

17th Oct, 20241. **SCO Summit 2024****GS 2 (International Relations)**• **Why in News:**

- The **23rd Meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of Government (CHG)** was held on October 16, 2024, in Islamabad, Pakistan. The summit concentrated on the bloc's trade and economic agenda.
- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar led the Indian delegation at the summit. Jaishankar's visit marks the first by an Indian foreign minister to Pakistan in nine years, highlighting the significance of India's participation in the SCO despite ongoing bilateral tensions.

• **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**○ **About**

- SCO is a **permanent intergovernmental international organisation**, created in June 2001 in Shanghai (China).
- Founding members included Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan.
- The five countries had come together to work on regional security, reduction of border troops, and terrorism in the post-Soviet era in 1996.
- In 2001, the Shanghai Five inducted Uzbekistan into the group and named it the SCO outlining its principles in a charter that **promoted what was called the Shanghai spirit of cooperation**.

○ **Official working languages:** Chinese, Russian○ **SCO Secretariat:** Beijing, China○ **Members & Observers**

- **10 member states** – China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan, Iran and Belarus.
 - India and Pakistan became full members at the Heads of State Council meet in Astana in 2017.
 - Iran became the 9th member of the SCO in **2023** under the chairmanship of India.
 - Belarus officially joined the SCO in July 2024, and became its 10th member state.
- **2 Observer members** – Afghanistan, Mongolia

○ **Organisational Structure of SCO**

- **The Heads of State Council (HSC)** is the supreme decision-making body in the SCO. It meets once a year and decide upon all the important issues of the Organization.
- **The Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) (CHG)** is the second highest body of the organization.
 - It meets once a year to discuss the strategy of multilateral cooperation and priority areas within the Organization, determine fundamental and topical issues in economic and other spheres, and approve the budget of the SCO.
- In addition to the meetings of the CHS and the CHG, there are also mechanisms for meetings on foreign affairs, national defense, security, economy and trade etc.
- The Organization has 2 standing bodies — **the Secretariat in Beijing** and the **Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)** in Tashkent.

• **Key Highlights of the EAM's Address at SCO**○ **Lack of Trust and Cooperation: Veiled Reference to Pakistan and China**

- EAM highlighted the importance of trust, cooperation, and good neighborly relations, subtly referencing challenges with Pakistan and China

India, Pak. avoid blaming each other at SCO meeting

Jaishankar and Ishaq Dar interact 'informally' during the first visit by an Indian Foreign Minister to Pakistan in nine years; atmosphere of exchanges more positive than in previous encounters

Subhasini Haider
ISLAMABAD

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and his Pakistani counterpart Ishaq Dar held an "informal interaction" at the conclusion lunch for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of Government meeting in Islamabad on Wednesday.

Officials confirmed the interaction even as a short video clip that appeared online showed the Ministers of the two countries speaking at a table seated next to each other.

The lunch was hosted by Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif who chaired the SCO session where, unlike on past occasions, both India's and Pakistan's national statements avoided contentious



Key meeting: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on Wednesday. PTI

language on sensitive issues.

According to sources, Mr. Jaishankar had also held a brief discussion with Mr. Dar at the SCO dinner on Tuesday evening as well, where they were joined by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, who is also Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board. Pakistan

has been keen to host the Indian team as part of the Champions Trophy due to be held in Pakistan in early 2025, but the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has not confirmed their participation.

Officials stressed that the conversation was part of normal diplomatic discourse, given that Mr.

Jaishankar was attending the lunch along with dignitaries from all 10 SCO nations including Russia, China, Iran, Belarus, and the central Asian states, and that "all leaders talked to each other during lunch and in the waiting lounge". The exchange reflected a much warmer note than similar previous encounters, including at the SCO Foreign Ministers' meeting in Goa in 2023, and the UN General Assembly meet last month.

Leaving Islamabad at the end of what had been the first visit by an Indian External Affairs Minister to Pakistan in nine years, Mr. Jaishankar thanked Mr. Sharif and Mr. Dar, commending them for a "productive" meet.

