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GEOPOLITICS AT GLANCE

70 YEARS OF BANDUNG AND NAM'S LEGACY



INTRODUCTION

The year 2025 marks the 70th anniversary of the historic Asia-Africa Conference, commonly referred to as the Bandung Conference. This summit laid the foundation for the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and became a turning point in the evolution of South-South Cooperation. The Bandung spirit fostered solidarity among newly independent nations, enabling the Global South to collectively assert its interests on the world stage. Yet, amid today's shifting geopolitical dynamics, competing national goals, rising alternative coalitions, leadership voids, and strategic inertia, debates have emerged regarding NAM's present-day significance.

WHAT IS THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT (NAM)?

The Non-Aligned Movement was conceived during the Cold War by recently decolonized countries that opted not to formally align with either the capitalist bloc led by the United States or the socialist bloc headed by the Soviet Union. Non-alignment did not imply detachment from global affairs or a refusal to engage with these powers for developmental benefits; rather, it represented a conscious decision to remain ideologically neutral and independent.

The seeds of NAM were sown in 1955 at the Bandung Conference, where 29 Asian and African nations—freshly independent—gathered to articulate a common agenda. This historic convergence of decolonized

states marked the emergence of the Global South. NAM officially took shape in 1961 during the Belgrade Conference, guided by the leadership of India, Yugoslavia, Egypt, Ghana, and Indonesia.

The ideological bedrock of NAM was based on five guiding principles, known as the Panchsheel:

- ☐ Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity
- ☐ Non-interference in internal or military affairs
- ☐ Mutual non-aggression
- ☐ Equality and mutual benefit
- ☐ Peaceful coexistence and cooperation in development

CHALLENGES CONFRONTING NAM

1. **Diminishing Relevance in a Post-Cold War Era:** NAM's foundational philosophy of neutrality was deeply rooted in Cold War politics and the anti-colonial struggle. With the Cold War's end and the rise of new power dynamics, the movement has increasingly appeared outdated and less effective in addressing contemporary global issues.
2. **Lack of Internal Unity and Diverse National Agendas:** The broad and diverse membership of NAM includes nations with varied governance systems, economic objectives, and foreign policy strategies. This heterogeneity makes it challenging to formulate united stands or decisive interventions. While consensus on general principles is achievable, meaningful coordination on pressing international matters often falls short.
3. **Leadership Vacuum and Internal Fragmentation:** The disintegration of key founding members like Yugoslavia and the absence of charismatic global leaders have eroded the movement's cohesion and clout. Some influential members have shifted focus toward more dynamic regional alliances, leaving NAM without strong figureheads to navigate today's multipolar world order.
4. **Limited Global Influence and Passive Approach:** NAM has developed a reputation for being more symbolic than strategic—frequently issuing statements rather than initiating impactful actions. Its stances on disarmament, conflict resolution, and economic justice have rarely translated into tangible results, weakening its global credibility and diminishing its role in shaping international outcomes.
5. **Overlapping Agendas with Emerging Groupings:** The rise of powerful alternative platforms such as BRICS, SCO, and the G20—many of which share NAM's goals—has further diluted NAM's uniqueness and appeal. These groups often provide more targeted or action-oriented solutions, reducing NAM's strategic space.

WHY NAM STILL MATTERS IN TODAY'S WORLD

1. **Enduring Relevance of Panchsheel Principles:** The foundational values that united developing countries in Bandung remain pertinent today. Mutual respect, non-intervention, peaceful coexistence, and equality are essential to preserving a multilateral order rooted in rules and fairness. These principles are increasingly important as global institutions like the UN struggle to remain effective in addressing emerging global crises.
2. **A Unified Voice for the Global South:** NAM continues to be the second-largest international bloc after the United Nations, with 120 member nations that represent more than half the global population and

nearly two-thirds of UN members. It remains a vital platform through which developing nations advocate for their rights and needs on the world stage.

- 3. Challenging Western Hegemony and Neo-Colonial Practices:** In a world still influenced by unequal power relations, NAM serves as a counterforce to the dominance of powerful Western nations. It actively opposes foreign occupation, unilateral sanctions, and undue interference in sovereign affairs, thus positioning itself against modern forms of neo-colonialism and external exploitation.
- 4. Tackling Developmental Inequities:** NAM has redirected its focus toward tackling poverty, inequality, and social exclusion—issues that pose real threats to peace and security across its membership. The movement champions more inclusive economic policies and equitable globalization that benefit the wider developing world, rather than just a privileged few.
- 5. Promoting Multilateralism and Peaceful Diplomacy:** True to its founding spirit, NAM remains committed to diplomatic dialogue, non-aggression, and nuclear disarmament. It actively defends international law and encourages cooperative solutions to shared problems, from climate change and pandemics to regional tensions and global security.
- 6. Enhancing Coordination Among Developing States:** NAM offers a collaborative space where countries of the Global South can harmonize their positions on critical global issues. Especially within the UN system, it helps unify the voices of developing countries on matters like sustainable development, institutional reform, and environmental justice.

CONCLUSION: NAM'S RELEVANCE IN A MULTIPOLAR FUTURE

As the global order evolves toward multipolarity, the Global South must play a proactive role in shaping a more just, equitable, and inclusive world. In this context, NAM continues to serve as a critical platform for advancing the collective interests of developing nations. Despite internal fragmentation and challenges to its influence, its foundational mission—to promote multilateralism, resist global power imbalances, and advocate for socio-economic justice—remains deeply relevant in 2025.

PM MODI'S APRIL 2025 VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA: A STRATEGIC MILESTONE



INDIA-SAUDI ARABIA RELATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to Saudi Arabia in April 2025—although shortened due to the Pahalgam terror attack—was a key moment in India's West Asia diplomacy. The visit witnessed the signing of several Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) across sectors like energy, digital infrastructure, pharmaceuticals, and labour welfare. India and Saudi Arabia share a relationship underpinned by mutual trust, strategic depth, and close people-to-people engagement.

A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF INDIA-SAUDI ARABIA RELATIONS

- ❑ **Early Phase of Warm Ties:** India and Saudi Arabia established diplomatic ties in 1947. These were followed by landmark visits, including King Saud's historic 1955 visit to India, and Prime Minister Nehru's return visit in 1956, symbolizing the cordiality of the early post-independence years.
- ❑ **Tensions During the Cold War:** However, during the Cold War era, relations cooled. Saudi Arabia aligned itself with the U.S.-led capitalist bloc, whereas India adopted a non-aligned stance. Bilateral ties were further strained following Pakistan's defeat in the 1971 war, the 1973 oil crisis, and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, which deepened regional rivalries.
- ❑ **Normalization and Renewal:** Ties normalized significantly with King Abdullah's landmark visit to India in 2006—his first and the first by a Saudi monarch in over five decades. The **Delhi Declaration (2006)** provided a framework for cooperation in energy, trade, technology, education, and healthcare.

- ❑ **Strategic Deepening:** The **Riyadh Declaration (2010)** built upon earlier gains and added strategic dimensions like counterterrorism, anti-money laundering, narcotics control, and defence cooperation. PM Modi's 2016 Riyadh visit, his meetings with the Saudi Crown Prince on the sidelines of G-20 summits, and the formation of the **Strategic Partnership Council (SPC)** reflect the maturing of a robust bilateral strategic architecture.

WHY INDIA–SAUDI ARABIA TIES MATTER: STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

GEOPOLITICAL IMPORTANCE

1. **Saudi Arabia's Expanding Regional Role:** The Kingdom wields substantial influence in West Asian geopolitics, including its involvement in the Israel–Palestine issue and its relationships with global powers like the U.S., China, Russia, and the EU. This has drawn India into deeper political engagement with Riyadh.
2. **China's Expanding Footprint:** China's mediation in the Saudi–Iran reconciliation and its rising profile in the Gulf have increased India's strategic imperative to strengthen its own ties with Saudi Arabia to counterbalance Beijing's influence.

GEOSTRATEGIC DIMENSIONS

1. **Counterterrorism Cooperation:** Saudi Arabia's leverage over Pakistan can be instrumental in pressing Islamabad towards meaningful dialogue on terror. Riyadh has shown solidarity with India by condemning the Pahalgam attack and backing India's stance on terrorism.
2. **Defence Collaboration:** India and Saudi Arabia are engaging in joint military drills, particularly focused on counterterror operations in mountainous terrains like those bordering Yemen. Defence production partnerships are also under discussion.
3. **Maritime Security and Anti-Piracy:** Ensuring safe navigation through critical chokepoints like the Gulf of Aden and the Strait of Hormuz is vital. Bilateral naval exercises such as **Al Mohed al Hindi** reflect growing maritime cooperation to secure vital oil shipping lanes.

GEOECONOMIC RELEVANCE

1. **Energy Security:** Saudi Arabia is India's third-largest oil and gas supplier, fulfilling 17% of India's crude oil and 32% of its LPG needs. With Iran under sanctions, Riyadh is a vital alternative energy partner. Additionally, both countries are now collaborating on **renewable energy**, especially **green hydrogen**, dovetailing India's energy transition with Saudi's Vision 2030.
2. **Vision 2030 and India's Role:** Saudi Arabia's ambitious **Vision 2030** plan aims to reduce dependency on oil and turn the Kingdom into a hub of global business and culture. India, with its IT expertise and infrastructure capabilities, is a key partner in realizing this vision.
3. **Investments and Sovereign Wealth:** With one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds, Saudi Arabia is a major investor in India's National Infrastructure and Investment Fund (NIIF). It is also a stakeholder in the \$44 billion **Ratnagiri refinery** project. Riyadh has pledged up to **\$100 billion** in investments across energy, tech, health, and infrastructure sectors in India.
4. **Bilateral Trade:** India is Saudi Arabia's second-largest trading partner, while Saudi Arabia ranks fourth for India. In FY 2022–23, bilateral trade reached **\$52.76 billion**, and future trade prospects appear even more promising.

