

December 4th and 5th news:

International:

Donald Trump pulls US out of UN global compact on migration

The Trump administration has pulled out of the United Nations' ambitious plans to create a more humane global strategy on migration, saying involvement in the process interferes with American sovereignty, and runs counter to US immigration policies.

The US ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, informed the UN secretary general, Antonio Guterres, at the weekend that Donald Trump was not willing to continue with an American commitment to the UN global compact on migration. The announcement of the US withdrawal from the pact came hours before the opening of a UN global conference on migration

In 2016, the 193 members of the UN general assembly unanimously adopted a non-binding political declaration, the New York declaration for refugees and migrants, pledging to uphold the rights of refugees, help them resettle and ensure they had access to education and jobs.

The initiative had the enthusiastic backing of Barack Obama, and was embraced by Guterres as one of his major challenges for 2018.

The aim is to publish a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration next year in time for adoption by the UN general assembly in September.

The US decision to withdraw will delight Trump's "America first" political base, but will do little to improve his standing in developing countries.

South Korea, U.S. kick off large-scale air exercise

South Korea and the United States launched large-scale joint aerial drills on 4th December, officials said, a week after North Korea said it had tested its most advanced missile as part of a weapons programme that has raised global tensions.

The annual U.S.-South Korean drill, called Vigilant Ace, will run until December 8th, with six F-22 Raptor stealth fighters to be deployed among the more than 230 aircraft taking part. The exercises have been condemned as a provocation by the isolated North.

F-35 fighters will also join the drill, which will also include the largest number of 5th generation fighters to take part

Around 12,000 U.S. service members, including from the Marines and Navy, will join South Korean troops. Aircraft taking part will be flown from eight U.S. and South Korean military installations.

South Korean media reports said B-1B Lancer bombers could join the exercise this week

National:

PM Modi inaugurates unique world-class hospital in Ahmedabad

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a unique world-class hospital at the Swaminarayan Gurukul Vidyapeeth Pratisthanam in Ahmedabad on 3rd December. The 200-bed hospital is an integration of Yoga, Ayurveda and Allopathy.

The hospital has world-class facilities in all the 3 streams offering the best possible care for any ailment. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's association with the Swaminarayan Gurukul Vidyapeeth Pratisthanam goes back a long way.

This world-class hospital aims at providing top of the line medical and health care on subsidised rates. What sets it apart is that it fuses the best of traditional and modern medicine. It offers holistic care using Ayurveda, Yoga and allopathy.

AYUSH:

The Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy, abbreviated as AYUSH, is a governmental body in India purposed with developing, education and research in ayurveda (Indian traditional medicine), yoga, naturopathy, unani, siddha, homoeopathy, Sowa Rigpa (Traditional Tibetan medicine), and other Indigenous Medicine systems.

It was created in March 1995 as the Department of Indian Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy (ISM&H). AYUSH received its current name in March 2003. That time it was operated under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The **Ministry of AYUSH** was formed with effect from 9 November 2014 by elevation of the Department of AYUSH.

The Indian Government has decided to introduce International Yoga Award Scheme. The award will be introduced with an aim to promote yoga. At present, the AYUSH ministry is working on the scheme and it will start giving the award from 2017.

Madame Tussauds wax museum opens its doors to Delhi

India's first Madame Tussauds wax museum opened its doors to Delhi on 1st December with 50 life-like figures spanning across history, sports, music, films and politics, for the public at the iconic Regal building in central Delhi

Madame Tussauds has been a successful tourist attraction in places like London, Las Vegas, New York, Orlando, San Francisco and Hong Kong. Its maiden facility here has wax statues of Indian personalities like Prime Minister Narendra Modi, cinematic icon Amitabh Bachchan and Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi, along with many Hollywood celebrities.

The Delhi facility is the 23rd edition of Madame Tussauds

Some other personalities, whose wax statues have been erected here include Katrina Kaif, Madhuri Dixit, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Salman Khan, Will Smith, David Beckham, Kim Kardashian Justin Bieber, Beyonce Knowles, Asha Bhosle, Sachin Tendulkar, Kapil Sharma, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and Ranbir Kapoor.

Bilateral:

First phase of Chabahar port opens, to boost trade between India and Iran

The first phase of the Chabahar port was inaugurated on 3rd December by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, opening up a new strategic transit route between Iran, India and Afghanistan, bypassing Pakistan.