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- He stressed the need for introspection **where friendship and cooperation have fallen short, pointing to issues like cross-border terrorism and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which India believes violates its territorial integrity.**
- **Key Challenges: Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism**
 - Jaishankar underscored the three key challenges that the SCO was established to address: **terrorism, separatism, and extremism**
 - He reiterated that activities across borders marked by these issues hinder trade, connectivity, and regional development, emphasizing the need for peace and stability to foster economic growth.
- **Call for Multilateralism and Reform**
 - The minister advocated for reformed multilateralism, especially regarding the United Nations Security Council, where India seeks permanent membership.
 - He stressed the importance of ensuring developing countries' representation in global institutions to make them more inclusive, effective, and democratic.
- **Regional Cooperation and Connectivity**
 - Jaishankar highlighted India's support for regional cooperation through initiatives like the International Solar Alliance, Mission LiFE, and digital public infrastructure.
 - He also emphasized the potential for expanded trade, energy flows, and connectivity within the SCO region if countries cooperate genuinely, calling for partnerships based on mutual respect and sovereignty.
- **Pakistan's SCO Presidency and Call for Unity**
 - Jaishankar congratulated **Pakistan on its SCO presidency** and urged for unity in addressing global challenges, including economic disruptions, climate change, and health crises.
 - He emphasized that collaboration in areas like industry, MSMEs, and environmental protection could unlock significant opportunities for regional prosperity.
- **India-Pakistan Foreign Ministers Hold First Talks in 9 Years**
 - **Jaishankar and Dar Engage in Talks at SCO Meeting**
 - For the first time since 2015, EAM S. Jaishankar and his Pakistani counterpart Muhammad Ishaq Dar engaged in direct talks.
 - These conversations occurred on the sidelines of the SCO Council of Heads of Government meeting in Islamabad, marking a significant diplomatic moment.
 - **Preliminary Discussions on Resuming Cricket Ties**
 - The discussions explored the possibility of resuming cricketing ties between India and Pakistan, with a focus on India potentially participating in the Champions Trophy hosted by Pakistan in February 2025.
 - While these talks were still in their early stages, the conversations opened a potential pathway for improving bilateral relations through sports diplomacy.
 - India's participation in the Champions Trophy in Pakistan would mark the Indian cricket team's first visit across the border in 17 years.

2. MSP approved for Rabi Crops GS 3 (Agriculture)

- **Why in News:** The Union Cabinet has recently approved new **Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for Rabi crops for the 2025-26 marketing season.** This decision comes amid ongoing discussions about agricultural support and food security in India, especially as the country prepares for the upcoming crop cycle. The increase in MSP is aimed at providing better financial support to farmers, ensuring they receive fair prices for their produce, and encouraging the cultivation of essential crops.
- **Key Highlights**

- **Wheat MSP Increase:** The MSP for wheat has been raised by Rs 150 per quintal, from Rs 2,275 to Rs 2,425.

- This increase is expected to benefit farmers, particularly in northern India, where wheat is a staple crop

- **Mustard MSP Increase:** The MSP for mustard has been increased by Rs 300, bringing it from Rs 5,650 to Rs 5,950 per quintal.

- Mustard is a significant oilseed crop, and the higher MSP aims to boost cultivation and ensure better returns for farmers, especially in states like Rajasthan, Haryana, and Madhya Pradesh.

- **Chana MSP Increase:** The MSP for chana (a key pulse crop) has been raised by Rs 210, setting the new rate at Rs 5,650 per quintal.

- This increase aims to promote chana production, which is vital for protein intake in the Indian diet, benefiting farmers in states like Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

- **About Minimum Support Prices (MSP)**

- MSP is a government-set price at which it purchases certain crops from farmers, ensuring them a minimum profit for their harvest.
- The MSP aims to safeguard farmers against price fluctuations in the market and encourage them to cultivate certain crops deemed essential for food security.

- **Crops under MSP:** CACP recommends MSPs of 23 commodities, which comprise

- **7 cereals** (paddy, wheat, maize, sorghum, pearl millet, barley and ragi)
- **5 pulses** (gram, tur, moong, urad, lentil)
- **7 oilseeds** (groundnut, rapeseed-mustard, soyabean, seasmum, sunflower, safflower, nigerseed)
- **4 commercial crops** (copra, sugarcane, cotton and raw jute)

- **Types of Crops:** India's agriculture is broadly divided into two seasons: Kharif and Rabi.

- **Kharif Crops:** These are sown in the monsoon season (June to September) and harvested in autumn. Examples include paddy, ragi, bajra, jowar, maize, and cotton.
- **Rabi Crops:** These are sown in winter (October to March) and harvested in spring. Examples include wheat, barley, gram, and mustard.

3. **Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955**

GS 2 (Governance)

- **Why in News:** In a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court **upheld the constitutional validity of Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955**, which granted citizenship to immigrants who entered Assam before January 1, 1966. This verdict is part of an ongoing legal and social debate over the status of immigrants, the rights of indigenous communities, and the demographic changes in the state.

- **What is Section 6A?**

- Section 6A was introduced to **the Citizenship Act, 1955**, as part of **the Assam Accord signed in 1985**. This accord aimed to address the concerns of local Assamese regarding the influx of migrants from Bangladesh.
- **Provisions:** The section specifically grants citizenship to individuals who migrated to Assam from Bangladesh before January 1, 1966, thus providing a different cut-off date for Assam compared to the rest of India.

Centre increases MSP for wheat, five other rabi crops

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on Wednesday increased the minimum support price (MSP) for rabi crops for the next marketing season of 2025-26 with the MSP for wheat going up by ₹150 a quintal. The new MSP for a quintal of wheat is ₹2,425 in comparison to ₹2,275 per quintal, which was in place for the 2024-25 season.

