**Syllabus subtopic:** Important International institutions, agencies and fora, their structure, mandate.

**Prelims and Mains focus:** About UNSC: its structure and mandate; Indo-US defence relations and India’s diplomatic efforts to counter China’s arguments on CAA

**News:** A special meeting of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on Kashmir was not convened on Tuesday, diplomatic sources have confirmed. The meeting was sought by China to discuss India’s decision to end the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

**Remarks made by the UNSC**

- Kashmir will not be discussed at the Security Council. The issue has to be treated bilaterally between India and Pakistan.

**Context**

- The UNSC met on August 16 after China insisted on reviving the ‘India-Pakistan Question’ at the world body’s highest decision making unit, where the issue had been dormant since it was discussed in December 1971.
- China’s move comes ahead of the expected meeting between the Special Representatives of India and China to discuss the border issue. It has also cast a shadow on the ‘2+2’ meeting between India and the U.S., in which Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Defence Mark T. Esper will host their counterparts S. Jaishankar and Rajnath Singh.

**Upcoming Indo-US 2+2 meeting**

- Enhanced defence cooperation, furthering their Indo-Pacific strategy, and discussions on global challenges, including U.S. policy in Iran and Afghanistan, are likely to feature at the top of the agenda as External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh sit down for the second “2+2” combined ministerial meeting with their U.S. counterparts, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Defence Mark Esper, on Wednesday.
- On the defence front, the two sides are expected to sign the Industrial Security Annex (ISA) and review steps being taken to operationalise the foundational agreement Communications Compatibility and Security.
Agreement (COMCASA), which was signed during the previous 2+2 talks.

- However, discussions on the last foundational agreement, Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Cooperation (BECA) have not concluded yet, as some differences still remain, official sources said.
- In addition, there are several big ticket defence deals in the works, the progress of which will be reviewed. These include the 24 Lockheed Martin MH60R Multi-Role helicopters worth $2.4bn and 13 BAE Systems built 127 mm MK45 Naval gun systems, among others.
- However, the threat of U.S. sanctions under CAATSA over S400 air defence purchases from Russia remains a sticking point.

About Industrial Security Annex (ISA) and its significance

- The ISA is crucial for U.S. companies bidding for big ticket Indian deals to partner with the Indian private industry, especially the multibillion dollar deal for 114 fighter jets. As part of efforts for codevelopment and coproduction of military hardware, a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Defence Technology Trade Initiative (DTTI) is also expected to be signed that “will act as a guide to coordinate projects.”

Quad grouping also to be discussed

- As part of the larger Indo-Pacific focus, the evolving cooperation between the Quad grouping comprising India, Australia, Japan and the U.S. will also be discussed. While Washington has been pushing for greater military engagement, New Delhi has stated that it doesn’t see any military role for the grouping.

Significance of the 2+2 dialogue

The 2+2 dialogue is the highest level institutional mechanism between India and USA that brings together our perspectives on foreign policy, defence and strategic issues.

A lot of progress has been made in the areas of foreign policy and defence between two countries and both are looking forward to a highly qualitative meeting.
U.S’ concerns over the CAA

- In addition, officials say U.S. concerns over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the protests, which the U.S. State Department has spoken about twice now, will come up.
- U.S. officials in Delhi have also raised the issue of continuing restrictions in Kashmir, including the detention of political leaders, as recently as last week, and have made requests repeatedly to the government to allow U.S. Embassy diplomats to visit Jammu and Kashmir.

India and US: four foundational agreements

The four foundational agreements are – Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), COMCASA, General Security Of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Cooperation (BECA).

About UNSC

- The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the organs of the United Nations and is charged with the maintenance of international peace and security.
- Its powers include the establishment of peacekeeping operations, the establishment of international sanctions, and the authorization of military action through Security Council resolutions. It is the only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states
- Members: The Security Council consists of fifteen members. Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, and the United States—serve as the body’s five permanent members. These permanent members can veto any substantive Security Council resolution, including those on the admission of new member states or candidates for Secretary-General.
- The Security Council also has 10 non-permanent members, elected on a regional basis to serve two-year terms. The body’s presidency rotates monthly among its members.