The port in the Sistan-Balochistan province on the energy-rich nation's southern coast lies outside the Persian Gulf and is easily accessed from India's western coast and is considered as a "gateway to golden opportunities" for trade with central Asian countries.

The first phase of the Chabahar port project is known as the Shahid Beheshti port and it was inaugurated by Rouhani in the presence of representatives of several countries of the region.

According to the ministry of external affairs, minister of state for shipping Pon Radhakrishnan represented India at the inauguration.

The port is likely to ramp up trade between India, Afghanistan and Iran in the wake of Pakistan denying transit access to New Delhi for trade with the two countries. India has been closely working with Afghanistan to create alternative, reliable access routes, bypassing Pakistan.

Under the agreement signed between India and Iran in May last year, India is to equip and operate two berths in the Chabahar Port Phase-I with capital investment of \$85.21 million and annual revenue expenditure of \$22.95 million on a 10-year lease.

INTERNATIONAL NORTH SOUTH CORRIDOR

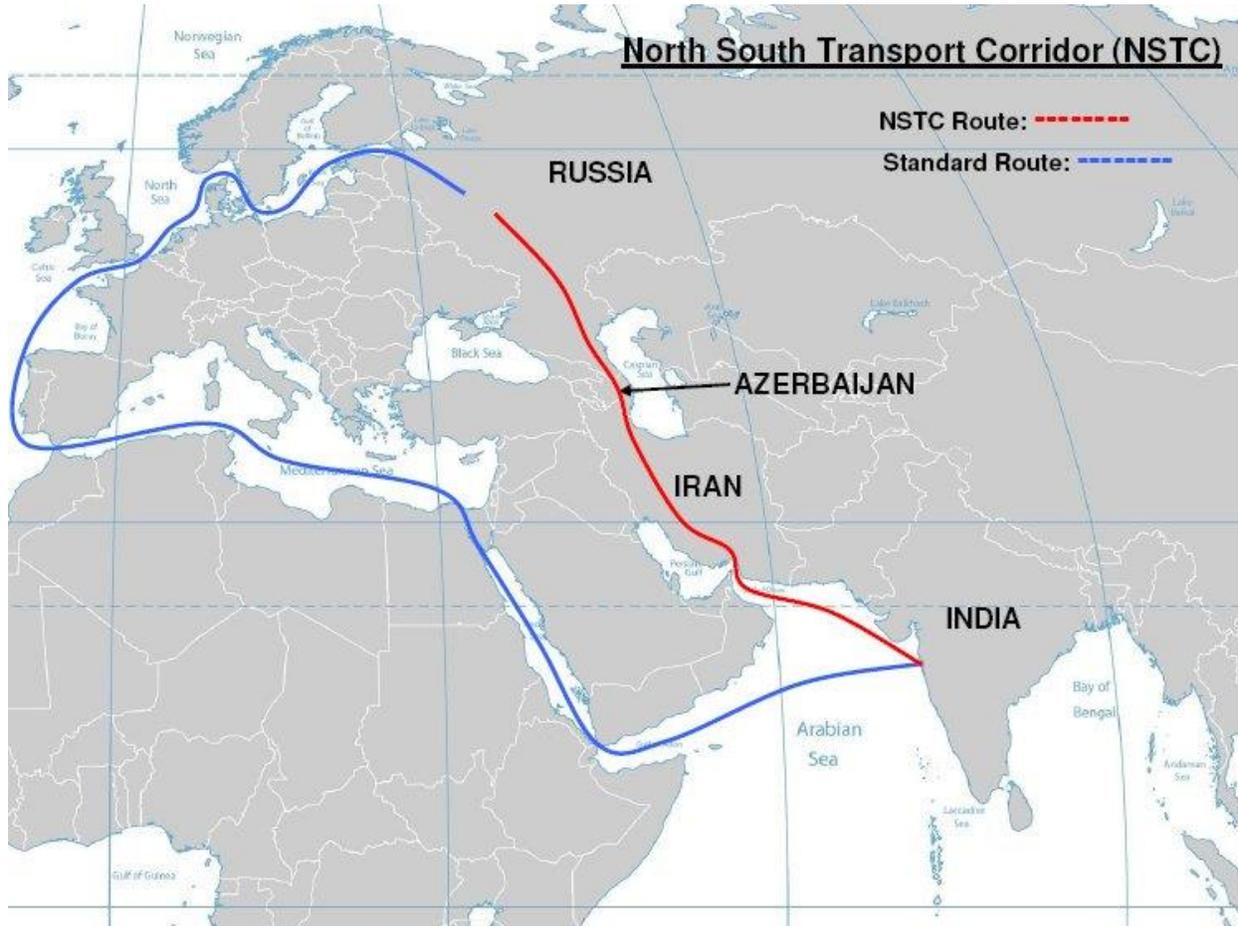
The International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC) is the ship, rail, and road route for moving freight between India, Russia, Iran, Europe and Central Asia. It is not a new concept. But the current INSTC project was initiated by Russia, India and Iran in September 2000 in St. Petersburg. The agreement was signed on 16th May 2002.