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Better support



The Cabinet increased the minimum support prices for rabi crops

Crop	MSP for rabi 2025-26*	MSP for rabi 2024-25*	Increase in MSP
Wheat	₹2,425	₹2,275	₹150
Barley	₹1,980	₹1,850	₹130
Gram	₹5,650	₹5,440	₹210
Lentil (masoor)	₹6,100	₹6,425	₹215
Rapeseed & mustard	₹5,950	₹5,650	₹300
Safflower	₹5,940	₹5,800	₹140

(*per quintal)

- **Purpose:** It was designed to protect the rights of indigenous Assamese people while acknowledging the historical context of migration in the region. The provision was part of a broader effort to manage demographic changes resulting from the influx of migrants.

- **About Citizenship**

- **Articles 5-11 of the Constitution** describe the various categories of persons who are entitled to citizenship. These were enforced on November 26, 1949, ahead of the commencement of the Constitution on January 26, 1950. Article 11 empowers Parliament to regulate citizenship by law; the Citizenship Act was, therefore, passed in 1955. It has since been amended 1986, 2003, 2005, and 2015.
 - **Article 5** provided for citizenship on the commencement of the Constitution: all those domiciled and born in India, either of whose parents was born in India, or anyone who had been ordinarily resident in India for at least five years preceding the commencement of the Constitution.
 - Under **Article 6**, anyone who migrated to India before July 19, 1948, from territory that had become part Pakistan, automatically became a citizen if either of their parents or grandparents was born in India. But those who entered India after this date needed to register themselves.
 - Those who had migrated to Pakistan after March 1, 1947, but had subsequently returned on resettlement permits, too, were included within the citizenship net (**Article 7**).
 - Under **Article 8**, a person of Indian origin residing outside India who, or any of whose parents or grandparents, was born in India can register as an Indian citizen with the relevant Indian diplomatic mission.
- **Rights of Citizen:** The Constitution gives some fundamental rights to non-citizens —
 - the right to equality before the law (Article 14)
 - protection of life and personal liberty (Article 21)
 - freedom to manage religious affairs (Article 25)
- However, some other fundamental rights, such as prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth (**Article 15**); equality of opportunity in matters of public employment (**Article 16**); and the six basic freedoms of speech and expression, peaceful assembly, forming associations or unions, movement, residence, and profession (subject to reasonable restrictions, **Article 19**), are available only to citizens.
- Also, only a citizen has the right to vote in elections to Lok Sabha and state Assemblies (**Article 326**), become a member of these Houses (**Articles 84, 191d**), and assume certain high offices such as those of President, Vice-President, Governor, and a judge of the higher judiciary.

4. Canadian frostbite: On the India-Canada diplomatic war GS 2 (International Relations)

- **Why in News:** India and Canada have entered a diplomatic standoff following allegations by Canada that Indian diplomats were involved in the assassination of Khalistani activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who was killed in June 2023. The Canadian government has sought to investigate Indian diplomats, labeling them "persons of interest" in this case, leading to mutual expulsion of diplomats. This escalation in tensions comes amid accusations from India of Canada providing a safe haven for violent extremists.
- **Allegations and Diplomatic Fallout**
 - **Canadian Accusations:** Canada's Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) has alleged that Indian diplomats may be linked to the killing of Nijjar and an Indian criminal network.

SC verdict today on

Canada must consider the impact of its recent actions on its diplomacy and image

India must consider the impact of its recent actions on its diplomacy and image

After a year of frosty exchanges and declining relations, India and Canada have declared diplomatic war, as India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) revealed this week that the Canadian government had sought to investigate and even interrogate the Indian High Commissioner and five other diplomats, naming them as persons of interest for the killing of Khalistani activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Mr. Nijjar, who was a Cabot dead in June 2023 in British Columbia, was wanted by India. In a press conference, the Canadian police (RCMP) detailed their suspicions that the Indian diplomats were somehow involved with an Indian criminal network they believe is responsible for the killing, as well as the targeting of some in the Indian diaspora. The Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has alleged political interference by India's diplomats, something high-6A erto it had accused China of. India's MEA has called the charges "preposterous", accusing Canada 1953 Indian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of orchestrating the investigations for political gain with a pro-separatist Khalistani votebank, given his re-cord-low ratings ahead of the 2025 general election. India also accused what it called the Canada of a "regime" for providing space to "violent extremists and terrorists to ... intimidate Indian diplomats and community leaders...". In the CO name of free speech, Delhi and Ottawa have each expelled six diplomats. With the reduced staff 198 strength in the High Commissions in both capitals and an outraged India reserving the right to further action, it could well mean drastic cuts in visas and curtailed direct travel links.