CULTURAL AND HUMAN LINKAGES

1. **Religious and Cultural Bonds:** Saudi Arabia facilitates the annual Hajj pilgrimage for over **1.75 lakh Indian Muslims**, reinforcing spiritual and cultural ties.
2. **Indian Diaspora as a Soft Power Asset:** With **2.7 million Indians**, the Indian diaspora is the largest expatriate group in Saudi Arabia. They are deeply respected, contribute over **\$11 billion annually** in remittances, and function as informal ambassadors of Indian soft power.
3. **Cultural Diplomacy and Tourism:** Under Vision 2030, cultural and educational collaborations, including joint efforts in cinema, tourism, and academic exchange, are gaining momentum.

CHALLENGES IN INDIA–SAUDI ARABIA RELATIONS

Despite the growing convergence between India and Saudi Arabia across strategic, economic, and cultural domains, their bilateral ties continue to face a range of enduring and emerging challenges. These issues are rooted in complex geopolitical dynamics, economic asymmetries, and socio-political concerns that test the resilience of this evolving partnership.

1. **Complexity of Middle Eastern Geopolitics:** The Middle East remains one of the most volatile and fragmented regions in the world, marked by deep-rooted rivalries such as the Saudi Arabia–Iran conflict and the historically tense Saudi–Israel relationship. As a rising global power, India seeks to maintain cordial and cooperative ties with all regional players—including Iran, with whom India collaborates on key projects like the Chabahar Port. However, this balancing act becomes increasingly delicate in light of Saudi Arabia’s antagonism toward Iran. India’s strategic autonomy is tested as it tries to walk this tightrope without alienating any party.
2. **Saudi–Pakistan Nexus:** Saudi Arabia’s long-standing and robust relations with Pakistan—encompassing financial assistance, military cooperation, and religious affinity—continue to complicate its engagement with India. Riyadh remains one of Islamabad’s largest financial benefactors. Concerns have been raised that such support indirectly fuels anti-India sentiments and terrorism in the region. Consequently, this dynamic introduces hesitation into deeper Indo-Saudi counterterrorism collaboration and undermines trust on sensitive security issues.
3. **Labour and Migration Issues:** A cornerstone of bilateral ties is the Indian expatriate community in Saudi Arabia, numbering over 2.6 million. However, several challenges persist:
 - **Expatriate Welfare:** Indian workers have faced harsh working conditions, wage delays, and legal hurdles, especially under the now-reformed Kafala system. Although Saudi Arabia has initiated labour reforms, ensuring consistent protection and welfare of Indian workers remains an ongoing concern.
 - **Nitaqat Program:** Introduced in 2011, the Nitaqat Saudization policy aimed to replace foreign workers with Saudi nationals in the private sector. This policy has caused anxiety among the Indian workforce and threatens employment stability for millions of Indians in the Kingdom.
4. **The Asian Premium on Oil:** India has long protested against the “Asian Premium”—a surcharge imposed by OPEC, particularly Saudi Arabia, on oil sold to Asian nations. Although Riyadh has reduced the premium from nearly \$10 per barrel to \$3.5 per barrel—especially after India diversified oil imports towards Russia—the issue remains unresolved. New Delhi has been advocating for its abolition or even the introduction of an “Asian Discount,” highlighting the perception of inequitable treatment by a strategic energy partner.

5. **Persistent Trade Deficit:** The bilateral trade relationship is heavily skewed in favour of Saudi Arabia, primarily due to India's dependence on oil imports. In FY 2023–24 alone, the trade deficit reached nearly USD 20 billion. This economic asymmetry poses challenges in building a balanced and sustainable partnership and often influences broader strategic negotiations.
6. **Contentious Stance on Kashmir:** Occasionally, Saudi Arabia has echoed Pakistan's narrative on Kashmir through statements issued by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), where Riyadh holds considerable influence. Although such references have decreased in recent years, any expression of support for Pakistan's position on Kashmir remains a diplomatic irritant in Indo-Saudi ties.
7. **China's Expanding Footprint:** As Saudi Arabia diversifies its global partnerships, its growing engagement with China—ranging from oil deals and infrastructure investments to emerging defence cooperation—raises strategic concerns for India. The deepening Riyadh–Beijing axis could potentially dilute India's influence in the region and complicate trilateral equations.
8. **Maritime Security Concerns:** Both India and Saudi Arabia rely on uninterrupted maritime trade through the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea. The rise of non-state actors and incidents like piracy, sabotage, and regional conflicts pose common threats to maritime security. Addressing these challenges requires close cooperation, joint naval drills, and intelligence sharing—areas where engagement remains nascent.

CONCLUSION

India and Saudi Arabia have undeniably come a long way in transforming their bilateral relationship into a multidimensional partnership. However, the path ahead is not without obstacles. Managing geopolitical rivalries, rebalancing economic asymmetries, securing diaspora welfare, and navigating strategic uncertainties like China's rise will determine the future trajectory of India–Saudi Arabia relations. Overcoming these challenges requires sustained dialogue, institutional mechanisms, and a shared commitment to mutual growth and regional stability.

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Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

INTRODUCTION

India and the UK, the world's fifth and sixth-largest economies, finalized their much-anticipated Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in May, 2025, following nearly three years of talks. Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised the deal as a "forward-looking and balanced" pact, marking a pivotal moment in India's post-Brexit trade strategy.

The agreement traces its origins to former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's April 2022 visit, which set an initial "Diwali 2022" target. Though delayed, the FTA reflects bipartisan alignment in the UK and enduring economic priorities despite leadership changes. Bilateral trade, valued at £42.6 billion in 2024, is poised to expand, fostering job growth, investment, and technological collaboration.

EVOLUTION OF THE INDIA-UK FTA

- ❑ **Political Momentum:** The pact gained steam during Boris Johnson's 2022 India visit, with an ambitious Diwali deadline.
- ❑ **Post-Brexit Realignment:** The UK's EU exit in 2020 drove its search for new partners, with India emerging as a high-growth market.
- ❑ **Cross-Party Consensus:** Successive UK governments, from Johnson to Sunak to Starmer, backed the deal, showcasing rare policy continuity.
- ❑ **India's Trade Expansion:** This follows India's FTAs with the UAE, Australia, and Mauritius, reinforcing its push to become a global trade nexus.
- ❑ **China-Plus-One Shift:** As businesses diversify supply chains away from China, India's strategic appeal has risen.

KEY AGREEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- ❑ **Tariff Cuts:** Scotch whisky and gin duties drop from 150% to 75%, eventually hitting 40% in a decade. UK car tariffs slashed from 100%+ to 10% under quotas.
- ❑ **Market Access:** Reduced levies on cosmetics, aerospace components, medical equipment, lamb, salmon, and electronics.
- ❑ **Services Liberalization:** ~100 annual visas for Indian professionals (IT, healthcare, engineering) and mutual qualification recognition.
- ❑ **Trade Efficiency:** Smoother customs processes and fewer regulatory hurdles.
- ❑ **Carbon Tax Compromise:** Protections for Indian metal exports against UK carbon levies, acknowledging developing nations' needs.
- ❑ **MSME & Investment:** Easier compliance for small businesses and incentives for green/digital investments.
- ❑ **IP & Digital Rules:** Safeguards for intellectual property and cross-border data flows, critical for India's pharma and IT sectors.

IMPLICATIONS FOR BOTH SIDES

- ❑ **UK's Post-Brexit Strategy:** Its most substantial trade deal since leaving the EU, anchoring a pivot to the Indo-Pacific.
- ❑ **Geopolitical Messaging:** Counters U.S. protectionism and China trade tensions, elevating India's role in supply chain diversification.
- ❑ **Sectoral Gains:** Indian pharma, textiles, IT, and auto parts gain; UK secures cost-competitive imports amid inflation.
- ❑ **Diaspora Ties:** Easier mobility for Indian workers strengthens cultural and economic bonds.
- ❑ **Blueprint for Future Deals:** Sets a precedent for India's upcoming EU and U.S. FTA talks, especially on services and regulations.
- ❑ **Global Confidence:** Signals stability amid rising trade barriers and fragmented multilateral systems.

OTHER INDIAN INITIATIVES, COLLABORATIONS & GLOBAL TRADE PROGRAMMES

- ❑ **India-United Kingdom Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO):** A bilateral forum for periodic review and coordination of the Free Trade Agreement.
- ❑ **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Schemes:** Government incentives to boost domestic manufacturing and export competitiveness.
- ❑ **One District One Product (ODOP) Initiative:** A program to promote district-specific products in global markets.
- ❑ **India-United Arab Emirates Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) (2022):** India's first major trade deal in over a decade, granting duty-free access for 90% of Indian exports to the UAE.
- ❑ **India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) (2022):** Strengthened trade ties in education, pharmaceuticals, and agricultural exports.
- ❑ **Digital India and Startup India Missions:** Government initiatives to empower technology-driven sectors benefiting from trade agreements.

