



**TATHASTU**  
Institute of Civil Services

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS



**17<sup>th</sup> February, 2024**

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S.NO.	TOPIC
1.	INDIA QATAR BILATERAL RELATIONS
2.	ARCTIC MARINE HEATWAVES
3.	PRELIMS POINTERS

## INDIA QATAR BILATERAL RELATIONS

**SOURCE:** [PIB](#)

**TAG:** GS Paper II- *Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's Interests.*

### PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**Mains**

**Q. Analyse the multifaceted relationship between India and Qatar and assess its significance for regional stability and global engagement in the context of evolving geopolitical dynamics in West Asia.**

**(150 words)**

### WHY IN NEWS?

- ❖ *Recently, an important bilateral meeting took place between **Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India** and **Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani of Qatar**, underscoring discussions on expanding cooperation and addressing regional developments in West Asia.*

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

- ❖ **Pre-independence ties:**
  - ☛ India and Qatar maintained trade relations dating back centuries, facilitated by **maritime trade routes**.
  - ☛ Indian merchants traded **textiles, spices, and other commodities with Qatar**, while Qatari traders were actively involved in the **Indian pearl trade**, contributing to the economic exchange and cultural interaction between the two regions.
- ❖ **Diplomatic relations establishment:**
  - ☛ Formal diplomatic relations between India and Qatar were established on **March 7, 1973**, following **Qatar's independence from Britain on September 3, 1971**.
  - ☛ This pivotal moment led to the **inauguration of embassies** in both nations, marking the formal commencement of diplomatic engagement.
- ❖ **Shared historical legacies:**
  - ☛ India and Qatar share common historical legacies, including the **influence of Islam**, which played a significant role in shaping cultural, social, and economic aspects of both societies.
- ❖ **Cultural connections:**
  - ☛ The historical ties between India and Qatar are also reflected in shared cultural elements, such as **language, cuisine, and traditions**.





- Cultural exchanges between the two nations have facilitated mutual understanding and appreciation, **fostering stronger bonds** between the peoples of India and Qatar.

### ECONOMIC COOPERATION:

#### ❖ Energy sector collaboration:

- India is a major importer of **liquefied natural gas (LNG)** from **Qatar**, with significant long-term contracts between Indian entities like **Petronet LNG and Qatar Petroleum**. This collaboration in the energy sector strengthens bilateral ties and **contributes to India's energy security goals**.

#### ❖ Trade volume growth:

- Bilateral trade between India and Qatar has witnessed **steady growth over the years**, surpassing USD 10 billion recently. There is **Joint Customs Cooperation** between the two countries.

- Qatar primarily exports **liquefied natural gas (LNG), liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), chemicals, petrochemicals, plastics, and aluminum articles to India**.

	(Values in US\$ billion)					
	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24 (Apr-Nov)
Indian Export to Qatar	1.61	1.27	1.28	1.87	1.97	1.01
Indian Import from Qatar	10.72	9.69	7.93	13.33	16.81	7.61
Total Bilateral Trade	12.33	10.96	9.21	15.20	18.78	8.62

(Source: Department of Commerce, India)

- In return, India exports **cereals, copper articles, iron and steel articles, vegetables, fruits, spices, processed food products, electrical and machinery, plastic products,**

**construction materials, textiles & garments, chemicals, precious stones, and rubber to Qatar.**

- India ranks among the **top three largest export destinations for Qatar**, alongside China and Japan.
- Similarly, India is also among the top three sources of Qatar's imports, along with China and the United States.

#### ❖ Investment opportunities:

- Indian companies have made substantial investments in Qatar across various sectors, including **infrastructure, real estate, and information technology**. Similarly, Qatari investors have shown interest in investing in India's burgeoning market, particularly in sectors such as **infrastructure, finance, and renewable energy**.

#### ❖ Labour relations:

- Qatar hosts a significant population of **Indian expatriates** who contribute to various sectors of the Qatari economy, including **construction, healthcare, hospitality, and information technology**.
- The Indian community in Qatar plays a vital role in **strengthening people-to-people ties** and fostering cultural exchange between the two nations.
- There also exists a **Joint Working Group on Labour and Manpower Development**.

### STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS:

#### ❖ Defence collaboration:

- India and Qatar have been exploring avenues to enhance defence cooperation, including **joint military exercises, defence equipment procurement, and intelligence sharing**.
- **Regular port calls** by the Indian Navy vessels and joint naval exercises signify the growing strategic partnership between the two countries in the maritime domain.
- India participates in the **Biennial Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (DIMDEX)** in Qatar.

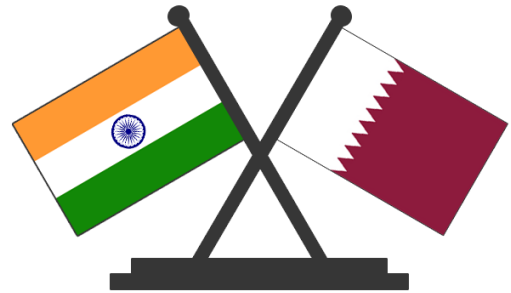
#### ❖ Counter-terrorism efforts:



- Both India and Qatar cooperate closely in the fight against terrorism, sharing intelligence and coordinating efforts to **combat extremist threats**.
- For example, Qatar's role in facilitating peace talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government, with India's keen interest in regional stability, highlights the strategic importance of their cooperation in counter-terrorism initiatives.

#### ❖ Regional stability:

- India and Qatar share common interests in **promoting peace and stability in the Gulf region and the broader Middle East**.
- **MOU signed** on Mutual Cooperation between Foreign Service Institute, MEA and Diplomatic Institute



### CULTURAL AND PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE EXCHANGES:

#### ❖ Cultural diplomacy:

- Both India and Qatar actively promote cultural exchanges through various initiatives, such as **music festivals, art exhibitions, film screenings, and culinary events**.
- Embassy of India, Doha and the Indian Community in Qatar celebrated **“Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav”, in 2022-23**. India was also one of the partner countries for **QatarMENASA year of culture 2022**.
- These cultural exchanges serve as platforms for promoting mutual understanding, appreciation of diversity, and strengthening the bonds of friendship between the two nations.

#### ❖ Yoga & Ayurveda:

- Qatar supported the unanimous adoption of a resolution at the **UNGA**, declaring **June 21** as the **International Day of Yoga (IDY)**. Additionally, **Qatar** allows the practice of complementary medicine, including **Ayurveda**.

#### ❖ Educational cooperation:

- India and Qatar have fostered collaboration in the field of education through academic exchanges, scholarships, and **joint research programs**.

#### ❖ Tourism promotion:

- Efforts to boost tourism between India and Qatar include **visa facilitation, direct flight connections**, and promotional campaigns highlighting tourist attractions, cultural heritage sites, and adventure tourism opportunities.

### REGIONAL COOPERATION AND MULTILATERAL ENGAGEMENTS:

#### ❖ GCC collaboration:

- India engages closely with the **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** countries, of which Qatar is a member, through high-level visits, economic agreements, and strategic dialogue mechanisms.
- Strengthening cooperation with the GCC enhances **India's economic and strategic interests** in the Gulf region.

#### ❖ United Nations involvement:

- India and Qatar collaborate within the framework of the United Nations (UN) on various global issues, including climate change, sustainable development, peacekeeping, and counter-terrorism.
- Their shared commitment to **multilateralism and the principles of the UN Charter** forms the basis of their cooperation on global challenges.

#### ❖ Non-Aligned Movement (NAM):



- As **founding members** of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), India and Qatar uphold the principles of **non-alignment, sovereignty, and territorial integrity**.
- Within the NAM framework, both countries advocate for a more **equitable and just international order**, emphasizing the importance of dialogue, cooperation, and collective action to address global issues.