On With the die cast for worsening ties, New Delhi must consider carefully the impact of its next steps not only on Indian diplomacy but also on India's image. While it is imperative to defend India's diplomats, it is equally important to investigate the allegations that Indian intelligence agencies have overstepped in operations in the case. The RCMP's naming of Indian underworld in tanglester Lawrence Bishnoi must also be investigated. As India's adversaries seek to draw links between allegations against Indian intelligence and national security operations in Pakistan, the UAE, Qatar, Canada and the U.S., even India's had close partners are looking askance. The U.S. westatement, that India should cooperate with Canada, must be seen as evidence of that. India's Mutual policy towards the Nijjar case, which it out-rightly rejects any connection to, and the Panman case in the U.S. - it has sent a high-level inquiry team - also raises questions. The government must prove it has nothing to hide. It must also be more transparent about how it expects to deal for with this challenge, and to reports that link Canada's allegations to India's top leadership including National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and quidome Minister Amit Shah. Above all, New Delhi must step up an international campaign to enalouse accountability from Canada to either pre-Statent verifiable evidence, or to stop casting this shadow over India's reputation and its diplomats. to implement section 6A.

They had blamed "rise in infiltration a consequence or an effect of Section 6A".

The court had, in turn, asked the petitioners to show material that benefits given to cross-border migrants, who arrived in India between 1966 and 1971 just before the Bangladesh Lib-

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre, had argued that the "far slower and more complex" land acquisition policies in West Bengal had been a thorn even for a vital national security project like border-fencing.

- **Political Motivations:** India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has dismissed these charges as "preposterous," accusing Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of using the situation for political gain among a pro-separatist Khalistani voter base.
- **Mutual Diplomatic Expulsions:** In response to the escalating situation, both India and Canada expelled six diplomats, significantly reducing the diplomatic staff in each country.
- **Implications for India's Foreign Relations**
 - **Impact on Indian Diplomacy:** The diplomatic rift poses risks not only to India-Canada relations but also affects India's global image and its diplomatic operations.
 - **Investigation Necessity:** It is crucial for India to investigate allegations against its intelligence agencies to ensure transparency and address any overstepping of boundaries.
 - **International Scrutiny:** The involvement of figures like gangster Lawrence Bishnoi in this case and the U.S. urging India to cooperate with Canada indicate that India's actions are under international scrutiny.
- **The Need for Accountability**
 - **Dual Policy Concerns:** India's differing approaches to the Nijjar case and other related incidents, such as the Pannun case in the U.S., raise questions about its consistency and transparency in dealing with such allegations.
 - **Call for Evidence:** New Delhi must press Canada for verifiable evidence regarding the accusations or challenge the validity of these claims to protect its reputation.
 - **International Campaign:** India should undertake a proactive international campaign to clarify its stance and demand accountability from Canada for the allegations made against its diplomats.

5. Spotlighting the work of the Economics Nobel winners Recent events of importance

- **Why in News:** The recent Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences awarded to Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson (AJR) highlights their influential research on the role of institutions in economic development, particularly in relation to historical events and colonial legacies. Their work sheds light on how the extractive institutions established during colonialism continue to impact economic growth and societal structures in formerly colonized regions.
- **Great Divergence and Institutional Impact**
 - **Definition of Great Divergence:** The term "Great Divergence" describes the widening economic and political gap between Western Europe and the East during the 17th and 18th centuries, largely attributed to industrialization in the West.
 - **Colonial Legacy:** Institutions formed during colonial rule have long-lasting effects, influencing economic trajectories even after countries gained independence.
 - **AJR's Findings:** Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson emphasize that extractive institutions benefit a small elite at the expense of broader societal development, contrasting with inclusive institutions that promote overall prosperity.
- **Research Methodology and Historical Evidence**
 - **Natural Experiments:** AJR's research employs natural experiments to identify causal relationships, allowing for comparisons of countries or regions based on their colonial experiences.
 - **Settler Mortality Rates:** They explored how differences in settler mortality rates between tropical and temperate regions influenced the establishment of extractive versus inclusive institutions.
 - **Indian Studies:** Their findings inspired significant studies in India, such as those by Abhijit Banerjee and Lakshmi Iyer, which reveal how colonial land tenure systems and governance structures have long-term negative impacts on agricultural productivity and infrastructure.

Spotlighting the work of the Economics Nobel winners

The Great Divergence is a term used to describe the gap in economic and political development between the West and the East. It emerges from this idea that in the 17th and 18th centuries, the advantages that Western Europe enjoyed due to industrialization allowed them to project political power elsewhere. This in turn helped them to reap economic rewards. One of the most relevant findings that emerged from this scholarship is the idea that institutions established during colonialism can have persistent effects many years after countries transitioned to sovereign rule.

Institutions and development
The winners of this year's Economics Nobel, or the Sveriges Riksbank Prize awarded for economic sciences, Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James Robinson (AJR), pioneers in new institutional economics, emphasized the role of institutions in the direction of development. Institutions are constraints on human behaviour, the rules of the game in the form of law and order that prevent the state or any other party from the complete use of force on those who cannot defend themselves. This can take the shape of the constitutional limits on the power of an executive, institutions curb their effect through incentives, such as the traffic fines on a busy street that nudge a driver from breaking the speed limit.