- ❑ **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI):** A trilateral collaboration with Japan and Australia to reduce dependence on Chinese supply chains.
- ❑ **India's G20 Presidency (2023):** Advocated for reformed multilateralism and inclusive globalization in trade policies.

CHALLENGES IN THE INDIA-UNITED KINGDOM FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

- ❑ **Asymmetric Gains:** According to the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) report, many Indian exports already enjoy low or zero tariffs in the UK, limiting additional benefits.
- ❑ **Carbon Taxation Conflicts:** The United Kingdom's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) could disadvantage Indian metal and steel exports.
- ❑ **Immigration Politics in the UK:** Post-Brexit restrictions led to limited visa concessions, with only around 100 additional annual visas for Indian professionals.
- ❑ **Regulatory Compliance Costs:** Indian Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) face challenges meeting stringent UK and European Union technical and environmental standards.
- ❑ **Domestic Industry Resistance:** Sectors such as automobiles and dairy in India oppose tariff reductions due to potential market disruptions.
- ❑ **Non-Tariff Barriers:** Strict United Kingdom and European Union regulations on food safety, intellectual property rights (IPR), and labeling create hurdles for Indian exporters.
- ❑ **Limited Stakeholder Consultations:** Critics highlight insufficient transparency and public scrutiny during negotiations.
- ❑ **Data Localization and Privacy Concerns:** Differences between India's draft Digital Personal Data Protection Act and the UK's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) framework.

WAY FORWARD

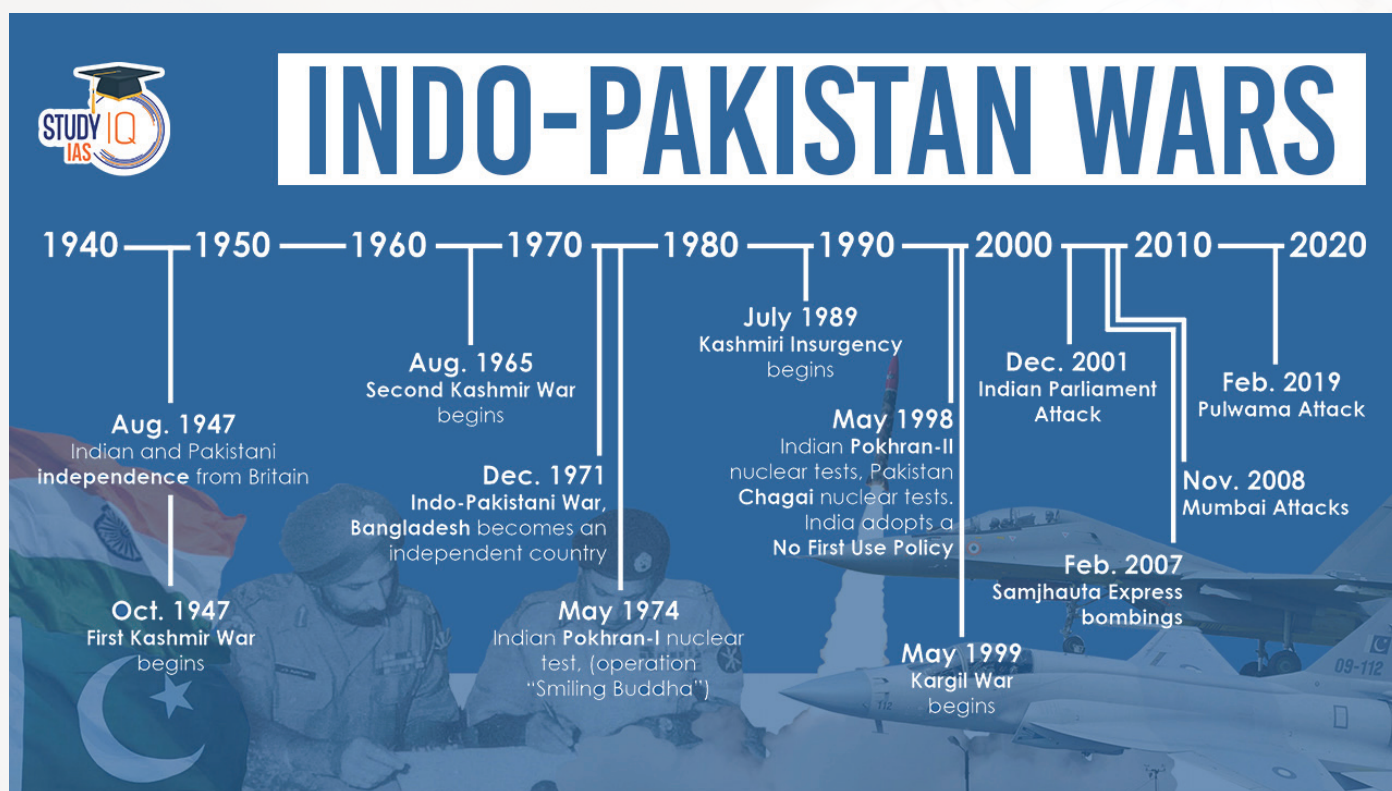
- ❑ **Treat the Free Trade Agreement as a Foundation:** Expand cooperation into defense, education, and climate technologies, with oversight by NITI Aayog or a dedicated committee.
- ❑ **Diversify Trade Partnerships:** Prioritize negotiations for Free Trade Agreements with the European Union and United States, with a focus on Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) standards.
- ❑ **Enhance Sector-Specific Skills:** Align Skill India programs with global demands, such as digital healthcare and financial technology (fintech) professionals.
- ❑ **Support for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs):** Provide technical and financial assistance to meet international compliance standards.
- ❑ **Develop a Green Trade Strategy:** Address Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)-related challenges through diplomatic and policy measures.
- ❑ **Strengthen Data Governance:** Ensure India's Digital Personal Data Protection Act aligns with global data protection norms.
- ❑ **Improve Transparency in Negotiations:** Institutionalize stakeholder consultations for future trade agreements.

- ❑ **Strengthen Dispute Resolution Mechanisms:** Enhance capabilities in international trade arbitration to protect domestic industries.

CONCLUSION

The India-United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement (2025) represents a strategic evolution in India's trade policy, merging the vision of self-reliance ("Atmanirbhar Bharat") with global economic integration. As India advances toward agreements with the European Union and United States, this pact provides critical insights for crafting a competitive and resilient trade framework.

INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS: A COMPLEX HISTORY OF CONFLICT AND TENSION



INTRODUCTION

India and Pakistan, two nuclear-armed neighbors in South Asia, continue to share a deeply strained relationship that originated during the violent Partition of British India in 1947. Despite having fought four major wars (1947-48, 1965, 1971, and 1999) and numerous military skirmishes, their bilateral dynamics remain defined by historical grievances, strategic competition, and intermittent peace initiatives.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS: THE 2025 PAHALGAM TERROR ATTACK

The recent tragic terrorist attack in Pahalgam and India's hard response serves as another grim reminder of persistent security challenges. It reignited debates about cross-border terrorism and the fragile security situation in the region.

KEY ISSUES SHAPING INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

- ❑ **Cross-Border Terrorism:** The persistent threat of terrorism has shaped bilateral tensions since the 1989 Kashmir uprising, with major attacks including the 2001 Parliament assault, 2008 Mumbai siege, 2016 Uri strike, 2019 Pulwama bombing, and recent 2025 Pahalgam incident. Research by ORF characterizes Pakistan's terror network as "state-supported non-state actors," providing sanctuary to groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. The Brookings Institution's 2023 analysis confirms Pakistan's ongoing proxy warfare in Kashmir remains a regional destabilizing factor.
- ❑ **Kashmir Dispute:** At the heart of tensions lies the contested status of Jammu and Kashmir, claimed by Pakistan but governed by India since accession. Following India's 2019 constitutional changes regarding Kashmir's special status, Pakistan reduced diplomatic engagement and sought international intervention. While New Delhi maintains this as an internal matter, UN bodies have periodically expressed human rights concerns. As former diplomat Shyam Saran notes, "Kashmir forms the cornerstone of Pakistan's national identity," while analyst C. Raja Mohan describes Islamabad's stance as "ideologically rigid strategic stagnation."
- ❑ **Border and LoC Ceasefire Violations:** Official records indicate more than 5,000 ceasefire breaches during 2020 along the Line of Control. Although a 2021 agreement temporarily reduced hostilities, violations have escalated again since 2023.
- ❑ **Water Disputes under Indus Waters Treaty:** Established in 1960 through World Bank mediation, this water-sharing agreement has faced growing tensions. Following the 2016 Uri attack, India reconsidered its participation, while Pakistan challenged Indian hydroelectric projects like Kishanganga and Ratle. In 2023, India initiated treaty renegotiations under Article XII, with the World Bank recommending neutral arbitration.
- ❑ **Trade and Economic Relations:** Economic ties collapsed after Pakistan suspended bilateral trade in 2019. CUTS International research suggests this decision costs both nations up to \$3 billion in potential annual trade.
- ❑ **Religious Radicalization:** Pakistan-based extremist networks, including militant groups and criminal organizations, continue exporting radical ideology. UN Security Council reports document the expanding network of radical religious schools serving as recruitment centers.
- ❑ **Nuclear Deterrence:** Both countries possess substantial nuclear arsenals and delivery systems. The 2019 Balakot crisis brought them perilously close to military escalation, as analyzed by RAND Corporation experts.
- ❑ **Afghanistan and Security Threats:** India supports stability in Afghanistan while accusing Pakistan of covert Taliban support. The 2023 USIP report warns of increased cross-border terrorism following the Taliban takeover, compounded by Pakistan's proximity to major narcotics production zones, evidenced by drone-assisted smuggling into Punjab.
- ❑ **Cyber Conflict:** Pakistani cyber units like APT36 persistently target Indian defense and research institutions, with numerous incidents documented by India's national cybersecurity agency.
- ❑ **Humanitarian Concerns:** Hundreds of fishermen remain imprisoned on both sides, while espionage cases like that of Kulbhushan Jadhav - where the ICJ ruled in India's favor in 2019 - continue straining relations.

