

The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE

Thursday, 07 Nov , 2024

Edition: International | Table of Contents

Page 01 Syllabus : Prelims Fact	Donald Trump makes historic comeback, wins second term
Page 02 Syllabus : Prelims Fact	Anglo-Indian leaders call for restoration of reservation in Parliament and Assemblies
Page 07 Syllabus : GS 3 : Science and Technology	RNA editing is promising to go where DNA editing can't
In News	Common Cat
In News	International Energy Agency
Page 09 : Editorial Analysis: Syllabus : GS 2 : International Relations	What Trump 2.0 means for India

—It's about quality—

Donald Trump has won a second term as U.S. President, defeating Kamala Harris and leading Republicans to secure the Senate.

- His campaign focused on economic concerns and immigration, appealing to Hispanic and younger voters, marking a significant political comeback.



Donald Trump makes historic comeback, wins second term

Republicans reach majority in Senate with at least 52 of 100 seats

78-year-old Trump will be the oldest President to assume office

Republican campaign against illegal migration finds support

Sriram Lakshman
WASHINGTON DC

Former U.S. President and Republican Donald Trump made a forceful comeback as he won a second term in office, defeating Vice-President Kamala Harris, the Democratic nominee, to become the 47th President of the United States. Republicans took control of the Senate, increasing their tally to at least 52 of the chamber's 100 seats.

That he had run a campaign of personal insults, misogynistic jibes, comments with racist overtones, committed felonies, instigated a mob which went on to attack the Capitol, and threatened allies abroad, was not enough to keep the majority of Americans from electing Mr. Trump their leader, again.

At the end of the day, the data suggest that voters wanted a break with current circumstances, driven primarily by their concerns around inflation and the economy, as well as illegal migration – the focus of Mr. Trump's campaign. The former President had promised to secure the border, and said he would conduct mass deporta-

tions and impose heavy import tariffs to fund tax cuts.

Mr. Trump, 78, is only one of two Presidents elected to a non-consecutive second term, and he will also become the oldest President at the time of entry into office.

U.S. President Joe Biden, 82, was pressured by his party to not seek another term, owing to concerns around age-related cognitive issues.

Theme of unity

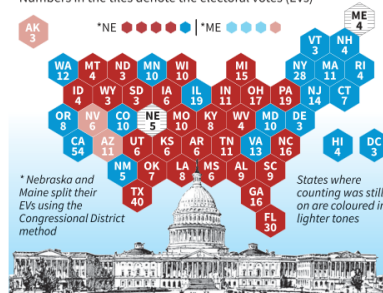
Ms. Harris, who could have become the first Indian American and Black woman President – had she won – campaigned on a theme of unity as she reached out to Independents and traditional Republicans who did not back Mr. Trump. She also focused on the risks to women's reproductive rights, especially restrictions on abortions, under a conservative government. Her campaign dwelt on the authoritarian tendencies and plans of Mr. Trump.

Ms. Harris was suddenly thrust onto the stage after Mr. Biden withdrew from the race in July and had difficulty in quickly defining her positions on the economy, defending her changing stance on illegal migration, and separating herself adequately from her predecessor's administration.

It turned out, in the end, that she could not con-

U.S. rolls out a red carpet

The tilemap depicts the State-wise results. States won/led by Trump are in red while those won/led by Harris are in blue. Numbers in the tiles denote the electoral votes (EVs)



vince enough voters.

During the night on Tuesday, Ms. Harris lost the most crucial prize of Pennsylvania by 2.3 points, with 97% of the votes counted. She also lost or looked poised to lose other crucial parts of the 'Blue Wall' (traditionally Democratic strongholds), with Wisconsin and Michigan turning red.

Mr. Trump also won Ohio, Iowa, and West Virginia – States that are home to large numbers of blue-collar workers and form the Rust Belt, along with Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Ohio.

Having lost two crucial battleground Sun Belt States – North Carolina and Georgia – Ms. Harris's chances of winning were next to impossible after she lost Pennsylvania.

Polls have been suggesting that Mr. Trump's message has reached new audiences, such as Hispanic voters and younger Gen-Z voters.

Exit poll results (Edison Research via Reuters) suggest Mr. Trump's support from Hispanic voters went up 13 points since the last election (45% versus Ms. Harris's 53%) and initial results suggest he managed to retain Black voter support at 2020 levels (12% versus Ms. Harris's 86%). Mr. Trump did especially well among Hispanic men, while his support among white women fell by 3 points (52% versus Ms. Harris's 47%).