AJR's work has highlighted the role of extractive institutions in shaping a country's growth trajectory. Extractive institutions are common in history because they still offer the fruits of growth to a small group of elites. Inclusive institutions, on the other hand, have rules and incentives that motivate people. Colonialism established extractive institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and South Asia while there are relatively fewer extractive institutions in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

AJR have emphasised the role of institutions in development but there has been criticism of this approach as privileging western liberal institutions.

England, AJR's seminal work was in establishing how these institutions have a causal impact on economic growth. They assembled archival evidence to show differences in settler mortality rates in tropical and temperate countries. For instance, settler colonies of Australia and the U.S. settled there in large numbers due to a relatively disease-free environment while colonies who settled in more tropical countries were wiped out due to disease.

The key to this type of research was the natural experiment. Social scientists usually cannot manipulate the variables they study like natural scientists running a clinical trial. What they can do is create research design innovations that approximate true experiments. They find observational settings in which causes are randomly assigned among units that they can compare such as individuals, villages, cities or countries. A simple comparison across these units exposed to the presence or absence of a cause can provide evidence for the effects that that particular cause has.

Investigations in India
The biggest contribution by AJR is in inspiring several studies that looked at the long-term effects of historical events on economic development where they identified new variables from detailed historical data. Two of the most well-known studies in this genre come from the Indian subcontinent.

Abhijit Banerjee and Lakshmi Iyer (2005) found that land-based colonial land revenue systems resulted in lower agricultural investments and productivity in these areas years later. Lakshmi Iyer (2009) showed that areas under direct colonial rule had fewer schools, health centres and roads than those under indirect colonial rule – an effect that seems to be fading away only recently.

Economic institutions are collective choices determined by political power. Political power can be de jure or de facto. The political power for

he Biden does not come from the person but the office that he holds, the President of the United States of America. On the other hand, you cannot see the same for Troika (Chang, Grabel, the President of Equatorial Guinea, one of the world's longest-serving leaders. This would be the factor power.

The question of reform of an extractive institution is about the ability to solve a collective action problem through the economic resources available to them. What AJR's research has shown is that it is difficult for groups with conflicting interests to agree on what good institutions look like. Groups with political power will always have an incentive to use that power to change the distribution of resources in their favour.

A perspective
AJR's research came into prominence at a time when the economic profession was moving away from a prescriptive policy framework to something more diagnostic. There was a deliberate move away from universal remedies such as the erasable shock therapy in Latin America or the Washington Consensus. Their approach is not without criticism. Acemoglu and Robinson have been sceptical about China's spectacular growth that is expected to slow down due to the eventual spread of extractive institutions.

However, scholars such as Yuen Yuen Ang have argued that AJR's approach tends to privilege western liberal institutions. When the U.S. was a developing country, they were as corrupt or engaged in risky practices quite similar to those undertaken in China today. The narrative of the impact of inclusive institutions from western Europe is at odds with America's chequered history with slavery, exclusion of women from property rights, and genocide of Native Americans. Other scholars such as Omair Usman (2022) have also pointed out the reluctance of AJR to critically engage with the complexity of actually existing colonialism and capitalism.

- **Political Power and Economic Institutions**

- **Political Power Dynamics:** Economic institutions are shaped by political power, which can be either de jure (formal) or de facto (informal), affecting the implementation of reforms.
- **Collective Action Challenges:** AJR's research highlights the difficulties in reforming extractive institutions due to conflicting interests among powerful groups, who benefit from maintaining the status quo.
- **Critiques of AJR's Framework:** While AJR's work is foundational, critics argue that it overly emphasizes Western institutional models, neglecting the complexities of colonialism and the historical context of countries like China and the United States.

6. **Battle of Walong**

GS 2 (International Relations)

- **Why in News:** The Indian Army is set to commence a month-long series of commemorative events from October 17 to November 14 to mark the **62nd Walong Day**. This initiative honors the valiant soldiers who fought in the **Battle of Walong** during the **1962 Sino-Indian War**, highlighting their sacrifices and courage in defending India's eastern front.
- **About the Battle of Walong**
 - The Battle of Walong was a significant conflict fought between October 20 and November 14, 1962, during the Sino-Indian War.
 - Located in the eastern part of Arunachal Pradesh, near the Indo-China border, Walong held strategic importance due to its proximity to the **McMahon Line** (de facto border between India and China)
 - **Forces Involved:**
 - Indian forces, primarily comprising the Assam Rifles and the Indian Army.
 - Opposing forces from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China.
 - Indian troops utilized the rugged terrain to their advantage, conducting counterattacks and inflicting significant casualties on Chinese forces.
 - Despite their determined defense, Indian forces were ultimately overwhelmed by the superior numbers and firepower of the Chinese army.
 - **Outcome:** The battle concluded with a retreat of Indian troops, marking a challenging moment in India's military history. Both sides suffered considerable casualties, with the Indian Army experiencing significant losses, including killed, wounded, and captured personnel.
 - **Legacy:** The battle symbolizes bravery and resilience, becoming a poignant chapter in India's military history.
 - **Walong War Memorial**
 - In honor of the soldiers who fought and lost their lives in this battle, the Walong War Memorial was established. It serves as a site of remembrance and tribute to the bravery of those who defended the nation.