MULTILATERAL GROUPINGS INVOLVING INDIA AND PAKISTAN

- ❑ **SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation):** India and Pakistan are founding members. SAARC summits are often stalled due to bilateral tensions. Paralysed since 2016 after the Uri attack. C. Raja Mohan observed that “SAARC has been held hostage to bilateral tensions.”
- ❑ **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO):** Both are full members since 2017. Pakistan has blocked Indian proposals and boycotted certain events. India skipped SCO meetings in 2024 due to provocations.
- ❑ **UN and Related Agencies:** Pakistan raises Kashmir issue frequently; India counters by stressing non-interference. India's Stand: Consistently maintains Kashmir is a bilateral issue under the Shimla Agreement (1972).
- ❑ **World Trade Organization (WTO):** Ongoing disputes over MFN status. India also withdrew Pakistan's MFN status in 2019.

PRESENT DYNAMICS AND SHIFTS

- ❑ Union Government follows a “terror and talks cannot go together” doctrine.
- ❑ Operation Sindoor and Balakot airstrike (2019) marked a shift towards pre-emptive action and direct response to the terrorist attack.
- ❑ Pakistan's internal economic crisis (USD reserves at critical levels as per IMF 2024 report) restricts its military adventurism.
- ❑ US withdrawal from Afghanistan has left Pakistan more regionally isolated. Think tank Carnegie India argues that the India-Pakistan equation is now less central to global diplomacy.

WHAT ARE THE THREATS AND CHALLENGES POSED BY PAKISTAN?

- ❑ **State-Sponsored Terrorism:** ISI's deep links with groups like LeT and JeM are documented by the FATF, which kept Pakistan on the grey list until 2022.
- ❑ **Cyber Espionage and Propaganda:** CERT-In flagged multiple attempts of phishing and propaganda campaigns from Pakistani IPs targeting Indian defence personnel.
- ❑ **Smuggling and Narco-Terrorism:** Punjab Police has reported a surge in drone-based smuggling of arms and heroin from across the border.
- ❑ **Border Infiltration:** IB and LoC infiltration attempts remain persistent. BSF recorded over 200 infiltration attempts in 2023 alone.
- ❑ **Strategic Alliance with China:** The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) runs through PoK, challenging India's sovereignty. Brookings warns of a “two-front” security risk for India from the Sino-Pak axis.
- ❑ **Propaganda Warfare:** Pakistan's ISPR targets international narratives (via social media).
- ❑ **Nuclear Posturing:** Tactical nukes threaten escalation.

WHAT ARE THE GLOBAL POWERS POLICIES TOWARD INDIA-PAKISTAN?

- ❑ **United States:** Views India as a strategic partner under Indo-Pacific Strategy. Maintains defence ties with Pakistan (e.g., 2022 F-16 upgrade aid) to keep leverage. Carnegie Endowment noted that the U.S. “wants to prevent escalation while balancing both ties.” Ashley Tellis calls US policy aims to “contain chaos in Pakistan while investing in India.”

- ❑ **China:** Strong strategic partner of Pakistan. China is an all-weather ally of Pakistan (CPEC, military aid) and supports Pakistan on Kashmir in UNSC. Uses Pakistan to counterbalance India's regional influence. Engaged in infrastructure and military cooperation via CPEC, which India opposes.
- ❑ **Russia:** Traditionally close to India, but now engages both countries, increasing ties with Pakistan in defense (Mi-35, joint drills). Supports anti-terrorism under SCO; has recently conducted trilateral exercises with both India and Pakistan separately.
- ❑ **OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation):** Supports Pakistan's stance on Kashmir, though many Gulf nations now have improved ties with India (e.g., UAE, Saudi Arabia).
- ❑ **Gulf Countries (UAE, Saudi Arabia):** Brokered 2021 ceasefire. UAE plays economic neutral; strong trade with both. Brookings Doha Center noted UAE's role in the Indo-Pak thaw.
- ❑ **European Union:** Concerned with human rights in Kashmir, supports bilateral dialogue and is a major trade partner for both countries.

WAY FORWARD: A BALANCED STRATEGY OF DETERRENCE AND DIPLOMACY

HARD STRATEGY: ASSERTING DETERRENCE AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Surgical and Cyber Strikes: Precision military and digital operations (e.g., 2016 Surgical Strikes, 2019 Balakot). Lt. Gen. D.S. Hooda (Retd.) advocates integrating military and cyber tools for strategic messaging.

- ❑ **Financial and Diplomatic Pressure:**
 - Global isolation of Pakistan (e.g., FATF grey listing 2018–2022).
 - IMF/World Bank conditionalities linking aid to counter-terror action.
 - Experts like C. Raja Mohan endorse “diplomatic strangulation” to curb terror financing.
- ❑ **Defense Modernization:**
 - Rafale jets, S-400 systems, indigenous missiles (Agni-V, BrahMos).
 - Gen. Bipin Rawat emphasized “tech-enabled integrated responses” for hybrid threats.
- ❑ **Proportional Response Doctrine:**
 - Balakot set a precedent for retaliatory strikes.
 - Strengthen border tech (drones, AI surveillance).
- ❑ **Global Models:** Israel's deterrence; renegotiate Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) for leverage.

SOFT STRATEGY: ENGAGEMENT AND QUIET DIPLOMACY

- ❑ **Backchannel Talks:** UAE-mediated 2021 LoC ceasefire renewal. Ex-diplomat Sharat Sabharwal highlights “silent diplomacy's” efficacy.
- ❑ **People-to-People Ties:** Kartarpur Corridor (2019), cultural exchanges (currently paused).
- ❑ **Third-Party Mediation:** Gulf states (UAE, Saudi) as neutral facilitators.

INTEGRATED STRATEGY: CARROT AND STICK

- ❑ **Israel's Model:** Combine military deterrence (Balakot) with soft outreach (Kartarpur).
- ❑ **Hybrid Response Framework:**
 - Address hybrid threats (terrorism, cyberattacks) with blended tools (military, economic, diplomatic).

- ORF recommends “controlled engagement” to balance hostility reduction and threat neutralization.

CONCLUSION: PRAGMATIC PATH AHEAD

India-Pakistan relations remain fraught but not hopeless. As former NSA Shivshankar Menon noted, “Peace is desirable, but only on terms ensuring India’s security.” The way forward demands:

- ☐ **Realism:** Acknowledge Pakistan’s structural hostility.
- ☐ **Resilience:** Sustain deterrence while exploring backchannels.
- ☐ **Calibration:** Match responses to provocations but leave room for diplomacy.

INDIA-BANGLADESH TRADE DIPLOMACY



INTRODUCTION

India and Bangladesh maintain a multifaceted relationship shaped by historical ties, geographical proximity, cultural affinities, and economic interdependence. Official trade data reveals Bangladesh emerged as India’s biggest South Asian trading partner, with two-way commerce crossing \$18 billion during 2022-23. While Indian exports dominated at \$13.8 billion, imports from Bangladesh reached \$4.9 billion.

Recent developments, however, point to growing economic friction. India’s imposition of trade barriers in May 2025 and Bangladesh’s previous restrictions on Indian products indicate deteriorating commercial relations. Research by GTRI suggests these measures will impact nearly half of bilateral trade, particularly affecting Bangladesh’s \$618 million garment exports to India, with total affected trade valued at \$770 million. This represents a significant departure from the traditionally robust economic partnership between the neighbors.

EMERGING TRADE TENSIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH

The traditionally robust economic partnership between India and Bangladesh has recently faced unexpected turbulence. In May 2025, India introduced trade restrictions affecting 42% of bilateral imports, valued at \$770 million, with Bangladesh's garment sector (\$618 million) bearing the brunt. This escalation follows Bangladesh's earlier measures, banning Indian yarn imports through key land ports, restricting food and tobacco trade, and imposing transit fees on Indian cargo.

ROOT CAUSES OF THE TRADE DISPUTE

❑ Political Shift in Bangladesh

- The interim government under Mohammad Yunus, replacing Sheikh Hasina's Awami League administration, has adopted a more China-leaning stance.
- Yunus's March 2025 visit to Beijing, where he controversially termed India's northeast as "landlocked" and proposed Chinese access via Bangladesh, triggered strategic concerns in New Delhi.

❑ Bangladesh's Trade Barriers

- April 2025 restrictions on Indian goods (yarn, rice, dairy, fish, tobacco).
- Imposition of a 1.8 taka per ton/km transit fee on Indian shipments, disrupting supply chains.

