



## Third FIPIC Summit

**For Prelims:** Forum for India–Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) Summit, [Pacific Island Countries](#), [Global South](#), [Radio Access Networks \(RAN\)](#), [India's Act East Policy](#), [United Nations](#), [Mission Sagar initiative](#).

**For Mains:** Significance of Pacific Island Countries, India's Relations with Pacific Island Countries.

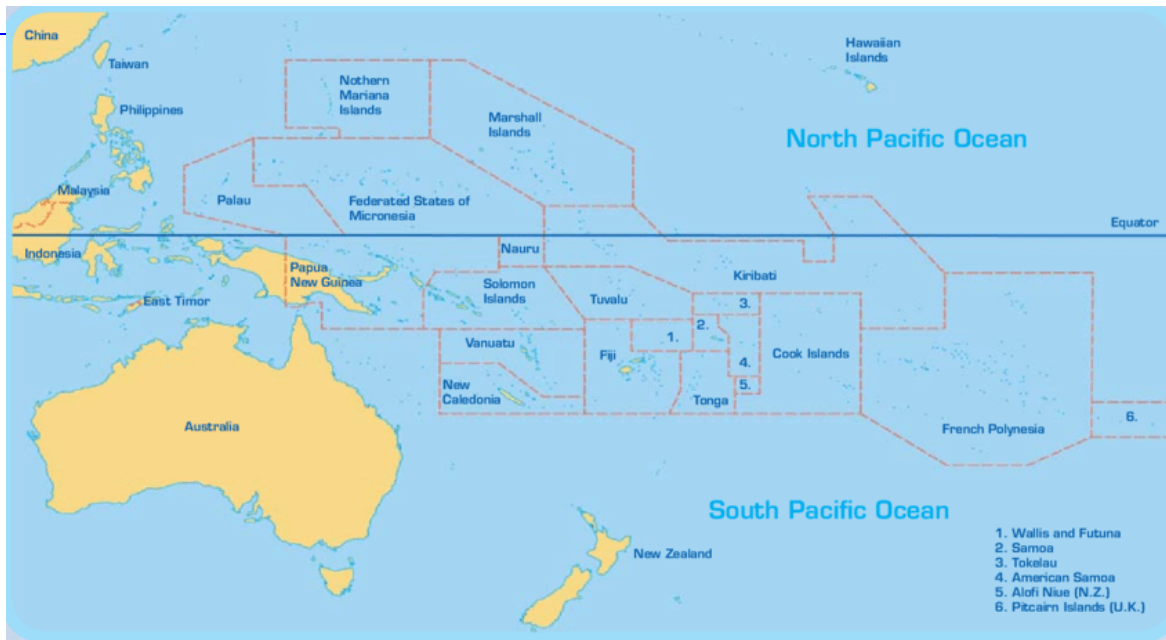
### Why in News?

The 3<sup>rd</sup> [Forum for India–Pacific Islands Cooperation \(FIPIC\) Summit](#) was held in **Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea** on May 22, 2023. It was **co-chaired by Indian and Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister** and attended by **14 Pacific Island Countries (PICs)**.

- The Indian Prime Minister was honored with the **Grand Companion of the Order of Logohu (GCL)** - the **highest civilian award of Papua New Guinea**.

### What are the Major Highlights of the Third FIPIC Summit?

- **India Stands with PICs:**
  - India supports the **sovereignty and integrity of all countries** and emphasised the **shared priority of reforming international institutions to amplify the voice of the Global South**.
    - The Prime Minister mentioned discussions with **Australia, the US, and Japan as part of the Quad during the G7 summit**, focusing on the Indo-Pacific region.
  - In line, leaders from the Quad nations have announced plans to implement Open [Radio Access Networks \(RAN\)](#) **beginning with Palau in the Pacific Region**.
  - The Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea also urged India to be an advocate for the PICs in the **G-7 and the G-20 summits**.
- **12-Point Formula:**
  - India also unveiled a **12-point development programme** in areas of **healthcare, cyberspace, clean energy, water and small and medium enterprises in PIC**, according to which:
    - India will establish a **super-specialty cardiology hospital in Fiji, introduce dialysis units and sea ambulances in all 14 PICs**, and establish **Jan Aushadhi Centres to provide affordable medicines**.
    - India will support the development of the **small- and medium-scale enterprise sector in each Pacific Island nation**.
      - India also pledged to **provide desalination units to address water scarcity issues**.
- **'Thirukkural Book:**
  - **Also, the Indian Prime Minister along with his Papua New Guinea counterpart** also released the Tamil classic **'Thirukkural'** in Tok Pisin (official language of Papua New Guinea) to **bring the Indian thought and culture closer to the people of this southwestern Pacific nation**.