#### CONCLUSION:

- ❖ *India and Qatar have seen a significant expansion in cooperation across various sectors, benefitting from their long-standing historical ties and consistent high-level engagement between their governments. The substantial and esteemed Indian community in Qatar plays a vital role in advancing Qatar's development and strengthening the enduring friendship and multifaceted cooperation between the two nations.*





## ARCTIC MARINE HEATWAVES

SOURCE: [NATURE.COM](https://www.nature.com)

TAG: GS Paper III- *Environmental pollution and degradation, Climate Change.*

### PRACTICE QUESTIONS

#### Mains

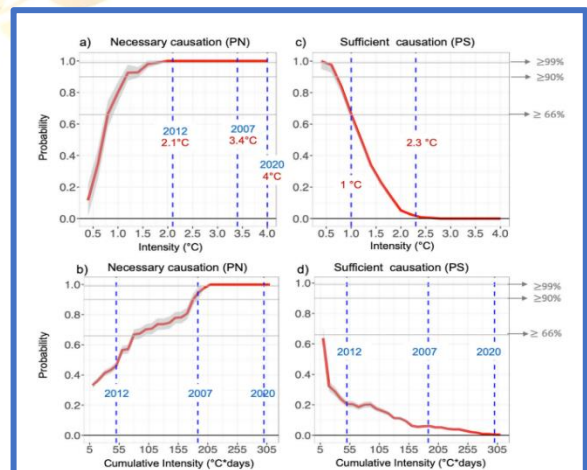
Q. How do the melting of the Arctic ice and glaciers of the Antarctic differently affect the weather patterns and human activities on the Earth? Explain. (150 words)

#### WHY IN NEWS?

- ❖ A recent study conducted by a team of researchers provides crucial insights into the role of greenhouse gas forcing in driving **extreme marine heatwaves in the Arctic**, highlighting the urgency of addressing anthropogenic climate change.
- ❖ Its findings underscore the imperative for targeted mitigation efforts to alleviate the escalating impacts of warming on Arctic ecosystems and sea ice dynamics.

#### INTRODUCTION TO ARCTIC MARINE HEATWAVES (MHWS):

- ❖ **Introduction:**
  - ☛ The Arctic Ocean has witnessed an **unprecedented increase in marine heatwave** events since 2007, characterized by extended periods of **abnormally high sea surface temperatures (SST)**.
- ❖ **Trigger Factors:**
  - ☛ These Marine heatwaves are primarily triggered by abrupt sea-ice retreat coinciding with maximum downward **radiative fluxes**, resulting in **increased heat absorption by the ocean**.
- ❖ **Severity Factors:**
  - ☛ The severity of Marine Heat waves in the **shallow Arctic marginal seas**, where they are most prevalent, is attributed to the net accumulation of seasonal surface heat flux in the ocean, exacerbating temperature anomalies.
- ❖ **Impact of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Forcing:**
  - ☛ Studies indicate that a significant portion, **up to 82%**, of the variability in sea surface temperatures over shallow Arctic marginal seas can be attributed to the net accumulation of seasonal surface heat flux, underscoring the **influence of GHG forcing**.
  - ☛ Event attribution analysis underscores the crucial role of GHG forcing, with the intense **2020 Arctic MHW**, the **most severe on record at 4°C**, being exceptionally unlikely without GHG forcing, **both in terms of its intensity and duration**.
- ❖ **Future Projections and Implications:**
  - ☛ Projections suggest that the continuation of rising GHG emissions, coupled with the expansion of first-year ice extent, will likely lead to the persistent reoccurrence of moderate marine heatwaves in the Arctic, with profound **implications for regional climate and ecosystems**.





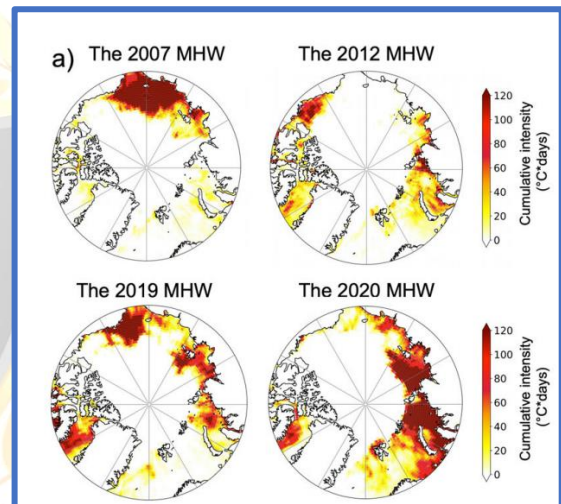
- Urgent mitigation measures are emphasized to address climate change impacts in the Arctic and mitigate the risk of more frequent and intense Marine Heatwaves events.