❑ India's Retaliatory Measures

- Revoked Bangladesh's transshipment privileges (April 2025), blocking Dhaka's exports via Indian airports.
- Limited Bangladeshi garment and processed food imports to Kolkata and Nhava Sheva ports, cutting off land routes.
- The DGFT termed this a "strategic countermeasure" against Bangladesh's alignment with China.

WHY INDIA-BANGLADESH TIES MATTER

1. Economic & Trade Interdependence

- Bangladesh is India's 6th largest export hub, sustaining millions of jobs in West Bengal, Assam, and Tripura.
- Over 350 Indian firms (Tata Motors, Marico, Aditya Birla) operate in Bangladesh.

2. Geostategic Necessity

- Gateway to Northeast India: Bangladesh's Chattogram Port is vital for Indian cargo.
- Inland Waterways Pact (PIWTT): Allows Indian goods via Bangladeshi rivers.
- SAFTA benefits: Bangladesh enjoys duty-free access to Indian markets.

3. Security Collaboration

- Joint counter-terrorism efforts, including the surrender of ULFA and JMB militants to India.

4. Infrastructure & Connectivity

- BBIN Motor Agreement: Facilitates regional trade.
- Maitree Express & Kolkata-Dhaka-Agartala buses: Strengthen cross-border mobility.
- India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline (2023): Boosts energy trade.

5. Unresolved Water Diplomacy

- Teesta River dispute remains a sticking point.
- Cooperation on Ganga-Brahmaputra management is critical amid climate change.

6. Soft Power & Multilateral Ties

- Educational Links: Bangladeshis form a large share of foreign students in India.
- Cultural Bonds: Shared heritage (Tagore, Bengali language).
- Regional forums: Both nations engage via SAARC, BIMSTEC, IORA.

CHALLENGES IN INDIA-BANGLADESH RELATIONS

1. Trade Protectionism & Economic Barriers

- Port restrictions & transit fees (1.8 taka/km/tonne) disrupt supply chains.
- India's May 2025 curbs affect 42% of bilateral imports (\$770 million), per GTRI.

2. Political Uncertainty in Bangladesh

- Interim Yunus regime lacks democratic mandate after banning major parties like Awami League.
- Election credibility concerns raise geopolitical risks for India.

3. China's Growing Footprint

- \$40+ billion BRI investments in Bangladesh, including ports & infrastructure.
- Yunus's offer of transit to China threatens India's Northeast security.

4. Border & Security Issues

- 1,200+ border deaths since 2000 (HRW data) due to smuggling & shootings.
- Illegal migration & cattle smuggling strain relations.

5. Water Sharing Disputes

- Teesta agreement stalled for decades, hurting farmers in West Bengal & Bangladesh.
- Tipaimukh Dam protests reflect mistrust over river management.

6. Perception of Indian Dominance

- "Big Brother" image fuels anti-India rhetoric in Bangladeshi politics/media.
- Grassroots discontent over trade imbalances & visa policies.

7. Weak People-to-People Ties

- Limited cultural & academic exchanges hinder long-term trust.
- Media narratives often amplify nationalist tensions.

WAY FORWARD: A SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIP

1. Strengthen Economic Diplomacy

- Permanent Joint Trade Commission: Fast-track dispute resolution with industry input.
- Ease non-tariff barriers: Simplify customs & logistics at key ports (Petrapole, Benapole).

2. Balance China's Influence

- Boost Indian investments via soft loans & Development Partnership Administration (DPA).

- Accelerate connectivity projects: Akhaura-Agartala rail, Maitri SEZ, inland waterways.

3. Resolve Water Disputes

- Mediated Teesta deal: Adopt Indus Waters Treaty-like neutral experts.
- Joint climate adaptation: Ganges-Brahmaputra basin management.

4. Enhance Subregional Cooperation

- Activate BBIN Motor Pact: Cross-border trade & transit.
- BIMSTEC energy grid: Shared power & gas infrastructure.

5. Build Public Goodwill

- E-visas for students/patients: Simplify travel for Bangladeshis.
- Cultural diplomacy: Joint Tagore festivals, media exchanges.

6. Support Democratic Stability

- Engage all political actors: Beyond ruling parties, per ORF's recommendations.
- Encourage free elections: As per MEA's 2023 parliamentary report.

CONCLUSION: PRUDENCE OVER PROVOCATION

India-Bangladesh ties are too critical to fail. As analyst Suhasini Haidar notes, "Leadership in South Asia demands diplomacy, not dominance."

Key Priorities:

- ☐ Trade pragmatism over protectionism
- ☐ Strategic patience amid Bangladesh's political flux
- ☐ People-centric engagement to counter anti-India narratives

A stable, prosperous Bangladesh aligns with India's Neighborhood First vision. The path ahead lies in dialogue, not deterrence, ensuring mutual gains in an era of geopolitical shifts.

TARIFF DIPLOMACY- US AS LEADER



INTRODUCTION

The global landscape for artificial intelligence (AI) is witnessing rapid changes, driven by shifting trade policies and intensifying geopolitical rivalries. The United States has recently introduced significant tariffs, especially targeting AI-related hardware, disrupting global supply chains and raising production costs. These developments are reshaping strategic priorities and creating both hurdles and opportunities for developing nations like India.

WHAT ARE THE EMERGING CONCERNS LINKED TO U.S. TARIFF STRATEGIES?

- ☐ **Escalating Costs:** Tariffs have increased the price of imported AI hardware components, making the U.S. a costlier destination for AI R&D.
- ☐ **Disrupted Supply Chains:** Global production lines, especially for semiconductors and AI components, have faced delays and logistical bottlenecks.
- ☐ **Decline in Innovation:** Reduced international competition due to trade barriers lowers the incentive for U.S. companies to innovate.
- ☐ **Global Misallocation of Resources:** Fragmentation of supply chains defies Ricardo's classical model of comparative advantage, reducing efficiency.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES AND EFFECTS OF U.S. TARIFF MEASURES?

- ☐ **Productivity Loss and Higher Expenses:** Integrated supply networks are broken, raising costs and slowing AI sector growth. Example: AI chip prices spiked post-2018 tariff hikes.

- ❑ **Reduced Innovation Competitiveness:** Less exposure to global advancements leads to sluggish R&D. Example: 2023 saw U.S. AI firms lag in patent filings.
- ❑ **Fragile Supply Chains:** Heavy reliance on select countries weakens resilience. Relocating facilities is capital-intensive. Example: Nvidia shifted away from Taiwan.
- ❑ **Investment Instability:** Policy unpredictability deters long-term tech investment. Example: Intel's U.S. plant expansion was postponed.
- ❑ **Higher Consumer Prices:** Rising input costs translate into inflated prices for digital products. Example: Laptop retail prices surged in the U.S.
- ❑ **Widening Global Tech Divide:** High-end AI tools become inaccessible to poorer nations. Example: African research institutions fall behind.
- ❑ **Environmental and Diplomatic Fallout:** Relocation may increase emissions in countries with lax regulations. Example: Vietnam's pollution from factory shifts.
- ❑ **Security Vulnerabilities:** Incomplete domestic manufacturing capacity hampers technological sovereignty. Example: U.S. dependency on rare earth minerals.

WHAT IS THE WAY FORWARD?

- ❑ **Diversify Supply Sources:** Embrace "China Plus One" to reduce overdependence and fortify supply lines. Example: Apple added Vietnam as a key supplier.
- ❑ **Enhance Domestic Manufacturing:** Use programs like PLI to scale up local production of strategic goods. Example: Micron's investment in India under PLI.
- ❑ **Invest in R&D:** Uplift public-private research funding to achieve AI self-sufficiency. Example: ₹1,000 Cr allocated under PM-STIAC.
- ❑ **Skilling the Workforce:** Align skill development schemes like PMKVY with AI demands. Example: NASSCOM's AI-ML certified courses.
- ❑ **Strengthen Infrastructure:** Scale digital assets like 5G and data centers to support AI's processing needs. Example: Hiranandani's 250 MW data park.
- ❑ **Forge Strategic Tech Alliances:** Promote cooperation through initiatives like iCET to co-develop and share knowledge.
- ❑ **Reform Trade Policies:** Strike a balance between protectionism and open innovation. Example: Tariff relaxations on AI components.
- ❑ **Adopt Decentralized AI Frameworks:** Use DePIN models to expand tech access beyond cities. Example: Helium's IoT mesh network.

CONCLUSION

Amidst shifting global trade dynamics and tariff escalations, countries like India must adopt forward-looking strategies. By localizing production, forging global partnerships, and supporting innovation, India can not only withstand protectionist headwinds but emerge as a central hub in the global AI and tech ecosystem.

INDIAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (IGP)

CASTE CENSUS



CASTE CENSUS



DECISION BY THE CABINET COMMITTEE

The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister, has resolved to incorporate caste enumeration into the upcoming national Census. The last time a comprehensive caste-wise population count took place across India was in 1931, prior to independence. Since then, only Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) have been included in Census counts.

DEFINING CASTE CENSUS AND CASTE SURVEY

- ❑ **Census:** A Census is a complete and systematic exercise that involves gathering, processing, and disseminating data on the demographic, economic, and social attributes of all individuals within a country at a given point in time. In India, this operation is carried out every ten years. As per Article 246 of the Constitution, conducting the Census is under the jurisdiction of the Union Government.
- ❑ **Caste Census:**
 - A caste census refers to the organized documentation of citizens' caste affiliations during the Census process. It seeks to compile information about the numerical strength, socio-economic status, education levels, and related demographic indicators of different caste groups.
 - From 1951 to 2011, Indian Census reports have consistently provided data on SCs and STs but have excluded data on other caste groups. Before independence, however, caste-based information was

part of every Census until 1931 — making the 1931 records the most recent comprehensive caste data available.

