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TODAY'S ANALYSIS

(29 January 2025)

TOPICS TO BE COVERED

- BLUE CARBON
- INDIA INDONESIA RELATIONS
- MCQs



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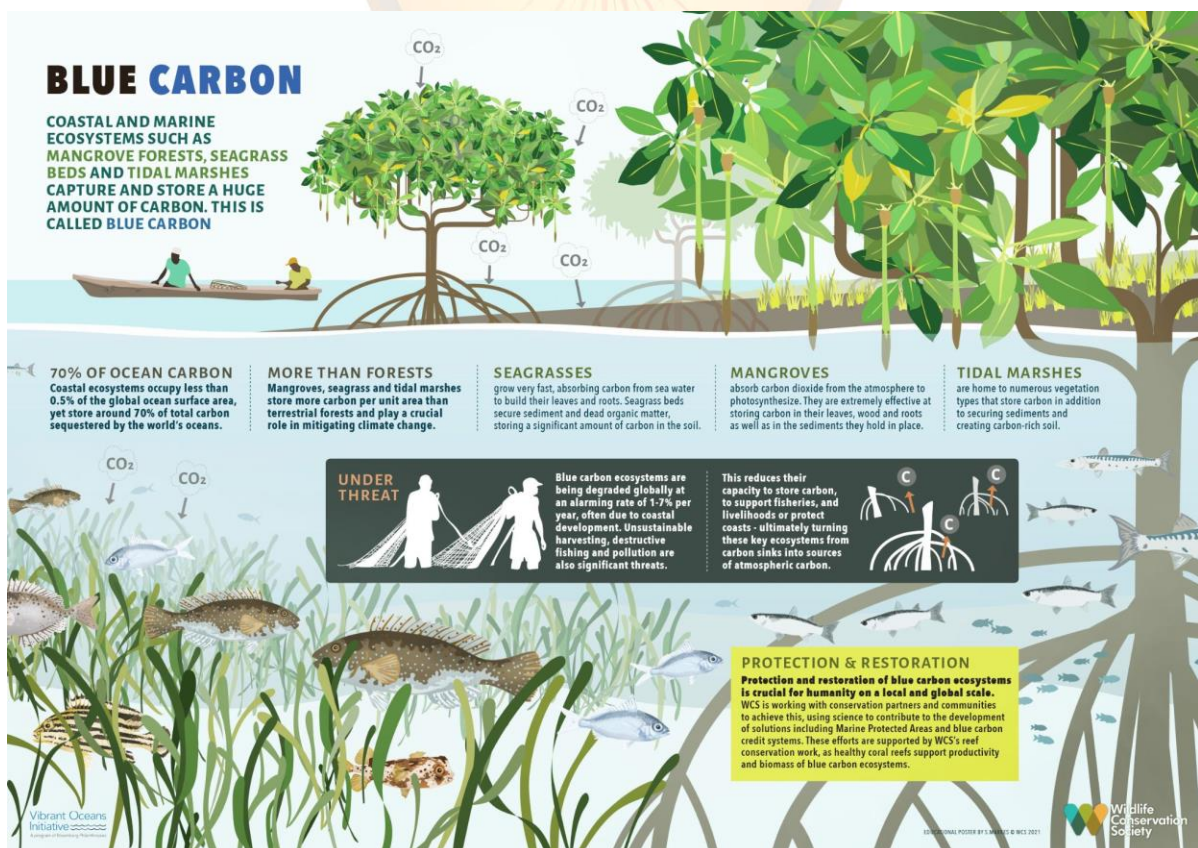
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BLUE CARBON

What is Blue Carbon ?

- Blue carbon refers to the carbon captured and stored by coastal ecosystems, specifically mangroves, seagrasses, and salt marshes.
- These ecosystems act as some of the most effective carbon sinks, sequestering large amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and helping to mitigate climate change.
- The importance of blue carbon is gaining increasing recognition in global climate action strategies.



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WHY IN NEWS?

