

Buddhism diplomacy

- There is much significance to India having hosted a two--day global Buddhist summit in New Delhi (April 20-21), which was organized by the Ministry of Culture in collaboration with the International Buddhist Confederation.

THE HINDU

India's efforts so far

- The Indian government has been actively investing in its Buddhist diplomacy efforts, with a focus on promoting tourism through the development of the "Buddhist tourist circuit."
- With its strong historical and cultural ties to Buddhism, India is well-positioned to play a leading role in shaping the discourse around Buddhist issues on the global stage.
- Against the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine crisis, Mr. Modi said, "India has not given 'Yuddha' to the world but 'Buddha'."
- Buddhist diplomacy has the potential to promote regional cohesion, given that nearly 97% of the global Buddhist population is based in Asia.

- During the Cold War, China effectively used Buddhist diplomacy to engage with its neighbouring countries, and it continues to employ this approach to gain legitimacy for its Belt and Road Initiative.
- As India and China compete to dominate the Buddhist heritage as a tool for soft power, India holds an advantage due to the faith's origins in the country.
- The current government's guiding principles for foreign policy, Panchamrit principles include "Sanskriti Evam Sabhyata" which means cultural and civilizational links, which were highlighted during the Delhi summit, which saw a diverse group of 171 foreign delegates from South Korea, Thailand, Cambodia, Japan, and Taiwan, along with 150 delegates from Indian Buddhist organizations.
- Also in attendance were prominent scholars, sangha leaders, and dharma practitioners. Through such efforts, India hopes to reinforce its image as a responsible global power committed to peaceful cooperation and regional stability.
- To further strengthen its Buddhist diplomacy, India should continue promoting Buddhism at the highest levels of government, while also

organizing cultural events to showcase the country's rich Buddhist history.

- The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) could play a significant role in promoting such events within and outside India”.
- India also needs to utilize the reach of Bollywood in promoting its Buddhist heritage. China, with its influence over Hollywood, has completely dominated the narrative around Buddhism through cinema.
- In contrast, India is behind in this domain; there have not been any efforts made through cinema. India's G-20 presidency this year could be used to promote Buddhist diplomacy on a bigger scale through various cultural meetings, especially as Buddhist teachings align with the motto of India's G-20.

THE HINDU

Drug Recall

- Is there a drug recall law in India? One of the reasons for this difference in behavior in India and the U.S. is because the law in the latter requires pharmaceutical companies to recall from the market those batches of drugs that have failed to meet quality parameters.
- India, on the other hand, has been mulling the creation of a mandatory

recall law for substandard drugs since 1976, and yet no law exists that mandates such medicine be removed from the market to this day.

- In 1976, the Drugs Consultative Committee, which consists of all the state drug controllers along with senior bureaucrats from the Ministry of Health and the national drug regulator, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), discussed the issue of drug recalls.

THE HINDU

- **Why is there no recall law?**
- There are three possible answers to this question.
- The first is that the Drug Regulation Section of the Union Health Ministry is not up to the task of tackling complex drug regulatory issues due to a combination of factors including apathy, lack of expertise, and a greater interest in enabling the growth of the pharmaceutical industry than protecting public health.
- The second possible factor is India's highly fragmented regulatory structure, with each State having its own drug regulator.
- To create an effective recall mechanism, the responsibility of recalling drugs has to be centralized, with one authority wielding the legal power to hold companies liable for failures to recall drugs from across the country.
- **Food misleading add**
- On April 29, the Advertisement Monitoring Committee at the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) flagged 32 fresh cases of food business operators (FBOs) making misleading claims and advertisements
- What are the regulations?
- There are varied regulations to combat misleading advertisements and claims, some are broad, while others are product specific.
- For example, FSSAI uses the Food Safety and Standards (Advertising & Claims) Regulations, 2018 which specifically deals with food (and related products) while the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)'s regulations cover goods, products, and services.
- Further, the Programme and Advertising Codes prescribed under the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 stipulate that advertisements must not imply that the products have "some special or miraculous or supernatural property or quality, which is difficult of being proved."
- The FSSAI seeks that the advertisements and claims be "truthful, unambiguous, meaningful, not misleading and help consumers to comprehend the information provided". The claims must be scientifically substantiated by validated methods of characterizing or quantifying the ingredient or substance that is the basis for the claim.

- Product claims suggesting a prevention, alleviation, treatment, or cure of a disease, disorder, or particular psychological condition is prohibited unless specifically permitted under the regulations of the FSS Act, 2006.
- **India and ASEAN Military exercise**
- The two-day sea phase of the ASEAN- India Maritime Exercise (AIME 2023) began with naval ships and aircraft from India, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Brunei taking part.
- They were in the Vietnamese Exclusive Economic Zone when the Chinese boats moved towards them.