodia indica*, *Gastrodiasikkimensis*
- **Others:** Legumes, Zingibers, Grasses, Balsams (*Impatiens*), *Begonia*

Significant Faunal Discoveries (2024)

- **Reptiles:**
 - **2 New Genera**
 - **37 New Species**
 - Eg: *Dravidoseps gouensis* (New genus), *Anguiculus dicaprio* (Colubridae family, named after Leonardo DiCaprio)
- **Amphibians:** 5 new species

India's Biodiversity Snapshot

- **Faunal diversity:** 1,05,244 species/subspecies
- **Floral diversity:** 56,177 species (angiosperms, gymnosperms, algae, fungi, etc.)
- **Global Ranking:** One of the **17 megadiverse countries**
- **Land Area vs Biodiversity:**

- Covers only **2.4% of global land area**
- Holds **~8% of world's recorded biodiversity**

Institutional Role

- **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI):** Publishes *Animal Discoveries* annually
- **Botanical Survey of India (BSI):** Publishes *Plant Discoveries* annually
- Emphasizes **systematic taxonomy** and **research-driven biodiversity conservation**

Biodiversity Hotspots Contribution

- **Regions:** Western Ghats, North-Eastern States, Andaman & Nicobar Islands
- **Contribution:** Accounted for **35% of total discoveries** in 2024

Importance of Discoveries

- **Conservation:** Helps in planning for biodiversity protection and sustainable use.
- **Potential Uses:** New plants have **agricultural, medicinal, horticultural, and ornamental value.**
- **Scientific Advancement:** Enriches taxonomic and ecological understanding of ecosystems.