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CURRENT AFFAIR

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India - Philippines Partnership and the South China Sea

- ➔ India and Philippines have organized the 5th meeting of the **Joint Commission** on Bilateral Cooperation (JCBC).
- ➔ During this, both countries decided to expand their defence partnership.
- ➔ The defence sector has become a major pillar of the India-Philippines partnership because of China's claims on the **South China Sea region**.
- ➔ India has appealed to all stakeholders to abide by the 2016 award by the **Permanent Court of Arbitration** on the South China Sea (SCS). Also, called for respecting the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**.
- ➔ The ruling contradicts China's extensive claims over the waters of the South China Sea. China has a dispute with South-East Asian countries regarding this area.
- ➔ **South China Sea Dispute:** China claims 90% of the South China Sea as its own. Its claim is based on the U-shaped nine-dash line.

- **Territorial Disputes:** Brunei, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam oppose China's claim on the South China Sea.

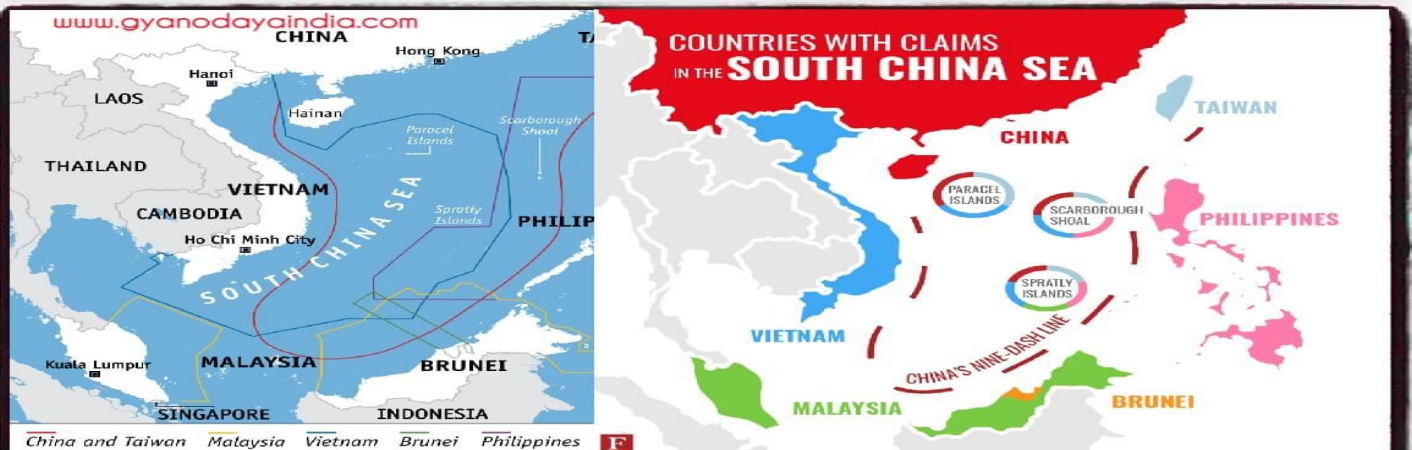
➔ **India's interests in the South China Sea:**

- Commercial interests associated with the sector
- Freedom of Navigation
- Rule-based regional order

➔ **UNCLOS** was adopted in **1982** and came into force in 1994.

➔ It sets a broad framework of law and order on the oceans and seas of the world.

➔ At the same time, it also makes rules governing all kinds of uses of the oceans and their resources.



