

New NON Alignment dimensions

- India's presence at the meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO was significant, reflecting a desire to be a part of both blocs, without antagonising either.
- The justification provided is that it represented a 'new version' of Non-alignment, viz., steering an independent course, despite open association with rival blocs.
- The philosophical underpinning for this seems to be that 'Nonalignment of the past' had not succeeded, and a way had to be found for "multiple engagements of the future.
- While, China today presents an acute 'near-term problem' for India, it is important that India does not fall into the trap that the current adversarial relationship with China is 'carved in stone', and can or never will be altered.
- India's foreign policy should be creative enough to leave an opening for an improvement in India-China relations over the longer term.
- Refashioning relations with China over the longer term is important, but attention also needs to be given on how to manage relations in the near term in the context of the

growing closeness in China-Russia relations.

- As their relations become closer, they have the potential of adversely impacting the current warmth in India-Russia relations.
- India, no doubt, has been a firm adherent of the 'No First Use Doctrine', and while nuclear relationships involving India, China and Pakistan have remained remarkably subdued over many years, India's strategic and foreign policy establishment cannot afford to overlook the nuclear aspect, given that the country is wedged between two active, and hostile, nuclear powers China and Pakistan.

THE HINDU

Lumpy skin disease

- Lumpy skin disease is caused by the lumpy skin disease virus (LSDV), which belongs to the genus capripoxvirus, a part of the poxviridae family (smallpox and monkeypox viruses are also a part of the same family). The LSDV shares antigenic similarities with the sheep pox virus (SPPV) and the goat pox virus (GTPV) or is similar in the immune response to those viruses.
- It is not a zoonotic virus, meaning the disease cannot spread to humans.

- It is a contagious vector-borne disease spread by vectors like mosquitoes, some biting flies, and ticks and usually affects host animals like cows and water buffaloes.
- According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), infected animals shed the virus through oral and nasal secretions which may contaminate common feeding and water troughs.
- Thus, the disease can either spread through direct contact with the vectors or through contaminated fodder and water.
- Studies have also shown that it can spread through animal semen during artificial insemination.
- LSD affects the lymph nodes of the infected animal, causing the nodes to enlarge and appear like lumps on the skin, which is where it derives its name from.

What is the geographical distribution and how did it spread to India?

- The disease was first observed in Zambia in 1929, subsequently spreading to most African countries extensively, followed by West Asia, Southeastern Europe, and Central Asia, and more recently spreading to South Asia and China in 2019.

What are the economic implications?

- The spread of the disease can lead to “substantial” and “severe” economic losses according to FAO and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).
- The disease leads to reduced milk production as the animal becomes weak and also loses appetite due to mouth ulceration.
- The income losses can also be due to poor growth, reduced draught power capacity and reproductive problems associated with abortions, infertility and lack of semen for artificial insemination.
- Movement and trade bans after infection also put an economic strain on the whole value chain.
- India is the world’s largest milk producer at about 210 million tonnes annually. India also has the largest headcount of cattle and buffalo worldwide.
- In Rajasthan, which is witnessing the worst impact of LSD, it has led to reduced milk production, which lessened by about three to six lakh litres a day.
- The FAO has suggested a set of spread control measures for LSD, which involves vaccination of susceptible populations with more than 80% coverage, movement

control of bovine animals and quarantining, implementing biosecurity through vector control by sanitising sheds and spraying insecticides, strengthening active and passive surveillance;

- Spreading awareness on risk mitigation among all stakeholders involved, and creating large protection and surveillance zones and vaccination zones.
- The Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying informed that the 'Goat Pox Vaccine' is "very effective" against LSD and is being used across affected States to contain the spread.
- The affected States have put movement bans in place and are isolating infected cattle and buffaloes, spraying insecticides to kill vectors like mosquitoes, with some affected States such as Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Delhi, and Uttar Pradesh also setting up dedicated control rooms and helpline numbers to guide farmers whose cattle have been infected.
- In a major breakthrough, two institutes of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) have developed an indigenous vaccine for LSD, which the Centre plans to commercialise and roll out in the next three to four months.

Spotted deer

- The chital also known as spotted deer, chital deer, and axis deer, is a deer species native to the Indian subcontinent. It was first described and given a binomial name by German naturalist Johann Christian Polycarp Erxleben in 1777
- It is sexually dimorphic; males are larger than females, and antlers are present only on males.
- The chital is listed on the IUCN Red List as least concern "because it occurs over a very wide range within which there are many large populations".
- The chital ranges over 8–30°N in India and through Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.
- The western limit of its range is eastern Rajasthan and Gujarat.
- The northern limit is along the Terai belt of the foothills of the Himalaya and from Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal through to Nepal, northern West Bengal and Sikkim and then to western Assam and the forested valleys of Bhutan, which are below an elevation of 1,100 m (3,600 ft).
- The eastern limit of its range is through western Assam to the Sundarbans of West Bengal and Bangladesh. Andaman and Nicobar

Islands and Sri Lanka are the southern limits.

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