By Wednesday afternoon, the Associated Press had called 292 Electoral College votes for Mr. Trump and 224 for Ms.

Harris. At least 270 votes, distributed unevenly across States, are required to win the Presidency.

Popular choice

Remarkably, Mr. Trump was already projected to win the popular vote by Wednesday morning. George W. Bush won the popular vote in 2004, the last Republican to do so until now.

Republicans also gained control of the Senate, increasing their tally to 52 of the 100 seats, even as the contest for the U.S. House of Representatives remained open as *The Hindu* went to press. If Republicans win the House, they would control the White House and U.S. Congress, enabling them to push through a conservative agenda in Washington.

"...We're going to help our country heal," Mr. Trump said, speaking in West Palm Beach, Florida, before he had reached the 270 mark.

"It needs help very badly. We're going to fix our borders," he added. Later in the speech, he indicated that immigrants could come in legally.

Mr. Trump, who has survived two recent assassination attempts, said he had been told by others that "God spared my [his] life for a reason".

Mr. Trump spoke of the coming of a "golden age" for America, saying, "America has given us an

unprecedented and powerful mandate. We have taken back control of the Senate."

"It's time to put the divisions of the past four years behind us," said Mr. Trump, who himself ran a divisive campaign.

Speaking after Mr. Trump's initial remarks, Vice-President-elect J.D. Vance called the results "the greatest political comeback" in American history.

"He's turned out to be a good choice," Mr. Trump said about Mr. Vance, to laughter from his supporters.

"It took a little heat at the beginning, but I knew the brain was a good one, as good as it gets," Mr. Trump said. His choice of Mr. Vance, a Yale Law School graduate who grew up in a white working-class family, was questioned because of Mr. Vance's gaffes (a reference to "childless cat ladies" was thought to cost Mr. Trump politically during the campaign).

Mr. Vance's wife, Usha Vance, whose parents immigrated to the U.S. from India, is set to become the first Indian American Second Lady of the United States.

In Washington, Ms. Harris was scheduled to make a speech at her alma mater Howard University on Wednesday afternoon.

FULL COVERAGE
» PAGES 14 & 15

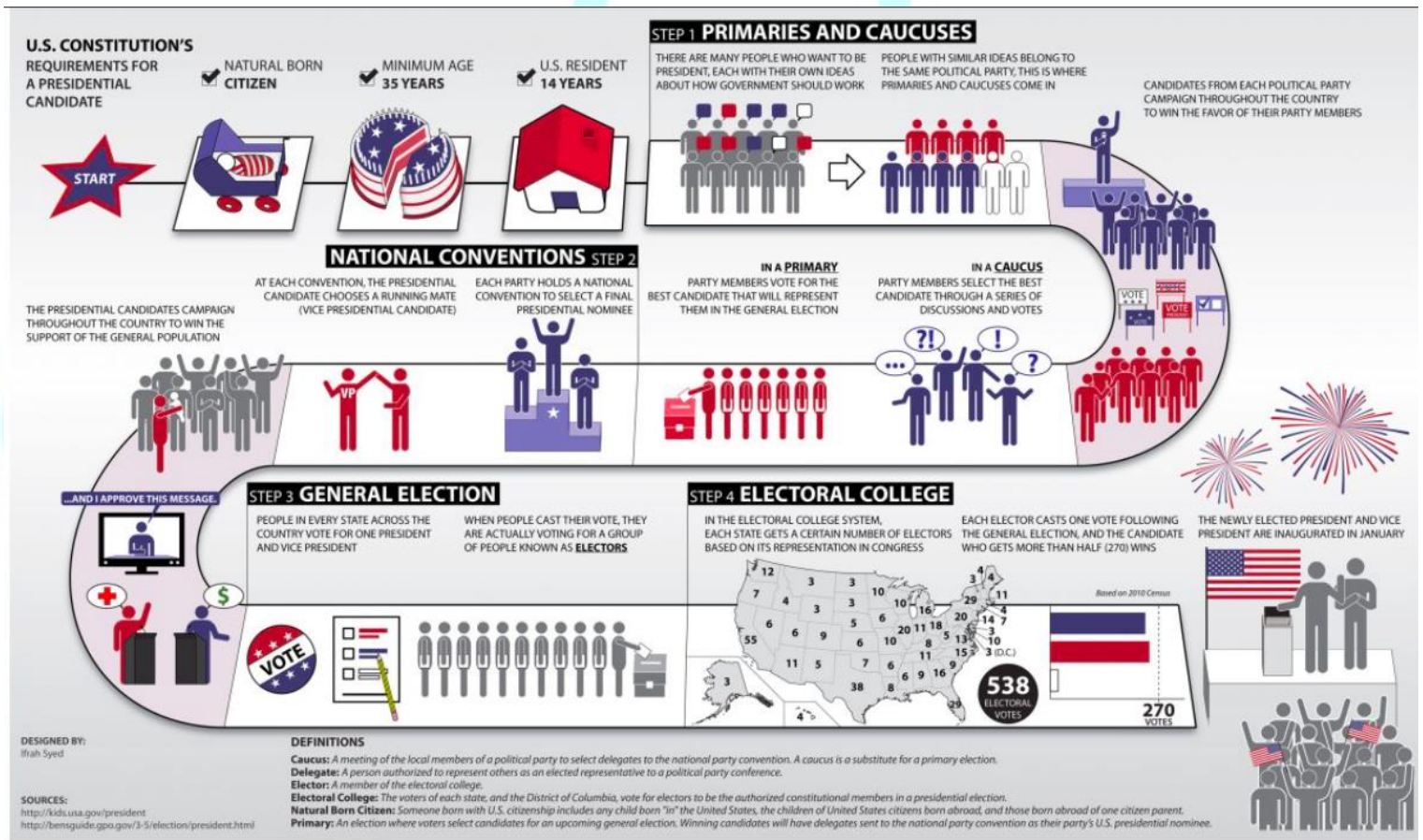
Analysis of the news:

- Donald Trump won the U.S. presidency for a second term, defeating Kamala Harris, the Democratic nominee.

Daily News Analysis

- Republicans gained control of the Senate with 52 seats, setting up a conservative-leaning Congress.
- Trump's campaign centred on economic concerns, inflation, immigration, and border security.
- He promised mass deportations, increased border security, and tariffs to fund tax cuts.
- Kamala Harris emphasised unity, reproductive rights, and opposed Trump's authoritarian tendencies but struggled to appeal to enough voters.
- Harris lost key battleground states, including Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Michigan, which diminished her chances.
- Trump gained support from new demographics, particularly Hispanic and Gen-Z voters, while retaining support among Black voters.
- Usha Vance, J.D. Vance's wife, will become the first Indian American Second Lady of the U.S.

How US President Is Elected?



A meeting of Anglo-Indian community leaders recently called for the reinstatement of reserved representation for Anglo-Indians in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.

- ▶ They urged the government to conduct a caste census to accurately reflect their population. Leaders highlighted the community's socio-economic challenges and lack of adequate political representation.

Anglo-Indian leaders call for restoration of reservation in Parliament and Assemblies

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

A meeting of the leaders of Anglo-Indian community, held here on Wednesday, urged the Centre to reinstate the quota for Anglo-Indians in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies. They asked the Centre to conduct a caste census to ascertain the number of Anglo-Indians in the country.

The leaders said the voice of Anglo-Indians is not heard in Parliament or Assemblies due to the denial of representation. They said the government did a big injustice to the Anglo-Indian community by quoting the 2011 Census figures, which was not a caste census. "By depending on a declaration by 296 Anglo-Indians, how can the government come to the conclusion that in India only 296 Anglo-Indians are

There is a population of 4 lakh people from the community across India, the leaders point out

there," they asked. The leaders reasoned that there is a population of nearly four lakh Anglo-Indians in the country and it was a cruelty to deny representation to the community without ascertaining the true figures.

"A study conducted by the Ministry of Minority Affairs in 2013 showed that the Anglo-Indian community faces educational and economical backwardness, housing problems and also identity crisis. While this is the reality, what data is there with the government to show that the community is 'well-off'," the leaders asked.

Charles Dias, former

Member of Parliament and convenor of the gathering, said the Anglo-Indian community that has contributed much for India is being neglected.

"They have almost lost control of the very institutions they built for the education of their children and often denied admissions to their children and appointments for them in these institutions," he said.

The meeting requested the Centre to conduct the forthcoming Census by separately enumerating all castes in the country and by including a separate column to enumerate the Anglo-Indian community in view of losing their constitutional protections.