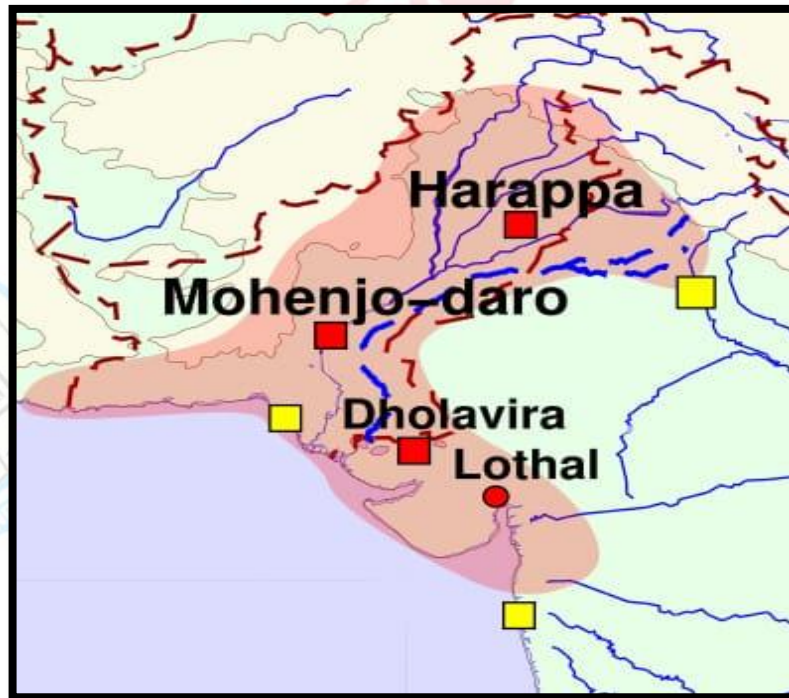
दक्षिण चीन सागर विवाद

'National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC)' at Lothal, Gujarat

- ➔ The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) is developing an **NMHC** at **Lothal** with world-class facilities.
- ➔ It is being developed under the **Sagarmala Programme**. It aims to showcase India's rich and diverse maritime heritage.
- ➔ It will house all the diverse and rich artefacts from ancient to modern times for education-cum-entertainment purposes.
- ➔ **This complex will include the following:**
 - World's Highest Lighthouse Museum
 - The World's largest open-water gallery
 - India's largest naval museum
- ➔ It is being developed as one of the biggest tourist destinations in the world.
- ➔ It is being funded by the **MoPSW** and the Ministry of Culture through a grant given under the National Culture Fund.

→ About Lothal-

- It was a major city of the **Indus Valley Civilization (IVC)**. Evidence of the oldest man-made **Dry Dock of 2400 BC** has been obtained from here.
- The site is situated between the **Bhogwa** and **Sabarmati rivers** near the Gulf of Khambhat.
- It was nominated for listing as a **UNESCO** World Heritage Site in 2014. However, it is still on the tentative list of **UNESCO**.



→ About Indus Valley Civilization:-

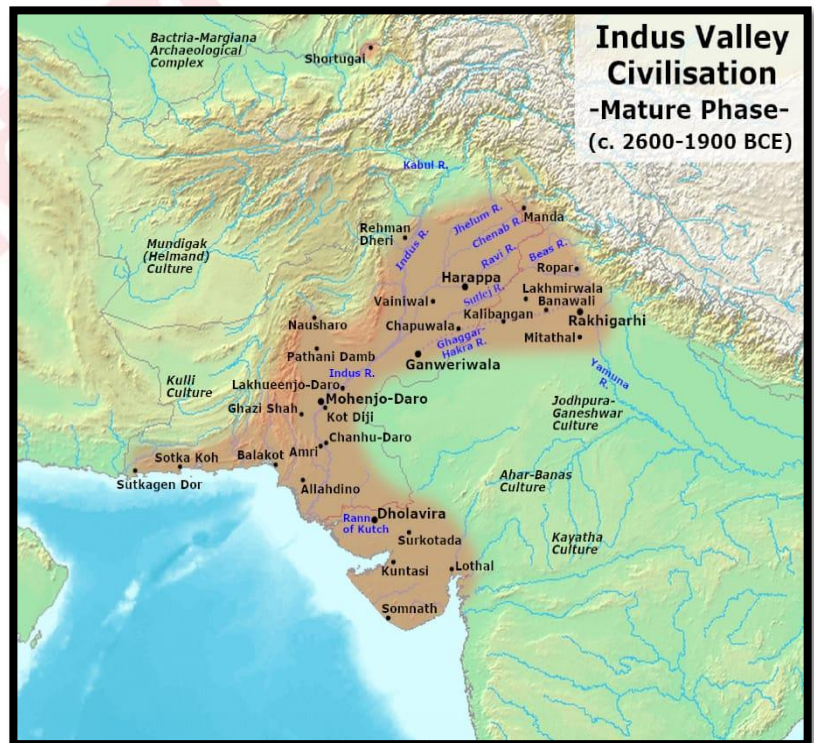
- It is also known as the **Harappan Civilization**.
- It was the largest (geographical) civilization among the four ancient urban civilizations of the then world. The other three civilizations are the civilization of **Egypt, Mesopotamia** and **China**.
- This civilization flourished in western South Asia **around 2,500 BC**. Presently it is the territory of Pakistan and North-West India.