Army to commemorate 62 years of the Battle of Walong with China

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

To mark the 62nd anniversary of the iconic Battle of Walong during the 1962 war with China, the Army is planning a month-long series of commemorative events beginning on Thursday. They will continue till November 14. In addition to a series of activities, the newly renovated Walong War Memorial, Shaurya Sthal at Lama Spur, and some key infrastructure projects in the border areas are also set to be inaugurated.

In 1962, the Indian Army halted the advancing People's Liberation Army soldiers for 27 days which forced them to commit their reserve Division from Tawang Sector to Walong as fierce battles unfolded in the unforgiving terrain



Last stand: The Walong War Memorial commemorating the iconic battle of 1962 in Arunachal Pradesh. (DINAKAR PERI)

of Kibithu, Namti Tri Junction (famously known as Tiger's Mouth), Walong, and adjoining features.

In October 1962, as Chinese forces advanced into the eastern most parts of Arunachal Pradesh, the task of defending it fell on the 11 Infantry Brigade under the Second Infantry Division. The Brigade had 6 Kumaon regiment, 4 Sikh

regiment, third battalion of 3 Gorkha Rifles, in addition to second battalion of 8 Gorkha Rifles and 4 Dogra. The Chinese offensive with more than 4,000 soldiers could not breach the forward defences held with 800 men for over 27 days and the Chinese Army was subsequently forced to employ additional division size force of approximately

15,000 soldiers. Vastly outnumbered and with little ammunition and no resources, the Indian soldiers fought till the last man, last round. Capturing this, the *Time* magazine wrote in January 1963, "At Walong, Indian troops lacked everything. The only thing they did not lack was guts."

This year's commemoration promises a vibrant mix of activities aimed at engaging the local communities and honouring the memory of the fallen heroes, one Army official said. "The events include white water rafting, motorcycle rallies, bicycle rallies, battlefield treks, adventure treks and a half marathon, all designed to reflect the adventurous spirit of the Indian Army in the rugged terrain of Arunachal Pradesh."

7. The Impact of Climate Change on Poor Farmers in India: FAO Report Recent events of importance

• Why in News:

- A recent report from the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** highlights how **climate change** disproportionately affects **poorer farmers in India**.
- Titled **"The Unjust Climate: Measuring the Impacts of Climate Change on Rural Poor, Women, and Youth,"** the report reveals the vulnerabilities faced by marginalized farming communities due to climate-induced stresses such as **heat stress, floods, and droughts**.

• About Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO):

- It is a specialized agency of the **United Nations** that leads international efforts to defeat hunger, improve nutrition, and ensure food security.
- Its primary mission is to raise levels of nutrition, improve agricultural productivity and better the lives of rural populations by promoting sustainable agricultural practices.
- Established in **1945**, FAO's headquarters is located in **Rome, Italy**.
- **Key Objectives of FAO:**

▪ Eradicating Hunger and Food Insecurity:

- FAO works towards achieving a world free of hunger, ensuring that everyone has access to safe and nutritious food.

▪ Sustainable Agriculture:

- The organization promotes the adoption of sustainable agricultural methods to increase productivity while preserving natural resources like soil, water, and biodiversity.

▪ Improving Rural Livelihoods:

- FAO supports smallholder farmers, rural communities, and women by providing tools, knowledge, and access to markets to improve their economic opportunities.

▪ Tackling Climate Change:

- The FAO is actively involved in addressing the impacts of **climate change** on food systems and advocating for climate-resilient farming practices.

• Key Highlights of the Report:

- The FAO, recently, presented the report "The unjust climate. Measuring the impacts of climate change on rural poor, women, and youth" at an event in New Delhi.

○ Key Findings of the Report:

▪ Income Disparities:

- The report finds that **poor households** globally lose **5% of their income** annually due to heat stress and **4.4%** due to floods, compared to wealthier households.
- In India, rural poor households are particularly vulnerable because their income sources are more reliant on **climate-sensitive agriculture**.

▪ Structural Inequalities:

- According to the report, the vulnerability of poor farmers is deeply rooted in **structural inequalities**.
- Households exposed to climate stressors experience a more significant reduction in total income compared to those unaffected.