- A report titled **Blue Carbon and its role in Carbon Sequestration** published in June 2024 revealed that **mangroves alone have the capacity to store more than 1,000 tons of carbon per hectare.**
- They also **store 3 to 5 times more carbon per equivalent area than tropical forests**, as per the article **Coastal Blue Carbons**, by the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).**

BLUE CARBON ECOSYSTEMS

- **Mangroves, Seagrasses, and Salt Marshes:** These ecosystems collectively make up the "blue carbon" ecosystem.
 - They are important in the **fight against climate change due to their remarkable ability to capture and store carbon**, which helps to offset global emissions.
- **Global Mangrove Restoration Potential:** If **10% of degraded mangroves worldwide were restored**, it could sequester an additional **1.6 billion tons of carbon.**

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- **Additional Environmental Benefits of Mangroves:**

- **Soil Erosion Prevention:** The **roots of mangrove trees stabilize coastal soils, reducing erosion** and protecting shorelines from storm surges.
- **Marine Life Habitat:** Mangrove forests provide vital habitats for a wide range of marine species, contributing to biodiversity and providing breeding grounds for fish, crustaceans, and other marine organisms.

ECONOMIC & POLICY CHALLENGES

- **Mangrove Loss and Degradation:**

- **Myanmar's Mangrove Loss:** Myanmar has **lost a significant portion of its mangrove forests.**
- Once home to over 1.2 million hectares of mangroves, only less than 500,000 hectares remain.
- The **Ayeyarwady Delta** alone has seen a **64% loss of its 270,000 hectares of mangroves in just 35 years.**
- Causes include **agricultural expansion, aquaculture, and coastal development** driven by economic pressures and population growth.

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- **Global Drivers of Mangrove Loss:** Agricultural land demand, particularly for rice and shrimp farming, has been responsible for 38% of global mangrove loss.
- **Challenges in Carbon Credit Systems:**
 - **Blue Carbon Credits:** These are instruments used in carbon markets to represent the carbon sequestered by coastal ecosystems, like mangroves and seagrasses.
 - They are used to offset emissions from industries and businesses.
 - However, blue carbon credit systems face significant economic policy hurdles, such as:
 - **High Costs and Complex Verification:** The process of generating and verifying blue carbon credits is complex, expensive, and often lacks transparency.
 - **Transparency Issues:** For example, the REDD+ project in Cambodia faced issues in proving that its carbon credits contributed effectively to environmental restoration, raising doubts about the integrity of such programs.

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- **Corruption and Mismanagement:** In Bangladesh's Sundarbans mangrove forest, corruption in the Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD), including illegal logging, bribery, and mismanagement, has severely undermined conservation efforts, accelerating the degradation of this critical ecosystem.

INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS AND PROGRESS IN BLUE CARBON INITIATIVES

- **Australia's Blue Carbon Method:**

- The **Blue Carbon Method** was developed by the Australian government as part of the **Emissions Reduction Fund** to simplify the process of including coastal wetland restoration in carbon markets.
- This has encouraged investments in the restoration of ecosystems like mangroves and seagrasses.
- The **South Australia Tidal Restoration Project** is an example of successful coastal ecosystem restoration, which has received positive results due to clear guidelines and robust verification practices.

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- **Carbon Credit Issuance:** As of December 2024, the **Australian Carbon Credit Unit Scheme (ACCU)** has issued approximately 16.45 million ACCUs through such projects.
- **Technological Innovations:**
 - **AI and Remote Sensing:** AI mapping technologies are now used to monitor seagrass meadows and other coastal ecosystems, allowing for more effective tracking of ecosystem health and carbon sequestration.
 - **Blockchain for Transparency:** Blockchain technology is being applied to ensure transparency in the verification and transaction of carbon credits, which helps build trust in the integrity of the carbon credit market.
- **Community-Driven Restoration:**
 - **Indonesia's MERA Program:** The **Mangrove Ecosystem Restoration Alliance (MERA)** has been instrumental in restoring mangrove areas in Indonesia.
 - This initiative has **improved local economies through** sustainable fisheries.
 - By early 2024, **262 hectares of mangroves** had been restored, and plans were in place for restoring **398,779.78 hectares**.

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- **Community Impact:** MERA's success has connected environmental health with economic stability, benefiting local communities by enhancing fisheries and providing other economic incentives.

ECONOMIC IMPERATIVE OF BLUE CARBON

- **Global Market Potential:**

- According to **McKinsey Sustainability**, the global market potential for blue carbon credits could reach **\$50 billion by 2030**.
- This indicates a significant financial opportunity for nations and businesses to invest in the restoration and conservation of blue carbon ecosystems.

- **Co-Benefits of Blue Carbon:**

- **Beyond carbon sequestration, blue carbon ecosystems offer several co-benefits**, including job creation, sustainable tourism, and enhanced fisheries management, which make them appealing to both governments and private investors.
- **India's Eco-Tourism:** In India, **restored mangrove ecosystems are increasingly** being viewed as a valuable asset for eco-tourism.