○ **Sagarmala**

Programme:

MoPSW started this program in 2015.

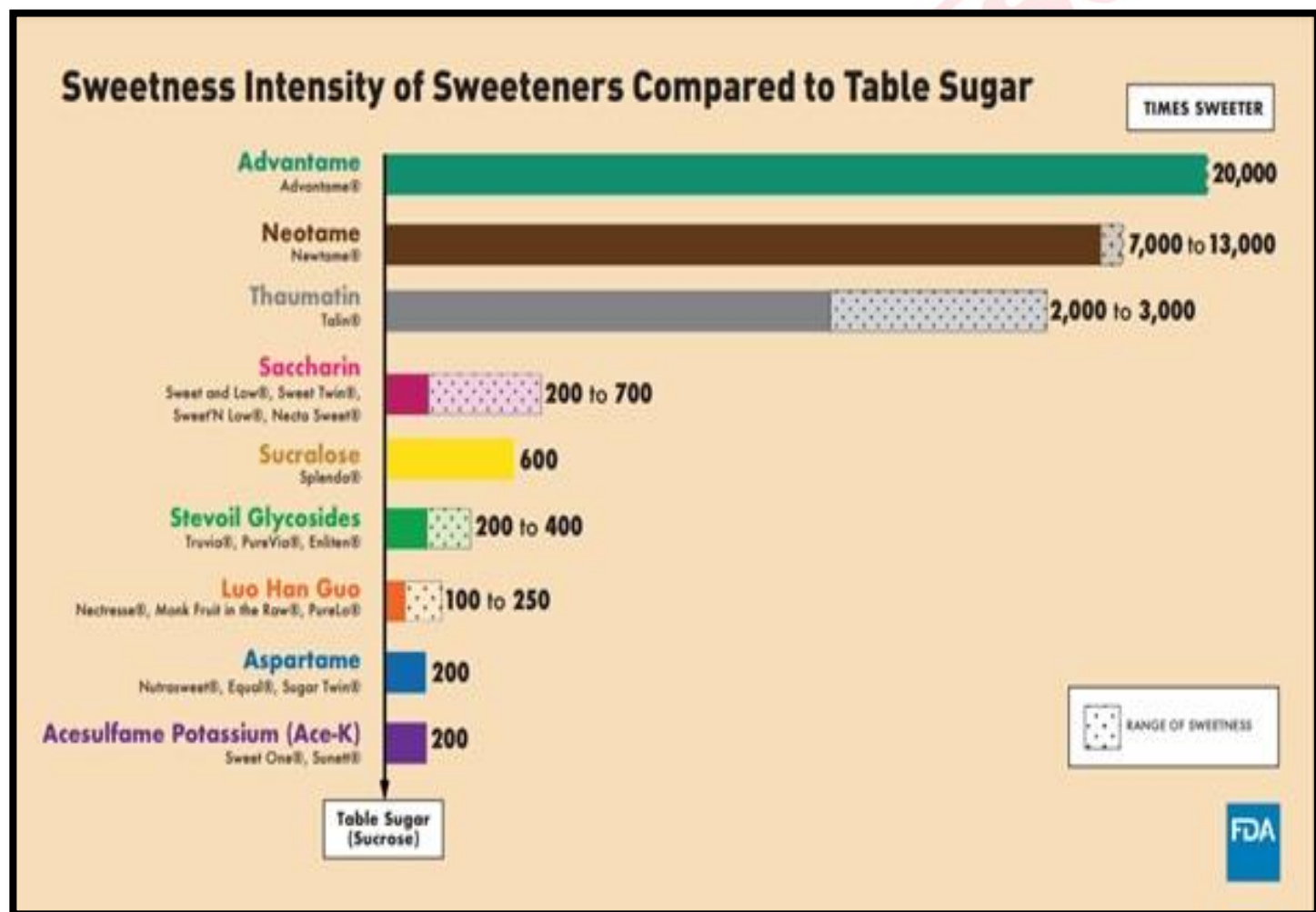
- Under this programme, 7500 km of India's overall port infrastructure is being developed along the long coastline.