- ❑ **Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC):** In 2011, the government undertook a Socio-Economic Caste Census, following recommendations from a Group of Ministers chaired by then Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee. This survey was conducted outside the framework of the official Census. However, its findings were never publicly released due to concerns regarding the reliability and consistency of the data collected.
- ❑ **Caste Survey:** Given that only the central government is constitutionally authorized to conduct a Census, various state governments such as Bihar, Karnataka, and Telangana have carried out independent caste surveys. These state-level exercises aim to determine the social and economic positioning of different caste groups to aid in policy formulation.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CENSUS, CASTE CENSUS (SECC), AND CASTE SURVEY

Criteria	Census	Caste Census (SECC)	Caste Survey
Legal Foundation	Governed by the Census Act, 1948	Lacks a specific legal statute; caste data may be collected via central government notifications	Has no legal foundation; states undertake them due to lack of power to conduct official Census
Caste-Related Data	Only collects and discloses socio-economic data for SCs and STs	OBC socio-economic data was gathered for the first time in 2011, but not released	State surveys aim to collect caste-wise socio-economic details
Confidentiality	All collected data is classified and kept confidential	Data submitted in SECC is accessible to government departments for deciding household benefits or exclusions	Data is used by state authorities to shape welfare and social policies

BENEFITS OF A CASTE CENSUS

1. **Informed Policy Design:** A caste-wise enumeration would offer detailed and reliable data on socio-economic conditions, education, health, and representation of various caste groups at different levels. This information is essential for designing targeted interventions and addressing specific disadvantages within marginalized castes and sub-castes.
2. **Restructuring Reservation Policies:** Since current affirmative action frameworks are rooted in outdated 1931 data, updated statistics could enable a more equitable distribution of reservations. It could help identify over-benefited groups and reallocate quotas to lesser-privileged castes such as Denotified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Tribes. Periodic caste-based assessments would also allow for monitoring the effectiveness of reservation policies over time.
3. **Improved Welfare Delivery:** Accurate caste data helps distinguish between dominant and marginalized groups, facilitating more precise allocation of welfare resources. Development initiatives can be customized to meet the unique needs of each community, optimizing the impact of public spending.

Bihar Case Study:

According to the National Food Security Act, nearly 83.92% of Bihar's population qualifies for subsidized food grains. The state's caste survey revealed population growth from 103.8 million (2011) to 130.7 million (2023). Thus, 109.7 million should be covered, but only 87.1 million are listed as beneficiaries, leaving out 22.6 million people amid rising food inflation.

4. **Recognizing Caste's Role in Society:** Although the census includes religion, language, and data on SC/STs, it hasn't recorded all castes since 1931. Given caste's integral role in Indian society, understanding its contemporary dynamics is vital for gauging the socio-economic status of various groups.
4. **Reducing Inequality:** India's unequal distribution of wealth and education limits economic mobility for most people. A caste census provides an objective, evidence-based approach to resolving such inequalities and supporting equitable development.
5. **Constitutional Support:** Article 340 empowers the state to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes and recommend improvements. Additionally, the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) has encouraged the inclusion of OBC data in the Census 2021.
6. **Strengthening Commission Efforts:** The Sachar Committee, which evaluated the socio-economic condition of Muslims, noted the usefulness of religion-based data. Similarly, caste data would support efforts like the Justice Rohini Commission for OBC sub-categorization.
7. **Capturing Intersections of Disadvantage:** Caste often overlaps with gender, region, and religion, compounding marginalization. A caste census could illuminate these layers, leading to multidimensional strategies to uplift vulnerable groups.
8. **Correcting Misinformation:** By offering empirical evidence, a caste census dispels myths about demographic strength. For example, assumptions about the numerical dominance of Lingayats in Karnataka can be verified.
9. **Empowering the Marginalized:** Counting castes officially can catalyze new identities and political awareness. This opens the door for renewed democratic participation and inclusive politics through wider representation and coalition-building.

CHALLENGES OF A CASTE CENSUS

1. **Political Exploitation:** There is a risk that political actors may misuse caste data for electoral gains. This could increase caste-based mobilization, diverting focus from merit and governance toward identity politics.
2. **Threat to National Cohesion:** Recording caste could reinforce caste consciousness, potentially escalating social divisions. The fear of rekindling caste rivalries has led to the limited release of SECC 2011 data, even a decade later.
3. **Rise in Quota Demands:** Detailed caste data might fuel calls for expanded or separate reservations. Groups like Patels, Jats, and Gujjars have already made such demands. The census could intensify pressure to breach the 50% reservation cap upheld by the Supreme Court.
4. **Operational Challenges:** India's vast number of castes and sub-castes varies widely across regions, posing a classification nightmare for enumerators. This was a key reason cited by the Registrar General in 2010 when rejecting the proposal to include caste in the Census.

5. **Ambiguity in Definitions:** Caste has no universally accepted definition, and identical castes may differ significantly across states. Moreover, they are often spelled or named differently, increasing the complexity of consistent documentation.
6. **Risk of Stigmatization:** Revealing caste identities could expose individuals to prejudice and social exclusion. This may discourage truthful responses and affect data reliability.

THE WAY FORWARD

1. **Standardization:** Develop a harmonized list of castes and sub-castes based on current classifications, aided by experts in sociology and anthropology. Special attention should be given to synonymous caste names across states.
2. **Enumerator Training:** Train field officers extensively to approach the subject with sensitivity, ensure accuracy, and respect privacy. Emphasize the voluntary nature of disclosure and strict confidentiality.
3. **Data Accuracy and Trust**
 - **Community Engagement:** Involve local leaders and caste organizations to validate data and build trust.
 - **Verification Protocols:** Employ multiple layers of validation to prevent inconsistencies.
 - **Awareness Drives:** Launch public campaigns to explain the purpose, safeguard privacy, and encourage participation.
4. **Data Protection:** Enforce robust data protection laws to prevent misuse and secure individual privacy, considering the sensitive nature of caste information.
5. **Preventing Misuse:** Create legal safeguards to keep the data from being exploited for divisive political goals. Promote the census as a tool for inclusive growth rather than identity fragmentation.

CONCLUSION

Despite apprehensions surrounding its potential misuse, a caste census, if undertaken with transparency, safeguards, and public trust, can become a powerful instrument for inclusive development and social justice. It holds the promise not of dividing society, but of strengthening democracy through equitable representation and better policy design.



Article 143 of Indian Constitution

THE LIVING FRAMEWORK OF INDIA'S CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

The Indian Constitution serves not just as a legal text but as a dynamic blueprint for governance, continuously shaped by judicial interpretations and legislative actions. As highlighted in the Law Commission of India's 272nd Report, the judiciary has emerged as a co-equal branch of government, particularly in clarifying ambiguous constitutional provisions. A distinctive feature of India's constitutional machinery is Article 143, which permits the President to seek the Supreme Court's advisory opinion on significant legal or factual matters. Esteemed jurist Justice Fali S. Nariman has described this mechanism as a hallmark of "mature constitutional statesmanship."

THE CORE CONCERN

In May 2025, President Droupadi Murmu invoked Article 143 to seek clarity on Articles 200 and 201, which govern the roles of Governors and the President in approving state legislation. This move followed a Supreme Court ruling that imposed deadlines for decisions on State Bills, sparking a debate on federalism. Since 1950, only 15 Presidential references have been made, underscoring the exceptional nature of this constitutional tool. Its significance lies in resolving constitutional ambiguities without adversarial litigation.

UNDERSTANDING ADVISORY JURISDICTION UNDER ARTICLE 143

Article 143 grants the President the authority to refer critical legal or factual questions to the Supreme Court. This provision traces its origins to Section 213 of the Government of India Act, 1935, which conferred similar powers on the British Governor-General.

- ❑ Article 143(1) allows the President to seek the Court's opinion on matters of public importance.

- ❑ Article 143(2) pertains to pending disputes, especially those involving treaties or intergovernmental agreements.
- ❑ Article 145 mandates that such references be heard by a bench of at least five judges.

While the Court's opinion is not legally binding, it carries substantial persuasive weight. Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer aptly termed these references as "solemn judicial deliberations on issues of national importance."

LANDMARK REFERENCES INCLUDE:

- ❑ **Delhi Laws Act Case (1951):** Clarified limits on delegated legislation.
- ❑ **Kerala Education Bill (1958):** Reconciled Fundamental Rights with Directive Principles.
- ❑ **Berubari Case (1960):** Held that territorial cession requires constitutional amendment.
- ❑ **Presidential Poll Case (1974):** Upheld election validity despite electoral college vacancies.
- ❑ **Third Judges Case (1998):** Reinforced the Collegium system for judicial appointments.
- ❑ **Keshav Singh Case (1965):** Balanced judicial oversight with legislative privileges.