They asked the Centre to appoint a Commission to ascertain the social, economical and educational situation of the Anglo-Indian community.

Constitutional provisions for Anglo Indians:

- ▶ Representation in Parliament: The Constitution of India provided representation for the Anglo-Indian community in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies through Article 331 and 333.

Daily News Analysis

- **Nomination:** The President could nominate up to two members of the Anglo-Indian community to the Lok Sabha under Article 331, and one member to the State Assemblies under Article 333 if they were not adequately represented.
- **Relevance:** This provision was intended to ensure the political voice of the Anglo-Indian community.
- **Revocation:** The 104th Constitutional Amendment Act (2019) ended the provision for nomination of Anglo-Indians to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, effectively removing their representation.
- **Caste Census:** The Anglo-Indian community advocates for a caste census to reflect their numbers accurately.



A Massachusetts-based biotech company, Wave Life Sciences, has pioneered clinical-level RNA editing to treat genetic disorders, offering a temporary, reversible alternative to DNA editing.

- Unlike DNA edits, RNA modifications do not make permanent changes to the genome, presenting lower immune risks
- RNA editing holds promise for treating several genetic diseases, though challenges remain.

RNA editing is promising to go where DNA editing can't

DNA editing makes permanent changes to a person's genome, and this can lead to irreversible errors. On the other hand, RNA editing makes temporary changes, allowing the effects to fade. In a clinic, this means a doctor can stop the therapy if a problem arises and mitigate long-term risk

Manjeera Gowravaram

In October 16, a biotechnology company in Massachusetts in the U.S. named Wave Life Sciences made headlines for becoming the first company to treat a genetic condition by editing RNA at the clinical level. But for all that this is a breakthrough, scientists had anticipated it.

The role of RNA in a function called RNA interference – where small RNA molecules keep a gene from being expressed – has been essential for the success of CRISPR-Cas9 gene-editing. The rapid development of mRNA vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic exemplified the complex as well as vital role RNAs play beyond gene expression and regulation. Now, at the dawn of a new era in precision medicine, RNA editing has made a pitch to be at the forefront.

What is RNA editing?

Cells synthesise messenger RNA (mRNA) using instructions in DNA and then “read” instructions from the mRNA to make functional proteins. During this process of transcription, the cell may make mistakes in the mRNA's sequence and, based on them produce faulty proteins. Many of these proteins have been known to cause debilitating disorders. RNA editing allows scientists to fix mistakes in the mRNA after the cell has synthesised it but before the cell reads it to make the proteins.

One technique involves a group of enzymes called adenosine deaminase acting on RNA (ADAR). Adenosine is one of the building blocks of RNA. ADAR works by converting some of the adenosine blocks in mRNA to another molecule called inosine. This is useful because inosine mimics the function of a different RNA building block called guanosine. Because guanosine-like function is found where adenosine is supposed to be, the cell detects a mistake and proceeds to correct it, in the process restoring the mRNA's original function. And then the cell makes normal proteins.

Scientists took advantage of ADAR's effects to pair it with a guide RNA (or gRNA): the gRNA guides ADAR to a specific part of the mRNA, where the ADAR works its magic. They expect a variety of serious genetic conditions can be treated using such site-specific RNA editing.

RNA editing in development

Wave Life Sciences used RNA editing to treat μ -1 antitrypsin deficiency (AATD), an inherited disorder. In patients suffering from AATD, levels of the protein μ -1 antitrypsin build up and affect the liver and the lungs. People with AATD affecting the lungs currently go through weekly intravenous therapy for relief; among people where AATD has affected the liver, a liver transplant is the sole treatment option.

In its therapy, dubbed WVE-006, the company used a gRNA to lead ADAR enzymes to specific single-point mutations in the mRNA sequence of the SERPINA1 gene, which contains the instructions for cells to make μ -1 antitrypsin. A single-point mutation occurs when a single building block of the mRNA is wrong. Once at the target, the ADAR enzymes fix the mRNA, and the



Cells synthesise messenger RNA, or mRNA, using instructions in DNA and then read instructions from the latter to make functional proteins. VCHAL/GETTY IMAGES

cells produce μ -1 antitrypsin at normal levels.

Wave Life Sciences is planning to extend its RNA editing technology to treat Huntington's disease, Duchenne muscular dystrophy, and obesity. The first two and some forms of obesity are associated with single-point mutations.