### ARCTIC MARINE HEATWAVES (MHWS) CHARACTERISTICS:

- Observations:**
  - Satellite observations spanning from 2007 to 2021 reveal the emergence of eleven Marine Heatwaves events in the Arctic, characterized by a **peak temperature anomaly of 3°C**.
- Regional Distribution and Environmental Factors:**
  - Marine Heatwaves events predominantly occurred over **Arctic marginal seas**, including the **Kara, Laptev, East Siberian, and Chukchi seas**, where **shallow mixed-layer depths and the prevalence of first-year ice create favourable conditions for Marine Heatwaves development**.

### MECHANISMS OF MARINE HEATWAVES IN THE ARCTIC:

- Triggered by Sea Ice Retreat:**
  - Marine Heatwaves in the Arctic are primarily initiated by sudden **sea ice retreat**, particularly during midsummer when there are **maximum downward radiative fluxes**, resulting in **increased solar heat absorption by the ocean surface**.
- Impact of Solar Radiation:**
  - Solar heat input plays a critical role in driving Marine Heatwaves, with areas experiencing significant sea ice loss and longer open water seasons showing the largest increases in solar heat input, particularly **affecting shallow marginal seas with first-year ice cover**.
- Strong Response in SST:**
  - The response of **sea surface temperature (SST)** to absorbed solar energy is most pronounced in regions with shallow mixed layers, enabling a rapid ocean response to **thermal forcing and contributing to the development of Marine Heatwaves events**.



### INFLUENCE OF GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) FORCING ON ARCTIC SST WARMING:

- Detectable GHG Signal:**
  - Observational data reveal a detectable signal of GHG forcing in the long-term warming of SSTs in the Arctic, indicating the **significant influence of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions on regional climate**.
- Robustness of Attribution:**
  - The attribution of SST trends to GHG forcing is reinforced by **the consistency between observed trends and model simulations**, highlighting the robustness of the link between GHG emissions and Arctic SST warming.

### CONCLUSION & IMPLICATIONS:

- Increasing Frequency and Intensity:**
  - The emergence of GHG-induced warming exacerbates the occurrence and intensity of extreme SST events, such as **marine heatwaves, in the Arctic**, with events of moderate to extreme intensity becoming increasingly likely due to GHG forcing.
- Necessity of GHG Forcing:**



- While GHG forcing is necessary for the occurrence of extreme events like Marine Heatwaves, it is not solely sufficient, with other factors also playing a role. Nevertheless, continued GHG emissions are likely to lead to more frequent and intense extreme events in the future, necessitating urgent mitigation efforts to curb **climate change impacts** in the **Arctic**.