GLOBAL COMPARISONS: ADVISORY JURISDICTIONS IN OTHER DEMOCRACIES

India stands among the few democracies where the executive can formally consult the judiciary. Other nations employ varied models:

- ❑ **Canada:** The Supreme Court of Canada provides advisory opinions under Section 53 of the Supreme Court Act, influencing major decisions like the 2014 Senate reform reference and the 1998 Quebec secession case.
- ❑ **United States:** The U.S. Constitution (Article III) prohibits advisory opinions, enforcing a strict separation of powers.
- ❑ **United Kingdom:** Though lacking a written constitution, the UK Supreme Court offers declaratory judgments on legal uncertainties.
- ❑ **Australia:** The High Court lacks advisory jurisdiction under Section 76 of its Constitution.
- ❑ **France:** The Conseil Constitutionnel conducts pre-enactment reviews, delivering binding rulings on constitutional compliance.

India's system aligns closely with Canada's advisory model, blending judicial input with executive consultation. It is more flexible than the U.S. system but less binding than France's constitutional review process.

THE CRITICAL ROLE AND IMPACT OF ARTICLE 143

Article 143 of the Indian Constitution serves as a vital mechanism for resolving constitutional ambiguities, preserving federal balance, and upholding democratic governance. Its significance can be understood through multiple dimensions:

1. Strengthening Democratic Governance

- Provides legal clarity on constitutional provisions affecting governance.
- The current reference on Articles 200 & 201 seeks to define the Governor's role in assenting to State Bills, ensuring smoother legislative functioning.

2. Reinforcing Federalism

- Acts as a non-confrontational tool to mediate Centre-State disputes.
 - Example: The Cauvery Water Dispute (1992) reference prevented executive overreach, maintaining federal balance.
- 3. Upholding Constitutional Morality**
- Ensures executive accountability by clarifying constitutional limits.
 - The Kerala Education Bill (1958) reference harmonized Fundamental Rights & Directive Principles, setting a governance precedent.
- 4. Encouraging Judicial Innovation**
- Facilitates progressive constitutional interpretations.
 - The Third Judges Case (1998) led to the Collegium system, reinforcing judicial independence.
- 5. Ensuring Legal Certainty**
- Prevents future disputes by resolving ambiguities early.
 - The Berubari Union Case (1960) clarified that ceding territory requires a constitutional amendment, averting potential conflicts.
- 6. Reducing Litigation Burden**
- Offers preventive adjudication, minimizing unnecessary cases.
 - Crucial given the Supreme Court's backlog (71,000+ cases in 2023).
- 7. Maintaining Rule of Law**
- Provides neutral judicial guidance without adversarial litigation.
 - Aligned with Keshavananda Bharati (1973), upholding constitutional supremacy.
- 8. Enhancing Global Democratic Standing**
- Reflects India's mature constitutional democracy.
 - Strengthens international credibility, as seen in India's 46th rank in the Global Democracy Index (2023).

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING ARTICLE 143

Despite its benefits, the use of Article 143 faces several hurdles:

1. Vague and Politically Charged References

- Questions like the current 14-point gubernatorial powers reference risk dragging the judiciary into politics.
- Example: The Ram Janmabhoomi Case (1993) was declined due to political sensitivity.

2. Non-Binding Nature

- The Supreme Court's opinion is persuasive but not mandatory.
- Example: The Berubari Case (1960) was initially ignored, creating confusion.

3. Risk of Political Misuse

- The executive may use it to delay tough decisions or shift responsibility.
- Example: References during contentious political periods may dilute accountability.

4. Lack of Public Participation

- The process is insular, excluding civil society, experts, and affected stakeholders.
 - Contrast: The Right to Privacy & Section 377 hearings allowed public submissions.
5. **Strains Judicial Resources:** The overburdened Supreme Court (80,000+ pending cases in 2024) must divert attention to advisory matters.
 6. **Federal Tensions:** References on contentious Centre-State issues (e.g., Article 200 disputes) can worsen federal mistrust.
 7. **Absence of Procedural Guidelines:** No fixed timelines or structured hearings, leading to delays.
 8. **Selective Implementation**
 - Governments may cherry-pick parts of the opinion.
 - Example: Special Courts Bill Case (1978) saw partial adoption of judicial observations.

THE WAY FORWARD: REFORMING ARTICLE 143

To maximize its effectiveness, the following reforms are essential:

1. **Codify Clear Procedures**
 - Establish structured guidelines for references (like Canada's Supreme Court Act).
 - Define admissibility criteria, timelines, and hearing norms.
2. **Restrict Scope to Constitutional Matters**
 - Avoid political or administrative questions.
 - Example: Exclude vague references like the Ram Janmabhoomi case.
3. **Enhance Transparency & Public Participation:** Allow amicus curiae briefs, expert consultations, and public hearings.
4. **Clarify Legal Status of Opinions:** Amend the Constitution or issue a judicial ruling to make opinions binding.
5. **Institutional Accountability:** Publish an annual report on Article 143 references, tracking implementation.
6. **Strengthen Federal Consultation:** For Centre-State disputes, involve State governments before making references.
7. **Form a Constitutional Review Committee:** A standing body (like the UK's Joint Committee on Human Rights) to vet references.

CONCLUSION: ARTICLE 143 AS A PILLAR OF CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY

Article 143 represents India's commitment to cooperative constitutionalism, resolving disputes through dialogue, not confrontation. As former CJI M.N. Venkatachaliah noted, "Democracy thrives on constitutional trust, and institutions like the judiciary must rise above politics."

The current reference on gubernatorial powers is more than a legal query, it is a test of India's federal democracy. How the Supreme Court balances judicial restraint and executive discretion will shape Indian governance for decades to come.

By reforming its procedures and ensuring accountability, Article 143 can continue to serve as a cornerstone of constitutional clarity and democratic stability.



RIISING NORTHEAST INVESTORS SUMMIT 2025

THE LIVING FRAMEWORK OF INDIA'S CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

India's Northeast, the "Ashtalakshmi" states, has transformed into a strategic growth engine. With 5,484 km of international borders, abundant natural resources, and renewable potential, it's now India's vital eastern gateway. NITI Aayog's 2021-22 SDG Index shows improving but uneven development. The Economic Survey 2024-25 identifies it as crucial for ASEAN integration under Act East Policy. Recent ₹1.5 lakh crore investments mark its shift from insurgency hotspot to emerging economic hub.

WHAT IS THE 'RIISING NORTHEAST' INVESTOR SUMMIT?

The "Rising Northeast: The Investor Summit," spearheaded by the Ministry of Development of North-Eastern Region (DoNER), highlights the investment opportunities in India's North-East Region (NER). Key takeaways from the summit include:

- ❑ **Infrastructure Expansion:** The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has allocated 10% of its total budget to the Northeast, resulting in the construction of 4,950 km of National Highways with funding exceeding \$5 billion.
- ❑ **Green Energy Commitments:** The summit witnessed the signing of 115 MoUs valued at ₹38,856 crore, aimed at boosting renewable energy projects in the region.

- ❑ **Enhanced Digital Access:** Investments totaling ₹1.5 lakh crore have gone into upgrading digital and physical infrastructure. BharatNet and Digital North East Vision alone received ₹50,000 crore, enabling 90% 4G coverage and fiber optic connectivity in 80% of rural homes.
- ❑ **Skill Training Initiatives:** More than 2,000 youth have been trained under schemes like Suryamitra, Varunmitra, and Jal Urjmitra, focusing on green energy expertise.
- ❑ **Strategic Importance:** The summit underscored the Northeast as India's entry point to ASEAN, leveraging its 5,484 km of borders with five neighboring nations.

WHY IS THE NORTH EAST IMPORTANT FOR INDIA?

- ❑ **Strategic Crossroads:** Bordering multiple nations, the Northeast is essential for India's Act East Policy and regional integration. Example: India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway; Sittwe Port in Myanmar.
- ❑ **Green Energy Epicenter:** With 218 GW of renewable energy potential, including 40% of India's hydropower, it is central to the country's clean energy ambitions. Example: Champhai Solar Park and 20 MW Solar Project in Mizoram.
- ❑ **Cultural Treasure:** The region's 200+ ethnic groups enrich India's cultural diplomacy. Example: Hornbill Festival, Nagaland; Ziro Music Festival, Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❑ **Ecological Richness:** As a biodiversity hotspot, it supports conservation and eco-tourism. Example: Kaziranga National Park; Loktak Lake, Manipur.
- ❑ **Organic Farming Leader:** Ideal for sustainable agriculture, the region contributes to food and medicinal crop diversity. Example: Sikkim's organic model; Assam's tea cultivation.
- ❑ **Skilled Youth Resource:** High literacy, tech-savviness, and English proficiency create a strong talent base. Example: IIT Guwahati alumni; 5G-based telemedicine in Arunachal.
- ❑ **Tourism and Wellness Hub:** With natural beauty and wellness traditions, it draws both eco-tourists and spiritual seekers. Example: Meghalaya's Living Root Bridges; Loktak Lake.
- ❑ **Economic Transformation:** Improved connectivity and new industries like semiconductors and bamboo-based manufacturing are boosting growth. Example: Assam's semiconductor unit; Kaladan Multi-Modal Project.