Some other companies using ADAR enzymes to perform RNA editing are Korro Bio for AATD and Parkinson's disease; ProOr Therapeutics for heart disease and bile acid buildup in the liver; and Shape Therapeutics for neurological conditions. They use different guides, RNA types, and delivery mechanisms, however.

Researchers are also extending RNA editing to make changes in the exon. mRNA is made up of portions called introns and exons; exons eventually code for a protein, whereas the introns are non-coding parts and are removed from the RNA before it's used to make a protein.

A company called Ascidian Therapeutic is testing its candidate to treat ABCA4 retinopathy. Several mutations in the ABCA4 gene lead to different levels of protein expression and disease severity. The ABCA4 gene is large, so standard gene replacement therapy is not feasible; instead, RNA editing is expected to be able to offer a way out. The candidate started clinical trials in January 2024 with a fast-track designation granted by the U.S. drug regulator.

The same regulator permitted South Korean company Rzymomics to conduct trials in the U.S. for its candidate to treat forms of liver cancer. In South Korea, this candidate has already proceeded to phase I and II trials. It works by regulating the

RNA editing is in its nascent stage, yet there are already at least 11 companies developing RNA editing methods for a range of diseases. Their efforts have elicited interest from large pharmaceutical firms, including Eli Lilly, Roche, and Novo Nordisk

production of human telomerase reverse transcriptase, a protein that affects tumour formation.

RNA vs. DNA editing

RNA editing has some advantages over DNA editing, especially on safety and flexibility. DNA editing makes permanent changes to a person's genome, and sometimes this can lead to irreversible errors. On the other hand, RNA editing makes temporary changes, allowing the effects of the edits to fade over time. In a clinic, this means a doctor can stop the therapy if a problem arises and mitigate long-term risk.

Second, CRISPR-Cas9 and other DNA editing tools require proteins acquired from certain bacteria to perform the cutting function, but these proteins can elicit undesirable immune reactions in some cases. RNA editing relies on ADAR enzymes, which already occur in the human body and thus present a lower risk of allergic reactions. This is useful for people who require repeated treatment and/or who have immune sensitivities.

Challenges in RNA editing

A big challenge in RNA editing is its

specificity. ADARs can perform adenosine-inosine changes in both targeted and non-targeted parts of mRNA, or skip the targeted parts altogether. When ADARs don't align with the adenosine of interest, potentially serious side-effects could arise.

Scientists are currently trying to improve the accuracy of gRNA by incorporating mechanisms that shield non-targeted parts of the mRNA.

Another challenge is the transient nature of RNA editing; this is also its strength, but individuals will need to be treated repeatedly to sustain the therapy's effects.

Third, current methods to deliver the gRNA-ADAR complex use lipid nanoparticles.

Researchers used them to great success to make mRNA vaccines to treat COVID-19 and the adeno-associated virus (AAV) vectors used in gene editing. But both of these methods have a limited carrying capacity, meaning they can't transport large molecules very well.

Market value and future outlook

RNA editing is in its nascent stage, yet there are already at least 11 biotechnology companies worldwide developing RNA editing methods for a range of diseases. Their efforts have elicited interest from large pharmaceutical firms, including Eli Lilly, Roche, and Novo Nordisk.

As research and clinical trials advance in the field of RNA editing, it seems like only a matter of time before RNA editing becomes a fixture of the gene-editing toolkit in clinical practice.

(Manjeera Gowravaram has a PhD in RNA biochemistry and works as a freelance science writer.gmanjeera@gmail.com)

Breakthrough in RNA Editing by Wave Life Sciences

- Wave Life Sciences, a biotech firm in Massachusetts, became the first to use RNA editing at the clinical level to treat genetic conditions.
- The success builds on RNA's essential role in functions like RNA interference and the rapid development of mRNA vaccines, highlighting RNA's importance beyond gene regulation.

RNA Editing: Mechanism and Technique

- RNA Editing Process: RNA editing corrects mistakes in mRNA after synthesis but before protein formation, preventing faulty proteins associated with genetic disorders.
- ADAR Enzyme: ADAR (adenosine deaminase acting on RNA) converts adenosine to inosine in mRNA, mimicking guanosine's function and allowing for accurate protein synthesis.
- Guided RNA (gRNA): A gRNA directs ADAR to specific mRNA segments, allowing site-specific RNA editing for treating genetic disorders.