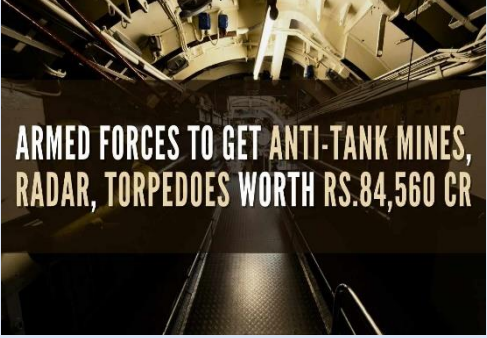







**PRELIMS POINTERS:**

17<sup>th</sup> February, 2024

TOPIC	DESCRIPTION
<p><b>RECCE AIRCRAFT TO ANTI-TANK MINES</b></p>	<p><b>WHY IN NEWS?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>The Defence Acquisition Council cleared Rs 84,560 crore worth of defence procurements, including aircraft and anti-tank mines, enhancing national security.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>ABOUT RECCE AIRCRAFT TO ANTI-TANK MINES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Maritime Reconnaissance Aircraft:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☛ 15 aircraft, derived from the C-295 medium lift tactical aircraft, will serve the Navy and Coast Guard.</li> <li>☛ Equipped with indigenous sensors, they will enhance surveillance and interdiction capabilities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ <b>Flight Refueller Aircraft:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☛ The IAF will acquire six midair refuellers, alongside leasing another tanker for training purposes.</li> <li>☛ These assets will extend fighter jets' operational time, filling a critical capability gap.</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ <b>Anti-tank Mines and Other Equipment:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☛ Approval for new-generation anti-tank mines for the Army, featuring seismic sensors and remote deactivation.</li> <li>☛ Other procurements include software-defined radios for the Coast Guard and air defence systems for the Army.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> 
<p><b>ISRO ANNOUNCES YOUNG SCIENTIST PROGRAMME 2024 (YUVIKA)</b></p>	<p><b>WHY IN NEWS?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>ISRO's announcement of the Young Scientist Programme 2024 (YUVIKA) is significant as it aims to nurture the curiosity and interest of young minds in space science and technology.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>ABOUT Young Scientist Programme (YUVIKA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ ISRO's special program aimed at school children.</li> <li>❖ Imparts basic knowledge on Space Technology, Science, and Applications.</li> <li>❖ Preference given to rural areas to create awareness.</li> <li>❖ Intends to inspire youth towards STEM-based careers.</li> </ul> <p><b>ELIGIBILITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Open to students finishing class 8 and currently in class 9.</li> <li>❖ Three students selected per state/Union Territory annually.</li> <li>❖ Selection based on 8<sup>th</sup> Standard academic performance and extracurriculars.</li> <li>❖ Curriculum includes lectures, hands-on activities, technical visits, and interactions with space scientists.</li> <li>❖ Weightage given to rural area students.</li> <li>❖ Younger candidates given priority in case of tie.</li> <li>❖ Successfully held in 2019, 2022, and 2023 with nationwide participation.</li> <li>❖ Open to students from all states and union territories.</li> </ul> 



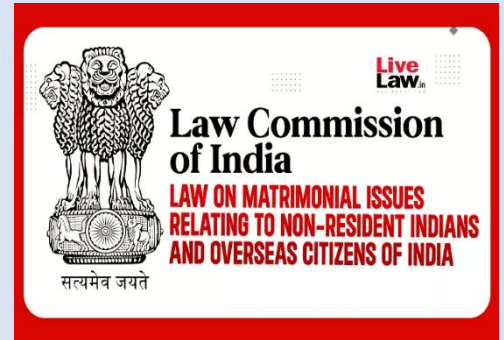
## LAW COMMISSION'S REPORT ON MATRIMONIAL ISSUES OF NRIS AND OCIS

### WHY IN NEWS?

- ❖ *The Law Commission of India has submitted a comprehensive report titled "Law on Matrimonial Issues Relating to Non-Resident Indians and Overseas Citizens of India" to the government, addressing concerns and proposing legislation covering various aspects of marriages involving NRIs and OCIs.*

### ABOUT LAW COMMISSION'S REPORT ON MATRIMONIAL ISSUES OF NRIS AND OCIS

- ❖ **Initiative:**
  - ☛ Law Commission's examination of the **Registration of Marriage of Non-Resident Indians Bill, 2019.**
- ❖ **Comprehensive Legislation:**
  - ☛ Recommends a central law covering all aspects of NRI and OCI marriages with Indian citizens.
- ❖ **Scope:**
  - ☛ Applies to both NRIs and Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs).
- ❖ **Registration Requirement:**
  - ☛ Proposes **compulsory registration of marriages between NRIs/OCIs and Indian citizens in India.**
- ❖ **Provisions:**
  - ☛ Includes **clauses on divorce, spouse maintenance, child custody, and serving legal documents to NRIs/OCIs.**
- ❖ **Passport Amendments:**
  - ☛ Suggests **changes to the Passports Act, 1967, for marital status declaration and passport linking.**