## What is FIPIC?

### ▪ About:

- India's engagement with the **PICs** is part of [India's Act East Policy](#).
  - A major initiative launched under the rubric of the Act East Policy for the PICs is the **Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC)**.
- FIPIC is a **multinational grouping developed for cooperation between India and 14 PICs, namely Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.**
- It was launched in November 2014 and the **first FIPIC summit was held in Suva, Fiji in 2014** and the **second one was held in Jaipur, India in 2015.**

### ▪ Objective:

- To **enhance India's relations with the PICs** in various fields such as trade, investment, tourism, education, health, agriculture, renewable energy, disaster management and climate change.
- FIPIC also provides a **platform for dialogue and consultation on regional and global issues of mutual interest.**

## What is the Significance of Pacific Island Countries?

- **Geopolitical Importance:** The Pacific Island nations are **strategically located in the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean**, which has drawn the attention of major powers like the US, Russia and China due to their **potential for trade, military presence, and alliances.**
- **Economic Potential:** These nations possess **valuable natural resources, including fisheries, minerals, timber, and tourism assets.**
  - Additionally, their [exclusive economic zones \(EEZs\)](#) are rich in marine resources. They also serve as **transit points for international trade, connecting various regions across the Pacific.**
    - **9 of the world's 10 busiest seaports are in this region.**
- **Cultural and Biological Diversity:** The Pacific Island nations are home to diverse **indigenous cultures, languages, and traditions, which are of immense value to humanity.**
  - The preservation and promotion of their unique cultural heritage contribute to global diversity.
- **Potential Vote Bank:** The 14 PICs, bound together by shared economic and security concerns,

account for as many votes in the [United Nations](#), and act as a potential vote bank for major powers to mobilise international opinion.

## How is India's Relations with Pacific Island Countries?

### ▪ About:

- **India and the PICs** share historical and cultural ties and **have been engaging with the PICs through various bilateral and multilateral platforms**, such as the [Non-Aligned Movement](#), the [United Nations](#) and the [FIPIIC](#).
- India's engagement with the PICs is driven by its [vision of a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region](#), as well as its commitment to support the development aspirations and [climate resilience of the PICs](#).
  - The references to "vision for a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific" are believed to be related to [China's increasing assertion in the region](#).

### ▪ Assistance:

- India has been a reliable partner for the PICs especially during the [Covid-19 pandemic](#).
- India has provided **vital medicines, vaccines and food to the PICs as part of its humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts**. Some of the examples of India's support to the PICs during the Covid-19 pandemic are:
  - India donated **1.2 million doses of Covishield vaccine to Fiji** under its **Vaccine Maitri initiative**.
  - Supplied essential medicines and medical equipment worth **USD 2 million to Papua New Guinea, 100 metric tonnes of rice to Nauru** under its [Mission Sagar initiative](#), line of credit worth **USD 75 million to Fiji for a co-generation power plant project**.
    - India extended a line of credit worth **USD 100 million to Samoa for a solar power project**.

### ▪ Economic Relations: Based on 2021-22 data, the total annual trade between India and Pacific Island countries is valued at **USD 570 million**, in commodities such as plastics, **pharmaceuticals, sugar, mineral fuel and ores**.

- Among them, **Papua New Guinea is the biggest trade partner in terms of value**.

### ▪ Future Prospects: India and the PICs have immense potential to enhance their cooperation in various sectors such as **blue economy, maritime security, digital connectivity, health care, education and skill development**.

- India can leverage its strengths in [information technology, renewable energy, space technology and pharmaceuticals](#) to offer innovative solutions to the challenges faced by the PICs.
- India can also share its best practices and experiences in [disaster management and climate change adaptation with the PICs](#).

[Source: IE](#)

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