Expanding RNA Editing Applications

- The company aims to treat Huntington's disease, Duchenne muscular dystrophy, and some forms of obesity using similar RNA editing techniques.
- Other firms, like Korro Bio and Shape Therapeutics, are also working on RNA editing for conditions like Parkinson's, heart disease, and neurological disorders.

Advantages and Challenges of RNA vs. DNA Editing

- **Advantages of RNA Editing:**
 - Temporary Changes: RNA edits are temporary, allowing effects to fade over time, which helps reduce long-term risks.
 - Lower Immune Reaction Risk: Uses ADAR enzymes naturally present in humans, minimising immune responses.
 - Reversible Therapy: RNA editing enables therapy discontinuation if issues arise, enhancing patient safety.
- **Challenges of RNA Editing:**
 - Specificity Issues: ADAR enzymes can affect non-targeted areas, risking side effects.
 - Repeated Treatments Needed: Effects are temporary, requiring ongoing administration.
 - Delivery Constraints: Lipid nanoparticles and vectors limit transport capacity for large molecules.

In News : Common cat

The elusive common cat snake was recently discovered in the Valmiki Tiger Reserve, Bihar.



About Common Cat Snake:

- ▶ Common Cat Snake, also known as Indian gamma snake, is a species of rear-fanged snake endemic to South Asia.
- ▶ Scientific Name: *Boiga trigonata*
- ▶ In India, it is found all over the country, excluding north-east states after Sikkim; it is also, not found in Indian islands.
- ▶ Habitat: It can be found in almost all kinds of forests and wide ranges of elevations.
- ▶ While venomous, the Common Cat Snake's venom is not considered highly dangerous to humans. It primarily uses its venom to subdue prey.
- ▶ Features:
 - It is a medium-sized snake that is usually found in the 70-100 cm range.
 - Its body is slender, thin, and bears a thin tail.

- Its upper body colour is grey-brown, with cream-coloured irregular markings, margined with black colour.
 - Its underside is yellow-white or yellow-brown.
 - Its head is large, triangular-shaped, and distinctly broader than the neck.
 - Unlike other cat snakes of its range, this species bears characteristic "gamma" or "Y"-shaped marking that helps in its quick identification on the field.
 - Lifespan: 12-20 years
 - Diet: It primarily consists of small vertebrates.
- ➡ IUCN Red List: Least Concern



In News : International Energy Agency

The global market for clean energy technologies is set to rise from \$700 billion in 2023 to more than \$2 trillion by 2035 – close to the value of the world's crude oil market in recent years, says a first-of-its-kind study by the International Energy Agency (IEA).



About International Energy Agency (IEA):

- It is an autonomous intergovernmental organisation within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) framework.
- Mission: It works with governments and industry to shape a secure and sustainable energy future for all.

Background:

- It was created in response to the 1973-1974 oil crisis when an oil embargo by major producers pushed prices to historic levels and exposed the vulnerability of industrialised countries to dependency on oil imports.
- It was founded in 1974 to ensure the security of oil supplies.

Daily News Analysis

- IEA's mandate has expanded over time to include tracking and analyzing global key energy trends, promoting sound energy policy, and fostering multinational energy technology cooperation.
- It is the global energy authority, providing data, analysis, and solutions on all fuels and all technologies.
- In recent years, the IEA has also focused on renewable energy and initiatives focused on environmental protection and stopping climate change.
- Membership: It is made up of 31 member countries, 13 association countries, and 5 accession countries.
- Criteria for membership: A candidate country to the IEA must be a member country of the OECD. In addition, it must demonstrate several requirements.
- Crude oil and/or product reserves equivalent to 90 days of the previous year's net imports, to which the government has immediate access (even if it does not own them directly) and could be used to address disruptions to global oil supply;
- A demand restraint programme to reduce national oil consumption by up to 10%;
- Legislation and organisation to operate the Co-ordinated Emergency Response Measures (CERM) on a national basis;
- Legislation and measures to ensure that all oil companies under its jurisdiction report information upon request;
- Measures are in place to ensure the capability of contributing its share of an IEA collective action.
- India joined this organization in 2017 as an Associate member.
- Reports published by IEA: World Energy Outlook, World Energy Balances, Energy Technology Perspectives, World Energy Statistics and Net Zero by 2050.