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- The country's government has provided funding for mangrove restoration under the **Coastal Regulation Zone Policy** reforms introduced in 2023. This has helped attract both national and international investment.

- **The MISHTI Scheme in India:**

- Launched in **2023**, the **Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes (MISHTI)** aims to restore **540 sq km of mangroves** across **nine states and four Union Territories** in India by **2028**.
- By **December 2024**, **250 sq km of mangroves** had already been restored under the MISHTI program.
- This initiative is expected to continue making significant strides toward restoring India's vital coastal ecosystems.

- **Economic Return on Investment:**

- According to a report by the **OECD (2024)**, every **\$1 invested** in blue carbon restoration can yield up to **\$6 in economic returns**, demonstrating the high economic value of investing in blue carbon restoration projects.

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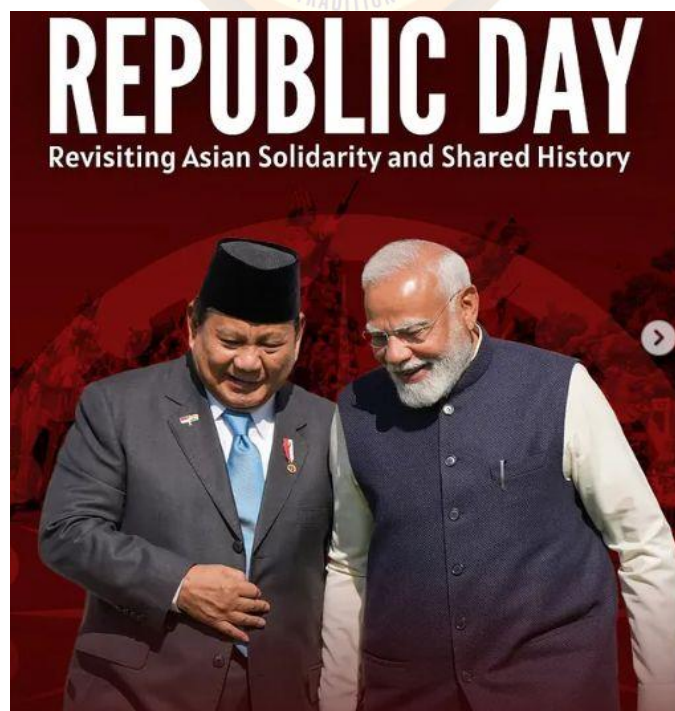
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INDIA INDONESIA RELATIONS

- Over the past 75 years, the bond between India and Indonesia has seen its ups and downs.
- A key moment came in 1950, when **Sukarno**, Indonesia's first president, was the chief guest at India's first Republic Day.
- As India celebrated its 76th Republic Day on 26 January 2025, Indonesian President **Prabowo Subianto** was invited as the chief guest, highlighting the continued strengthening of their diplomatic ties.



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- **What makes this year's Republic Day even more special** is the presence of the Indonesian President joined by a **152-member marching contingent and a 190-member band from Indonesia**, marching **alongside the Indian Armed Forces** at the Republic Day Parade at Kartavya Path.
- This **shows the unity between the two nations adds another chapter to the growing relationship** between India and Indonesia, filled with promise for the years ahead.
- **On January 25, 2025**, India and Indonesia took another **step forward by signing several important agreements in areas like maritime security, health, traditional medicine, culture, and digital cooperation during** a meeting between P.M. Modi and Indonesian President Subianto **at Hyderabad House in New Delhi**.

EARLY POST COLONIAL LEGACY

- **Shared Struggle Against Colonialism:** India and Indonesia both **fought against colonial rule in the 20th century. India's support for Indonesia's independence struggle** against **Dutch colonial** control played a crucial role in the formation of strong bilateral ties.

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- **India's Diplomatic Support:** Under Prime Minister **Jawaharlal Nehru**, India was one of the **first countries to support Indonesia's independence from the Dutch**. India provided **humanitarian aid, diplomatic backing**, and even took actions such as **banning Dutch airlines** from flying over India in 1947 as a sign of protest.
- **Sukarno's Visit to India:** In 1950, **President Sukarno** of Indonesia visited India as the guest of honor at India's **Republic Day celebrations**.
- This visit **symbolized the strong bilateral ties between the two nations**, with Nehru and Sukarno maintaining a close friendship rooted in their shared struggle against colonialism.
- **Treaty of Friendship (1951):** India and Indonesia signed the **Treaty of Friendship** in 1951, which aimed to establish "**perpetual peace and unalterable friendship**."
- This treaty reflected their shared commitment to **non-alignment, anti-colonialism**, and **peaceful coexistence**.
- **Bandung Conference (1955):** India and Indonesia were central figures in the **Bandung Conference**, which marked the birth of the **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)**.

