



Editorials/Opinions Analysis For UPSC 22 January 2022

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Setting sail for a powerful India-German partnership

Context:

The German Navy frigate Bayern landed in Mumbai on January 20, 2022. This is a remarkable step for Indo-German relations.

Relevance:

GS Paper – 2: Groupings & Agreements Involving India and/or Affecting India's Interests, Effect of Policies & Politics of Countries on India's Interests, Regional Groupings

Dimensions of the Article:



1. Germany's Recent Initiatives for Indo-Pacific
2. Interests behind the Engagement
3. German Military Vessel –The Bayern
4. India-Germany Cooperation
5. Way Forward

Germany's Recent Initiatives for Indo-Pacific:

- Germany has realised that the world's political and economic centre of gravity is, to a large degree, shifting to the Indo-Pacific region, with India as a key player, strategic partner and long-standing democratic friend at the hub.
- Here is where a significant part of the future international order is being shaped.
- The visit of the Bayern is a concrete outcome of the Indo-Pacific Policy Guidelines that Germany adopted in autumn 2020 and the European Union's Indo-Pacific Strategy published last year.
- **Why did Germany come up with such guidelines at this particular time?**
 - Germany is determined to contribute to buttressing the rules-based international order at a time when it is exposed to grave challenges.
 - For Europe, just like for India, it is vital that trade routes stay open, that freedom of navigation is upheld and that disputes are resolved peacefully on the basis of international law.
 - India is a maritime powerhouse and a strong advocate for free and inclusive trade — and, therefore, a primary partner on that mission.

Interests behind the Engagement:

- The Indo-Pacific, with India as its centrepiece, looms large in Germany's and the European Union's foreign policy. Why?
- **Economic Interests:** The Indo-Pacific region is home to around 65% of the global population and 20 of the world's 33 megacities.
 - The region accounts for 62% of global GDP and 46% of the world's merchandise trade.
 - As much as India, Germany is a trading nation. More than 20% of German trade is conducted in the Indo-Pacific neighbourhood.
 - This is why Germany and India share a responsibility to maintain and support stability, prosperity and freedom in this part of the world.
 - Europe's key interests are at stake when championing a free and open Indo-Pacific.



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- **To Combat Climate Change:** Indo-pacific region is also the source of more than half of all global carbon emissions.
 - This makes the region's countries key partners in tackling global challenges such as climate change and sustainable energy production and consumption.

German Military Vessel –The Bayern:



- After visiting Japan, Australia, Vietnam, Singapore and other countries in the region , the Bayern is set to return Germany from India thus completing its seven-month journey in the region.
- **Its Objective:** Our message is one of cooperation and inclusiveness. But inclusiveness does not mean blind equidistance.
 - We will not stand by when the multilateral order is challenged and when attempts are made to try to place the law of power over the power of law.
- **Significance:**
 - The Bayern participated in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and European Union missions Sea Guardian in the Mediterranean Sea and Operation ATALANTA — formally European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) Somalia — in the Arabian Sea.
 - The Bayern also helped monitor United Nations sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

India-Germany Cooperation:



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- After 16 years of Angela Merkel's chancellorship, Olaf Scholz took the helm of the German government in December 2021.
 - During their inaugural conversation, German Chancellor and the Prime Minister of India agreed that as major democracies and strategic partners, India and Germany will step up their cooperation to tackle common challenges, with climate change on top of the agenda.
 - **Significant role of India:**
 - No global problem can be solved without India's active involvement.
 - This year, Germany will hold the G7 Presidency, and from December 2022, India will assume the same role for the G20. This is an opportunity for joint and coordinated action.
 - **Importance of Germany for India:**
 - Germany cooperates with India to the tune of €1.3 billion a year in development projects, 90% of which serves the purpose of fighting climate change, saving natural resources as well as promoting clean and green energy.
 - No country receives more such support from Germany than India.
 - **Convergence of India and Germany:**
 - What world leaders agreed upon at COP26 in Glasgow, Germany and India are putting into practice.
 - Both the Nations are committed to work on a sustainable path for India's growth that will benefit both our countries.
 - *For example*, Germany has been supporting the construction of a huge solar plant in Maharashtra's Dhule (Sakri). With a capacity of 125 Megawatt, it serves 2,20,000 households and generates annual CO2 savings of 155,000 tons.

Way Forward:

- As India celebrates 75 years of independence, this visit sends a signal of friendship and cooperation.
- The Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to India said- "We are setting sail for a powerful partnership, in calm waters and heavy seas alike. And hopefully, we will exceed your expectations, every once in a while."

-Source: *The Hindu*