What Trump 2.0 means for India

Five years after Prime Minister Narendra Modi told a crowd in Houston, Texas, that India had “connected well” with Republican candidate Donald Trump and followed it up with “*Abki Baar Trump Sarkar* (This time, a Trump government)”, Mr. Trump has gained the votes required to become the U.S.’s 47th President. Mr. Modi’s statement reflected the bonhomie that the two leaders shared throughout Mr. Trump’s first tenure. But when we go beyond personal ties to bilateral ties, “Trump 1.0” was a mixed bag for India. New Delhi will no doubt welcome Trump 2.0, even as it braces for the impact of some of his methods, such as using social media to open coercion in order to drive home a point.

Where the road will be smooth

There are several reasons for the Modi government to be delighted with Mr. Trump’s victory. The President-elect has made it clear that he intends to build on his past history with India, which will include building trade ties, opening up more technology for Indian companies, and making more U.S. military hardware available for Indian defence forces. He will pick up the broken threads of negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement, which saw intense negotiations in 2019-2020 before he lost power, and which former President Joe Biden showed no interest in continuing. Rather than pushing India on carbon emission cuts, Mr. Trump is likely to encourage India to buy into U.S. oil and LNG, along the lines of the Memorandum of Understanding for the Driftwood LNG plant in Louisiana in 2019, which would have brought \$2.5 billion in investment from Petronet India into the U.S. but was shelved a year later.

Under Mr. Trump, India-U.S. ties are also unlikely to face less trouble over issues such as democratic norms, minority rights, press freedoms, and human rights, which the Modi government faced from the Biden administration and the U.S. Commission on International



Suhasini Haidar

New Delhi’s warm welcome for Trump 2.0 will be tempered by concerns over his social media posts and tough rhetoric on trade and tariffs

Religious Freedom. Nor will they need to worry about queries on the treatment of climate and human rights NGOs hit by the Foreign (Contribution) Regulation Act, 2010, although there may be some questions asked by Republican Congressmen who are concerned about U.S. Christian NGOs operating in India. New Delhi will also hope that public comments by the U.S. State Department and Department of Justice on the Pannun-Nijjar cases will be more muted. While the trial involving alleged middleman, Nikhil Gupta, for the aborted assassination attempt on Khalistani activist Gurpatwant Pannun last year would continue, founder of the Republican Hindu Coalition, Shalabh ‘Shailli’ Kumar, has said that he expects Mr. Trump to “crackdown” on Khalistani groups. Moreover, Mr. Trump’s frosty ties in the past with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau indicate that New Delhi would not have to worry about a reaction from Washington over its ongoing diplomatic war with Ottawa over the Nijjar killing.

Potential trouble areas

So, where could the trouble come from? The first problem is Mr. Trump’s persistent focus on cutting trade tariffs, which saw his administration impose a series of counter-tariffs, file World Trade Organization complaints, and then withdraw India’s GSP status for exporters. The second is his habit of disclosing the contents of private conversations with leaders and, on occasion, embellishing them or even imagining them. For instance, he mocked Mr. Modi on the issue of lowering of duties on Harley Davidson motorcycles and badgered India to lift the ban on Hydroxychloroquine exports, which did not go down well in New Delhi. This habit took a more serious turn when it involved other countries. In 2019, Mr. Trump told Pakistan’s then Prime Minister, Imran Khan, that they could “resolve the Kashmir issue”, and that Mr. Modi had asked him

to mediate in the matter (India vehemently denied the assertion). In 2020, after China transgressed the Line of Actual Control, Mr. Trump posted that Mr. Modi was “not in a good mood” over the developments; India denied that the two leaders had spoken at all. Diplomats, however, point out that Mr. Trump did back India in the conflict, ensuring that the U.S. shared intelligence, leased drones, and supplied winter gear for the forces “in a manner different from past U.S. administrations”. Perhaps the most testing times were during the U.S.’s tensions with Iran: in June 2018, he sent the then United Nations envoy, Nikki

Haley, on a mission to New Delhi to virtually threaten India with sanctions.

Subsequently, India “zeroed out” its oil

imports from both Iran and Venezuela. In some relief, New Delhi is likely to face little pressure now on cutting ties with Moscow, given Mr. Trump’s interest in engaging the Russian President. India will also seek Mr. Trump’s intervention in ending Israel’s war in Gaza and Lebanon, and reopening talks with Gulf countries, to help revive its plans for the India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor.