Climate change impact harsher on poorer farmers in India: FAO report

A.M. Jigeeesh

NEW DELHI

Poor households globally lose 5% of their total income in an average year from heat stress and 4.4% from floods compared with households that are relatively better off, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations said in a report on Wednesday, warning about the negative impacts of climate change on the farming population in India.

Senior FAO economist Nicholas Sitko presented the report "The unjust climate. Measuring the impacts of climate change on rural poor, women, and youth" in New Delhi.

The report said on-farm income sources of the rural poor in India were affected in different ways depending on the type of climate stress. In case of droughts or such events, poor households dedicated more



The vulnerability of poor households to climate stressors is likely to be rooted in structural inequalities, the report said. FILE PHOTO

time and resources to agricultural production to sustain themselves, as off-farm employment opportunities reduced.

The total incomes of poor households reduce compared with those of families that have not been exposed to a significant climate stressor, it said. "The vulnerability of poor households to climate stressors is likely to be rooted in structural inequalities,"

the report said and asked the government to take policy measures such as expanding the social security net.

Anticipatory social protection programmes can be scaled up and scaled out to more beneficiaries in anticipation of an extreme weather event, the report suggested. "Providing effective livelihood support ahead of extreme weather events can help

reduce reliance on adverse coping strategies and limit the number of people pushed into poverty because of these events," it said. The report recommended improving work-force diversification and enhancing off-farm employment opportunities. It urged policymakers to address "gendered barriers" in non-farm employment.

Responding to the report, NITI Aayog member Ramesh Chand said India was doing its best to deal with the issue of climate change. "We have implemented National Innovations on Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA) much earlier to address the problem of climate change. We were first in the world to do so for all crops. We also have a contingency plan for all agriculture districts. We were the first country to implement an employment guarantee scheme as a social safety net," he said.

- Poor farmers dedicate more resources to sustaining agricultural production during adverse events, leading to reduced opportunities for **off-farm employment**.
- **Impact of Heat Stress and Floods:**
 - The report states that climate change widens the income gap between poor and non-poor households globally.
 - Floods increase this gap by approximately **\$21 billion per year**, while heat stress contributes to a gap of over **\$20 billion**.
 - In India, rising temperatures increase the dependency of poor households on farming, while off-farm incomes decrease by **33%**.
- **Policy Recommendations:**
 - The FAO report suggests expanding **social security nets** for vulnerable communities.
 - **Anticipatory social protection programs**, which provide livelihood support ahead of extreme weather events, can help reduce poverty and reliance on harmful coping strategies.
 - The report also recommends addressing **gendered barriers** in employment, promoting **workforce diversification**, and providing **mentorship programs** to help rural communities participate in the modern workforce.
 - The report emphasizes the need to empower **women** and **youth** in rural areas to help combat the effects of climate change.
 - **Gender-transformative approaches** are necessary to challenge discriminatory social norms and enable women to make economic decisions that directly affect their lives.
 - The report suggests **mentorship programs** and initiatives to strengthen socio-emotional skills, allowing women and youth to better participate in the workforce and adapt to modern employment needs.
- **NITI Aayog's Response:**
 - Responding to the report, a member of **NITI Aayog**, said that India has been actively addressing the challenges posed by climate change. Key initiatives include:
 - **National Innovations on Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA):**
 - This project was implemented to help Indian farmers adapt to extreme weather conditions.
 - NICRA offers solutions for various crops, ensuring that farmers are equipped to handle adverse climatic events.
 - **Employment Guarantee Schemes and Social Safety Nets:**
 - India was the first country to implement an **employment guarantee scheme** (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme) to provide economic security to its population.
 - During the COVID-19 pandemic, the government distributed **free food grains** (Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana) to two-thirds of the population, demonstrating its commitment to addressing both climate-related and economic challenges.
 - **Increasing Women's Participation:**
 - Recent data from the **Periodic Labour Force Surveys (PLFS)** shows a significant increase in women's participation in the workforce, indicating progress toward gender equality in employment opportunities.