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- Both Nehru and Sukarno were founding members of NAM, advocating for **political independence** and **economic self-sufficiency** for newly independent countries, and fostering **South-South cooperation** between India and Indonesia.

RELATIONSHIP DURING 1960s

Divergence and Cold War Alignment (1960s)

- Differences on China:** Initially, both India and Indonesia saw **China as an ally in their anti-colonial struggle**.
- However, the relationship began to diverge after **India's relationship with China soured** following the **1959 Tibetan Uprising** and the **1962 Sino-Indian War**.
- Indonesia's Continued Friendship with China:** While India distanced itself from China **after the 1962 war**, **Indonesia maintained its friendship with China**, leading to tensions between India and Indonesia during the 1960s.
- Personal and Political Strains:** The tension **was not only due to political differences but also personal strains between Prime Minister Nehru and President Sukarno**. Nehru's refusal to support Sukarno's idea of holding a **2nd Bandung Conference** in the 1960s further escalated tensions.

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- **Indonesia-Pakistan (1965):** During the **1965 India-Pakistan war**, **Indonesia supported Pakistan**, which caused a significant rift. **Indonesia's Foreign Minister announced support for Pakistan**, and **Indonesia even supplied arms to Pakistan**.
 - This support for Pakistan led to **an attack on the Indian Embassy in Jakarta**, marking a low point in bilateral relations.
- **Political Change in Indonesia:** In **1966**, an **attempted coup in Indonesia** led to the **weakening of Sukarno's power** and the rise of **General Suharto**. Suharto's **anti-communist stance** and shift toward a **pro-Western foreign policy** helped restore and strengthen Indonesia's relationship with India.

THE SUHARTO ERA (1970s): RECOVERY & STAGNATION

- **Maritime Boundaries Agreement (1977):** The **1977 maritime boundaries agreement** marked the beginning of a more stable relationship between India and Indonesia. The two countries also cooperated on issues related to **regional security** and **economic development** during this time.
- **Cold War Alignments:** During the Cold War, India aligned itself with the **Soviet Union**, while Indonesia leaned toward the **United States**.

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- This ideological and political divide created some challenges in bilateral cooperation, but the two countries maintained diplomatic and trade relations.
- **Diplomatic Engagement:** Despite ideological differences, both nations maintained regular **diplomatic exchanges**. Notable visits include **Suharto's visit to India in 1980**, and Indian leaders such as **Indira Gandhi** and **Rajiv Gandhi** also visited Indonesia in the early 1980s.

THEE 1990s: LOOK EAST POLICY OF INDIA

- **Economic Liberalization in India:** In the early 1990s, under **Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao**, India began its **economic liberalization** process, which included greater focus on Asia. The '**Look East**' policy was introduced to strengthen **India's economic and political ties with Southeast Asia**, including Indonesia.
- **Regional Economic Growth:** The 1990s saw **Indonesia's rapid economic growth**, presenting India with opportunities for increased trade and investment. Bilateral cooperation expanded in various sectors, especially as both nations pursued economic modernization.

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- **Strategic Cooperation:** As regional security concerns grew, particularly in the **South China Sea**, India and Indonesia strengthened their **strategic cooperation**. They conducted **joint military exercises** (e.g., **Garuda Shakti**) and started **sharing intelligence**, improving their defense ties.
- **Multilateral Cooperation:** India and Indonesia worked closely in multilateral forums like the **East Asia Summit (EAS)** and the **ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)**, emphasizing regional stability and collaboration on global issues.

2000s: COMPREHENSIVE ENGAGEMENT

- **Increased Defense and Security Cooperation:** The 2000s saw both nations **strengthening defense ties** through regular **joint military exercises** and **maritime security cooperation**, particularly due to the strategic importance of the **Indo-Pacific region** for global trade and security.
- **Bilateral Trade Expansion:** By 2022, **Indonesia became India's 2nd-largest trading partner** in ASEAN, with bilateral trade reaching **\$38.84 billion** in 2022-23.
- Indonesia exports **coal, crude palm oil, and oil** to India, while India exports **refined petroleum, vehicles, and steel** products to Indonesia.