India’s neighbours may be more concerned about the impact of Mr. Trump’s victory. During his last tenure, he had cancelled most of the U.S. aid to Pakistan. Now, the Shahbaz Sharif government would worry about losing U.S. support on loans from the IMF and World Bank as well. In Bangladesh, Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus, a close friend of Democratic Party leaders, has already run afoul of Mr. Trump, who posted on social media last week about Dhaka’s failure to protect Hindu minorities. The Biden government had expanded its outreach in South Asian countries, such as Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives. So, many in the region may worry not so much about U.S. actions, but a lack of attention from the new administration.

GS Paper 02 : International Relations

PYQ: (UPSC CSE (M) GS-2 2020): What is the significance of Indo-US defence deals over Indo-Russian defence deals? Discuss with reference to stability in the Indo-Pacific region. (200 words/12.5m)

Context :

- ▶ New Delhi's enthusiastic reception of Trump 2.0 will be moderated by apprehensions about his social media posts and harsh stance on trade and tariffs.

Trump 2.0 Impact on India-U.S. Trade Relations:

- ▶ Trade Negotiations and Free Trade Agreement (FTA): Trump is likely to pick up negotiations for an India-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA), a process that began during his first term but was shelved after his loss in 2020. This could provide opportunities for greater market access and trade partnerships.
- ▶ Focus on Tariffs: Trump's administration has been vocal about reducing trade tariffs. This could lead to pressure on India to lower its tariffs, as it did during Trump 1.0 when counter-tariffs were imposed, and India lost its Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) status.
- ▶ U.S. Military and Technology Access: India is likely to benefit from increased access to U.S. military hardware and technology. Trump's administration has historically supported closer defense ties with India, which could be further solidified in his second term, benefiting India's defense capabilities.
- ▶ Energy Deals and Trade: Trump could encourage India to increase purchases of U.S. oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG), as seen with previous deals like the Driftwood LNG plant. This could bolster trade, while also positioning the U.S. as a key energy partner for India.
- ▶ Note: The Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) is a U.S. trade program that grants duty-free access to certain goods from developing countries to promote economic growth.

Implications for India's Foreign Policy (Russia and Iran):

- ▶ Relations with Russia: Trump's pro-Russia stance suggests that India will face less pressure to distance itself from Moscow.
- ▶ While previous U.S. administrations have criticized India's defense ties with Russia, Trump may adopt a more pragmatic approach, focusing on other strategic aspects like defense cooperation without pressing India on Russian relations.
- ▶ Iran Policy: Trump's previous sanctions against Iran caused India to reduce its oil imports from Iran. Under Trump 2.0, India is likely to face fewer sanctions-related pressures, as Trump has historically shown a less critical stance on countries like Iran compared to other U.S. leaders.
- ▶ India could therefore maintain or revive its ties with Iran without facing significant U.S. backlash.

Challenges from Trump's Domestic Policies (Immigration and Technology Transfer):

- **Immigration and H-1B Visa Policy:** Trump's tough stance on immigration and H-1B visas could pose challenges for India, especially in terms of its highly skilled workforce.
- **India's tech sector relies heavily on H-1B visas,** and stricter immigration policies under Trump 2.0 could limit opportunities for Indian professionals to work in the U.S., affecting India's IT and services sector.
- **Technology Transfer:** Trump has shown a preference for protectionist policies, which may slow down the transfer of advanced technologies to India.
- **This could impact India's aspirations to become a global hub for high-tech industries,** particularly in sectors like artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and defence technology.
- **Increased Focus on U.S. Jobs:** Trump's focus on bringing jobs back to the U.S. may result in policies that prioritize domestic industries over foreign collaborations, limiting the scope for Indian companies in certain sectors and creating trade tensions.

Way forward:

- **Strengthen Bilateral Trade Negotiations:** India should actively engage in FTA negotiations with the U.S., seeking mutually beneficial terms that address tariff concerns, market access, and defense collaboration, while also ensuring safeguards for sensitive sectors like technology and agriculture.
- **Diversify Technology and Energy Partnerships:** India can focus on diversifying its sources of technology transfer and energy imports, strengthening ties with other global players in these sectors to mitigate potential risks from Trump's protectionist policies and ensuring sustainable growth in high-tech industries and energy security.