India's 'extended neighborhood' and INSTC

- With the coming of the new millennium, we are seeing a protracted effort from the Central government to connect with our 'extended neighbourhood'.
- This is obvious from the Look-East-turned-Act-East policy, Link West policy etc.
- One of the significant corner in our extended neighbourhood is the Central Asia, with which we aim to re-connect, with our **Connect Central Asia policy**, pronounced in 2012.

- Central Asia as a podium has received renewed interests after the swearing-in of the new Government. India attaining full membership in the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO), PM Modi's historic visit to the five Central Asian countries etc. stand testimony to this.
- INSTC, or International North-South Transport Corridor, receives special mention in India-Central Asia relations.

What is INSTC?



- The International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC) is a multi-modal connectivity project establish transport networks (ship, rail, and road route) for moving freight between India, Russia, Iran, Europe and Central Asia.
- INSTC would enhance accessibility to the land locked central Asian nations.
- It is a not a new concept. This ancient route was used by European, Indian and many other foreign traders to reach out to the Central Asian markets. During the time of the Safavid dynasty, it is estimated that around 10,000 Indian traders were spread across the empire. *(Safavids were one of the most significant ruling dynasties of Persia (modern Iran) from 1501 to 1736.)*
- The current INSTC project was initiated by Russia, India and Iran in September 2000 in St. Petersburg.

- The modern day INSTC is a multi-modal transportation route linking **Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf** to the **Caspian Sea** via Iran, and then onwards to **northern Europe** via St. Petersburg in Russia.
- The route primarily involves moving freight from India, Iran, Azerbaijan and Russia via ship, rail and road. The objective of the corridor is to increase trade connectivity between major cities such as Mumbai, Moscow, Tehran, Baku, Bandar Abbas, Astrakhan, Bandar Anzali and etc

Sports:

Deepika Kumari wins bronze

India's Deepika Kumari has won bronze medal at the Indoor Archery World Cup Stage 2 that concluded in Bangkok on on 3rd December. Deepika, seeded third, defeated 13th seeded Sayana Tsyrempilova of Russia

Virat Kohli created another record

Virat Kohli scored his sixth double century, in the ongoing test match against Srilanka in Delhi, this is the highest as a captain. He overtook West Indies great Brian Lara, who held the record previously with five double tons in Tests.

With a sixth double hundred, Kohli has also tied Sachin Tendulkar and Virender Sehwag for the most 200-plus scores for India in Tests. While Tendulkar had six double centuries, Sehwag had recorded four double and two triple hundreds.

Persons in news:

Aditya puri: Aditya Puri, the Managing Director of HDFC Bank, is the only Indian on **Fortune's** 'Businessperson of the Year' list. The Businessperson of the Year list is an annual ranking of world's top 20 heads of companies. At the 18th position, Aditya Puri is the only head of an Indian company on the list.

Obituary

Shashi Kapoor: Veteran actor Shashi Kapoor passed away on 4th December. Born on March 18, 1938, to the illustrious and formidable theatre and film actor Prithviraj Kapoor, Shashi Kapoor hit the spotlight at the age of four, acting in plays directed and produced by his father. He started acting in films as a child artiste in the late '40s.

His best known performances as a child actor were in *Aag* (1948) and *Awaara*(1951), where he played the younger version of the character played by Raj Kapoor. Shashi Kapoor also worked as assistant director in the '50s.

He made his debut as a leading man in the 1961 film *Dharmputra* and went on to appear in more than 116 films during '70s and until the mid '80s.

Some of his memorable films include *Deewar*, *Kabhie Kabhie*, *Namak Halal*, *Kaala Pathar* and others. He was honoured with Padma Bhushan in 2011 and received the prestigious Dada Saheb Phalke award in 2015