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- **Cultural Ties:** There was a significant growth in **cultural ties**, including increased **educational exchanges**. Many Indonesian students studied in India, and there was a rise in **tourism** between the two countries.
- **Leadership Exchanges:** From the 2000s onward, each **Indonesian president** and **Indian prime minister** visited the other country, helping deepen ties in various areas, from trade to cultural collaboration.

2010s & 2020s: ACT EAST POLICY

- **'Act East' Policy:** In 2014, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** expanded the **'Look East'** policy into the **'Act East'** policy.
- This shift focused on **practical, outcome-oriented cooperation**, particularly in defense, connectivity, and economic growth, with a strong emphasis on the **Indo-Pacific region**.
- **Ongoing High-Level Engagement:** The **January 2025 visit** of **President Prabowo Subianto** to India highlighted the continued commitment to strengthening ties.
- The visit resulted in agreements covering **maritime security, digital cooperation, traditional medicine, and defense industrial cooperation**.

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- **Current Economic Ties:** As of **2023-24**, bilateral trade between India and Indonesia was valued at **\$29 billion**.
- India imports **coal** and **palm oil** from Indonesia, while its exports include **refined petroleum products, commercial vehicles, and machinery**.
- **Untapped Potential:** Despite strong ties, experts believe there is still **untapped potential** in sectors like **technology, infrastructure, and green energy**. These areas could provide opportunities for further collaboration in the future.

KEY AREAS OF COOPERATION & FUTURE POTENTIAL

- **Maritime Security:** Both nations are focused on **maritime security** in the **Indo-Pacific**, **India** and **Indonesia** cooperate on securing vital shipping lanes, which are increasingly important in the face of rising geopolitical tensions.
- **Defense and Military Cooperation:** **India** and **Indonesia** are enhancing their **defense cooperation**, including **joint military exercises, defense technology sharing**, and potentially collaborating on **defense production**.
- The agreements signed in **2025** indicate growing **defense industrial cooperation**.

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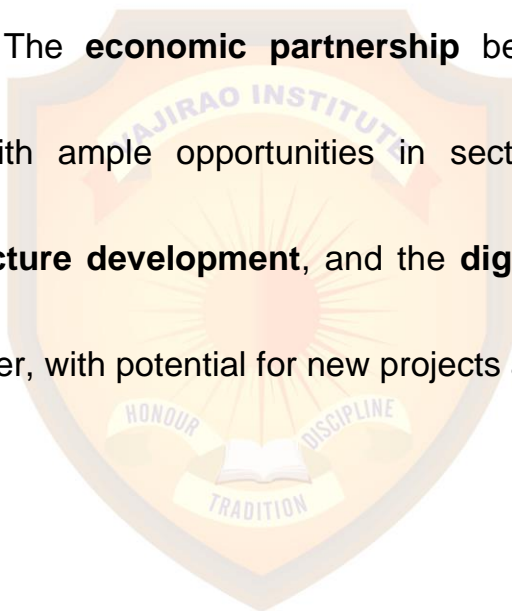
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- **Regional Influence and Multilateral Platforms:** Both countries are committed to ensuring **regional stability** and cooperation through multilateral platforms like the **East Asia Summit (EAS)** and the **ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)**, strengthening their strategic roles in the **Indo-Pacific**.
- **Economic Potential:** The **economic partnership** between **India** and **Indonesia** continues to grow, with ample opportunities in sectors like **renewable energy**, **technology**, **infrastructure development**, and the **digital economy**. Both countries aim to boost trade further, with potential for new projects and investments.



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MCQs

1. Consider the following statements and mark the correct one:
 1. Blue Carbon is the carbon stored in marine ecosystems.
 2. Marine Ecosystems can store more carbon than terrestrial ecosystems.

- (A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 & 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans. (C)

2. How many of these can be the impacts of mangrove ecosystem restoration?

1. Enhanced Tourism
2. Increased fish yields.
3. Achieving Net Zero target will be easier.

- (A) Only 1 of these.
(B) Only 2 of these.
(C) All of these.
(D) None of these

Ans. (C)

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3. Ayeyarwady Delta, often seen in news lies in which country?

- (A) China
- (B) Laos
- (C) Thailand
- (D) Myanmar

Ans. (D)

4. Where was the inaugural summit of Non Alignment Movement hosted?

- (A) Bandung
- (B) Belgrade
- (C) New Delhi
- (D) Accra



Ans. (B)

5. Which of these countries is not a member of East Asia Summit?

- (A) Australia
- (B) Indonesia
- (C) India
- (D) All of the above are members of East Asia Summit.

Ans. (D)

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