Aspartame

- ➔ Recently the cancer research arm of the **World Health Organization (WHO)** is set to list the popular sugar substitute aspartame as "possibly carcinogenic to humans".
- ➔ Aspartame is also known as artificial sugar all over the world.
- ➔ Chemically, aspartame is a methyl ester of two natural amino acids, L-aspartic acid and a dipeptide of **L-phenylalanine**.
- ➔ It was discovered in 1965 by **James M. Schlatter**, a chemist at the American pharmaceutical company **G. D. Searle & Company** (now a subsidiary of Pfizer).
- ➔ It is used in a wide range of diet soft drinks, sugar-free chewing gum, sugar-free ice cream, sugar-free breakfast cereals, etc.
- ➔ According to the **FDA**, aspartame is about 200 times sweeter than table sugar.
- ➔ Aspartame is preferred by people trying to reduce calories or lose weight, or by diabetics because while 2 teaspoons (8 grams) of sugar provide **about 32 kcal of energy**, 1 gram of aspartame is only 4 kcal.

- ➔ It is often argued that a **12 floz** (about 350 ml) can of regular cola contains about 10 teaspoons of sugar, whereas the same amount of aspartame-containing cola contains **only 7 kcal**.
- ➔ In fact, cans/bottles of diet fizzy drinks often have "**zero sugar**" or "**zero calories**" written on the packaging.



UAE- India Economic Summit

- ➔ The **UAE India Economic Summit** was held on 3 July at the ADGM Auditorium in **Al Maryah Island, Abu Dhabi**.
- ➔ It was organized under the theme ."Fostering Synergies–Uniting the Falcon and Tiger Economies,"
- ➔ It was jointly hosted by **SBI Capital Markets Limited** (SBICAPS) and Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM).
- ➔ It was attended by industry leaders from India and UAE and officially inaugurated the **SBICAPS ADGM** branch office.
- ➔ Several topics such as startups, green energy, capital markets and stressed asset resolution were discussed during the summit.
- ➔ The conference featured a series of panel discussions discussing key topics in the new economy.
- ➔ The Sustainability and Green Energy panel discussed financing options for sustainable projects, climate-conscious investing, regulatory aspects of sustainable finance, and the impact of carbon trading.

- ➔ The Capital Markets panel discussed various aspects of the capital market and investment opportunities.
- ➔ A panel also discussed stressed asset resolution.
- ➔ The **UAE-India Economic Summit** has not only strengthened ties between the two countries but also opened up avenues for investment and prosperity for both countries.



Panchayat Development Index

- Union Minister of State for **Panchayati Raj, Kapil Moreshwar Patil** said that in order to evaluate various indicators for targeted development in villages, the Central Government has prepared the '**Panchayat Development Index**' (PDI).
- The index will act as a statistical tool to measure and monitor development at the panchayat level. On an experimental basis, data was compiled for **four districts of Maharashtra** – Pune, Sangli, Satara and Solapur.
- The **PDI** is a composite index that measures the performance of panchayats in achieving the localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- It provides a holistic and evidence-based assessment of the development status of Panchayats and highlights their strengths and weaknesses.
- **PDI** aims to promote the localization of **SDGs** by raising awareness about their importance among panchayats and stakeholders.

- ➔ It encourages Panchayats to adopt best practices and innovations to improve their performance in achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- ➔ The Panchayat Development Index ranks panchayats at various levels, including district, block and village, based on their aggregate score.
- ➔ **Panchayats are categorized into four grades:** D (scores under 40%), C (40-60%), B (60-75%), A (75-90%), and A+ (above 90%).
- ➔ The Panchayat Development Index considers nine themes, including poverty-free and improved livelihoods, healthy villages, child-friendly villages, water-sufficient villages, clean and green villages, self-sustaining infrastructure, socially equitable and safe villages, good governance and women. - Includes friendly villages.
- ➔ Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) is a system of rural local self-government in India.
- ➔ Local self-government is the management of local affairs by local bodies elected by the local people.

➔ Through the **73rd Constitutional Amendment Act**, of 1992, for the establishment of democracy at the local level, Panchayati Raj Institutions were given constitutional status and they were entrusted with the task of rural development in the country.