8. Rising Tensions Between North and South Korea GS 2 (International Relations)

- **Why in News:** Tensions between North and South Korea are escalating significantly. Recently, North Korea announced that over 1.4 million citizens applied to join the military, coinciding with the destruction of roads and railway lines along its southern border. This act was in retaliation for South Korea allegedly sending drones carrying anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets. The situation is becoming increasingly volatile, raising concerns about the potential for conflict.
- **The Korean peninsula has a complex history:**
 - **Colonial Rule and Division:** After being under Japanese control from 1910, Korea was divided into two separate states following Japan's surrender in 1945. The Soviet Union supported the establishment of a communist regime in the North (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), while the United States backed a democratic government in the South (Republic of Korea).
 - **Korean War (1950-1953):** Tensions escalated into war in 1950 when North Korea invaded the South. The conflict saw major initial gains for the North but eventually led to a stalemate, resulting in an armistice in 1953. This established the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), but no formal peace treaty was ever signed, leaving the Koreans technically still at war.
 - **Attempts at Reunification:** Both Koreas have long sought reunification, with several diplomatic efforts made since the 1970s, including agreements in 2000, 2007, and 2018. However, these efforts have yielded little progress, particularly as North Korea has pursued nuclear weapons development, leading to international sanctions.
- **The roots of the current tensions can be traced back to several key events:**
 - **Failed Diplomacy:** In 2019, a summit between then-U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un failed to produce a meaningful agreement on denuclearization. This setback reportedly led to a breakdown in relations between North Korea and the U.S., prompting North Korea to restart its nuclear program.
 - **Shift in Attitude:** In early 2024, Kim Jong Un publicly renounced any hopes for reunification with the South, declaring it the "primary foe." This marked a significant change in rhetoric and policy towards South Korea.
 - **Escalating Hostilities:** North Korea has engaged in various provocations, including sending balloons carrying propaganda and trash across the border and fortifying its defenses. The recent destruction of infrastructure connecting the two Koreas signals a formal end to diplomatic ties.

Korean peninsula heating up again: history of hostility between North and South, trigger for current tensions

ANAGHA JAYAKUMAR

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 18

SHIMMERING TENSIONS between North and South Korea, are now seemingly boiling over. North Korea on Wednesday announced that more than 1.4 million citizens had applied to join the army. This came a day after it blew up a section of roads and railway lines on its southern border, in response to South Korea allegedly sending drones with anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets across the border last week.

Technically, the two Koreas have been at war for more than 70 years, and periodic flare-ups are not uncommon. The recent escalation is nonetheless significant.

Historical context

The Korean peninsula had been under Japanese control since 1910. After Japan's surrender in 1945, which brought World War II to an end, the peninsula was split into two. The Soviet and the Chinese communists propped up the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the North, while the Americans supported the creation of the Republic of Korea in the South.

In 1950, North Korean forces under founder Kim Il Sung invaded the South, triggering the three-year-long Korean War.

Despite the North making initial gains, support from the US helped South Korea fight back. Eventually, neither side secured a decisive victory, and an armistice was signed in 1953. The Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), dividing the peninsula into half roughly around the 38th Parallel, was created but no permanent peace treaty was signed.

Since then, both Korean nations have dreamt of "reunification", by force if necessary. But the likely human and material cost of an all-out war has, by and large, prevailed.

Starting in the 1970s, both sides held negotiations towards achieving a "peaceful reunification", with agreements in 2000, 2007, and 2018 significant in this regard. However, very little tangible progress was made.

Meanwhile, North Korea pursued the development of nuclear weapons, inviting heavy sanctions from the UN Security Council, the US, and its allies.

Genesis of current tensions

In 2019, then US President Donald Trump and North Korea leader Kim Jong Un met in Hanoi, Vietnam. This was their second meeting, after Trump in 2018 became the first sitting US president to meet the North Korean leader. Many had hoped that

the summit would see US and North Korea make headway regarding denuclearisation and consequent ease of sanctions.

However, the summit ended abruptly with not even a joint statement being signed. Robert Carlin and Siegfried Hecker wrote in an article in 38 North, a US-based publication specialising in policy and technical analysis of North Korea, that this was "a traumatic loss of face for Kim", which pushed DPRK to completely end its attempts to normalise relations with the US (and consequently the South). The country also restarted its nuclear programme.

Tensions between North and South Korea have been escalating since then. In January 2024, Kim notably announced a shift in DPRK's outlook towards South Korea. Renouncing further attempts at reunification, Kim said that the South was now to be viewed as the "primary foe and invariable principal enemy".

In July, North Korea announced that it had further fortified its southern border. All year, it has been sending helium balloons carrying trash across the southern border, in response to South Korean activists sending "propaganda-laden" balloons to the North. By blowing up the Gyeongui and Donghae roads, which connect North and

South Korea, DPRK formally laid to rest any hope for peaceful reunification.

Could there be war?

Carlin and Hecker described the current situation as "more dangerous than it has been at any time since early June 1950". Notably, they wrote that North Korea's increasing closeness to Russia and China has meant that it is not wary of the "ironclad deterrence" presented by South Korea's alliance with the US.

"There is a belief, entirely understandable, that more and more frequent symbols of our intent to escalate will keep the North at bay, as well our oft-stated conviction that if the North attacks, the counterattack will totally destroy the North Korean regime. Yet, in the current situation, clinging to these beliefs may be fatal," they wrote following Kim's declaration in January.

However, this does not necessarily mean that a war is impending. "I doubt that the situation would escalate to the level of war. North Korea is exploiting military confrontation to strengthen internal cohesion," Professor Kang Dong-wan, who teaches political science and diplomacy at Dong-a University in Busan, told the BBC.

"Whenever tensions rise, North Korea emphasises external threats to boost loyalty to the regime," he said.