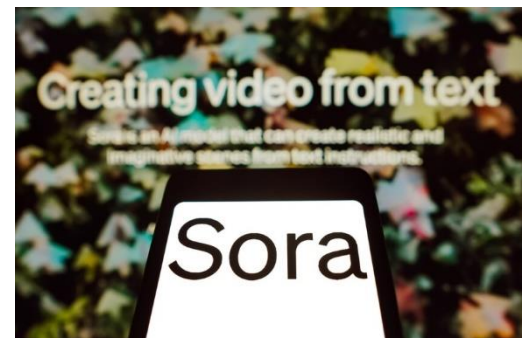
## OpenAI launches 'SORA'

### WHY IN NEWS?

- ❖ *OpenAI's latest innovation, Sora, marks a breakthrough in artificial intelligence as it unveils a model capable of converting text prompts into videos with remarkable accuracy and detail.*

### ABOUT OpenAI 'SORA'

- ❖ **OpenAI's Breakthrough:**
  - ☛ **OpenAI introduces "Sora," a GenAI model enabling text-to-video conversion, overcoming previous inconsistencies in AI-generated video creation.**
- ❖ **Capabilities:**
  - ☛ **Sora generates videos up to a minute long, featuring complex scenes with multiple characters and accurate details.**
  - ☛ **It offering a significant advancement in AI video synthesis.**
- ❖ **Unique Features:**
  - ☛ **Sora demonstrates a deep understanding of language.**
  - ☛ **Accurately interpreting prompts to create compelling characters and scenes expressing vibrant emotions.**





## SWAMINATHAN PANEL

- ❖ **Safety Measures:**
  - ☛ OpenAI prioritizes safety steps before **Sora's public release, collaborating with security experts.**
  - ☛ **Policymakers to prevent misinformation** and hateful content generation.
- ❖ **Shortcomings:**
  - ☛ Inaccuracies in **simulating complex physics.**
  - ☛ Challenges with **specific cause-and-effect instances.**

### WHY IN NEWS?

- ❖ *Protesting farmers, particularly from Punjab, are **demanding a legal guarantee for Minimum Support Price (MSP)**, referring to **recommendations made by the Swaminathan Commission.***

### ABOUT THE SWAMINATHAN PANEL

- ❖ **Formation and Purpose:**
  - ☛ **Established in 2004** to address agricultural challenges in India.
  - ☛ Led by **M S Swaminathan**, aimed to enhance farming sustainability and productivity.
- ❖ **Reports and Suggestions:**
  - ☛ Submitted five reports suggesting strategies for **food security and farmer welfare.**
  - ☛ Recommended MSP to be based on **production costs, without specifying a formula.**
- ❖ **MSP Recommendations:**
  - ☛ Advocated for MSP to be **set at least 50% higher than the cost of production.**
  - ☛ **Didn't endorse the C2 plus 50% formula demanded by farmers** but focused on improving MSP implementation.



## RUSSIAN SOKOL OIL

### WHY IN NEWS?

- ❖ ***India has resumed importing Russian Sokol oil** after a hiatus of two months, with at least two refiners receiving deliveries of the light sweet crude in February, as reported by trade sources.*

### INDIA RESUMES IMPORTS OF RUSSIAN SOKOL OIL:

- ❖ India resumes **Russian Sokol oil imports after a two-month halt.**
- ❖ **Hindustan Petroleum Corp (HPCL)** buys Sokol oil from a trader.
- ❖ Indian state refiners **stopped purchases** due to government advice.
- ❖ Over 10 million barrels of **Sokol remained unsold during the pause.**
- ❖ The vessel **Seagull discharged Sokol** at Mumbai port in February.
- ❖ **Nayara Energy**, majority-owned by Rosneft, also received a Sokol delivery.





- ❖ **More Sokol shipments expected** at eastern ports later in February.
- ❖ Russia considers selling Sokol through **trading firms to reduce surplus stocks**.
- ❖ **Sokol oil is exported by Sakhalin-1 LLC**, a Rosneft subsidiary.
- ❖ India is the **world's third-largest consumer of crude oil and depends on imports to meet over 85% of its requirement**.