CHALLENGES CONFRONTING THE NORTH EAST

- ❑ **Infrastructure Gaps:** Even with rising investments, critical deficits persist in roadways, railways, healthcare, and educational institutions, hindering regional economic development. Example: Arunachal's limited road network; lack of rail links in Nagaland's interiors.
- ❑ **Insurgency and Security Volatility:** Lingering insurgent threats and cross-border tensions deter private investment, hamper development, and challenge stable governance. Example: ULFA's sporadic presence in Assam; border tensions near Nagaland-Myanmar.
- ❑ **Industrial Stagnation and Joblessness:** Absence of major industries results in job deficits and youth migration, affecting local economic resilience. Example: Youth exodus from Manipur due to limited employment.
- ❑ **Connectivity Deficits:** Tough terrain and geographical complexity delay infrastructure rollout, restricting regional mobility and market integration. Example: Road projects stalled in Arunachal's remote zones.

- ❑ **Ecological and Climatic Risks:** The region's susceptibility to floods, landslides, and quakes regularly damages infrastructure and ecosystems. Example: 2022 floods in Assam led to displacement and crop failures.
- ❑ **Administrative Inefficiency:** Poor coordination and jurisdictional overlaps cause lags in policy execution. Example: Kaladan Multi-Modal Transport Project faces repeated delays due to bureaucracy.
- ❑ **Untapped Resource Potential:** Despite rich natural resources, inadequate policies and private sector disinterest keep hydropower and minerals underused. Example: Only 7% of 129 GW hydro potential developed.
- ❑ **Financial and Skill Inclusion Gaps:** Lack of credit and vocational training undermines entrepreneurship and economic agency, especially in rural belts. Example: MSME loan outreach is limited; high literacy hasn't bridged skilling gaps.

STRATEGIC WAY FORWARD

- ❑ **Seamless Infrastructure and Connectivity:** Accelerate integrated multimodal networks, land, air, rail, and waterways, to link the NER to the rest of India and ASEAN economies. Example: Operationalize ICP Moreh; complete Trans-Arunachal Highway.
- ❑ **Industrial Hubs and Investment Enablers:** Promote SEZs, processing zones, and digital investor platforms to generate employment and raise output. Example: Assam's agri-SEZ; DoNER's 'Invest North East' platform.
- ❑ **Peace and Border Governance:** Foster dialogues with insurgents, boost border patrols, and resolve state boundaries to create security and stability. Example: Assam-Meghalaya talks; stronger presence at Indo-Myanmar border.
- ❑ **Green Growth and Climate Adaptation:** Advance sustainable policies, renewable energy, and disaster-proof infrastructure to protect sensitive ecosystems. Example: Arunachal's community forest preservation; resilience infra with World Bank help.
- ❑ **Skill Development for Human Capital:** Tailor skilling to local industries, open new vocational centres, and reduce employability gaps. Example: NER Skill Plan 2022; handloom upskilling centres in Nagaland.
- ❑ **Cultural Tourism and Soft Power:** Build thematic circuits and promote festivals to generate revenue and deepen regional identity. Example: Meghalaya's living root bridges; Hornbill Festival in Nagaland.
- ❑ **Digital and Financial Empowerment:** Extend BharatNet broadband, advance e-governance, and increase access to digital banking and credit. Example: Tripura's digital land records; BHASHINI translation platform.
- ❑ **Healthcare and Education Modernization:** Expand telemedicine, upgrade medical infrastructure, and foster research through regional education hubs. Example: Telehealth in Arunachal; NER Institute of Education.

CONCLUSION

The North East is poised to become a key pillar of India's growth and connectivity agenda. With focused reforms and robust execution, it can evolve into a dynamic zone of commerce, culture, and strategic relevance. As PM Modi aptly framed it, the Northeast is not India's margin but its "gateway of possibilities", where heritage merges with high-tech aspirations.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

What is meant by 'relative autonomy' of State in Marxist analysis?

(15 Marks)

In Marxist analysis, the concept of “relative autonomy” of the state refers to the idea that while the state primarily serves the interests of the ruling class (bourgeoisie), it possesses a degree of independence. This autonomy allows the state to act in ways that might not immediately align with the interests of the ruling class, thereby ensuring the long-term stability of the capitalist system. The concept challenges the simplistic notion of the state as a mere tool of the bourgeoisie.

According to classical Marxist theory, the state is an instrument of class domination, used by the ruling class to maintain its power over the proletariat. However, the theory of relative autonomy, developed by later Marxist scholars such as Antonio Gramsci and Nicos Poulantzas, suggests that the state has some independence from direct bourgeois control. This autonomy allows the state to mediate between different class interests, address contradictions within capitalism, and maintain the overall stability of the system.

Gramsci's Contribution: Gramsci argued that the state is not just a coercive apparatus but also functions ideologically to maintain the hegemony of the ruling class. Through its relative autonomy, the state can create a consensus among different classes, ensuring the continued dominance of the ruling class without overt coercion.

Poulantzas's Perspective: Poulantzas emphasized that relative autonomy is necessary for the state to manage class conflicts and contradictions. By appearing neutral or independent, the state can implement policies that serve the long-term interests of capitalism, even if they temporarily conflict with the immediate interests of individual capitalists.

In contemporary politics, the concept of relative autonomy is evident in state interventions during economic crises, where governments might act against the immediate interests of capitalists (e.g., through regulation or bailouts) to preserve the overall system. This autonomy is also seen in social policies that address inequality to prevent social unrest, further illustrating the state's role in maintaining capitalist stability.

Relative autonomy in Marxist analysis highlights the state's complex role within capitalist society. Rather than being a simple instrument of class oppression, the state acts with a certain level of independence to ensure the stability and reproduction of the capitalist system. This nuanced understanding allows for a more sophisticated analysis of state actions and policies within Marxist theory.

Examine the evolution of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of India as a Constitutional Court.

The Supreme Court of India, established under the Constitution of India, has undergone a remarkable transformation over the years, evolving into a Constitutional Court with extensive jurisdiction and substantial powers. At its inception, the Supreme Court had relatively limited original jurisdiction, primarily focused on resolving disputes between the Union government and individual states or between states themselves, as enshrined in Article 131 of the Indian Constitution.

However, over time, the Supreme Court expanded its role and acquired significant appellate jurisdiction. Initially, it could only hear appeals on constitutional matters from the High Courts. Subsequent amendments broadened its appellate jurisdiction to encompass a wide array of cases, including civil, criminal, and non-

constitutional matters. Today, the Supreme Court stands as the ultimate court of appeal in the country, hearing appeals not only from the High Courts but also from various tribunals and other judicial bodies.

The Court's jurisdiction as a Constitutional Court further developed with the expansion of its writ jurisdiction under Articles 32 and 226 of the Constitution. These articles empower the Court to issue writs for the enforcement of fundamental rights, making it a guardian of these rights. The landmark *Keshavanand Bharati* case gave birth to the basic structure doctrine, which places certain core principles of the Constitution beyond the reach of parliamentary amendments. While the doctrine established the inviolability of the Constitution's basic structure, the specific components of this structure remain a matter for the judiciary to determine. This doctrine has acted as a check on the power of Parliament to amend the Constitution in a manner that would undermine its foundational principles.

In the 1980s, the Supreme Court of India introduced the concept of Public Interest Litigation (PIL), a groundbreaking innovation that significantly expanded the Court's jurisdiction. PIL empowered the Court to address a wide range of issues related to social justice, the environment, human rights, and administrative matters, often by responding to petitions from concerned citizens, NGOs, or others acting in the public interest. This proactive approach to addressing pressing societal concerns demonstrated the Court's commitment to constitutional interpretation and judicial activism.

Moreover, the Supreme Court's exercise of judicial review plays a pivotal role in solidifying its position as a Constitutional Court. By reviewing the constitutionality of laws, policies, and actions of the government, the Court ensures that the Constitution remains supreme in the Indian legal system. This power is essential in upholding the fundamental rights of citizens and preventing potential abuse of power by the legislative and executive branches.

In summary, the Supreme Court of India has evolved from its origins with limited original jurisdiction to become a powerful Constitutional Court with extensive powers. This evolution has strengthened the Court's role in protecting fundamental rights, upholding the Constitution's sanctity, and serving as the final interpreter of the law in India. Through landmark decisions, innovations like PIL, and the development of the basic structure doctrine, the Supreme Court has played a vital role in shaping the legal landscape of India and safeguarding its constitutional framework.

Comment on: "The Constituent Assembly was a one party body in an essentially one party country. The Assembly was the Congress and the Congress was India." (Granville Austin). (2010, 15 marks)

Granville Austin's assertion that the Constituent Assembly was a "one-party body" in a "one-party country," with the Congress as the central force, reflects both the political dominance of the Indian National Congress and the socio-political context of the time.

The Congress, being the preeminent force in the Indian independence movement, had deep roots in mass mobilization across the country, making it the most representative and powerful political entity during the formation of the Indian Constitution.

However, it is essential to recognize that while the Congress had an overwhelming presence, the Constituent Assembly was not exclusively composed of Congress members. The Assembly included representatives from various regions, communities, and political groups, such as the Muslim League, Sikhs, Scheduled Castes, and princely states, reflecting India's diverse fabric. Yet, following the partition and the withdrawal of the Muslim League, Congress's influence became even more pronounced.

Austin's comment can also be viewed through the lens of the **Congress's ideological spectrum**. The party housed a wide variety of views, ranging from **right-wing conservatism to socialist leanings**. Thus, although the Congress was dominant, it allowed for considerable debate and discussion on constitutional matters, reflecting diverse views within the Assembly.

Critics argue that this dominance stifled alternative political voices, particularly those from the left and right of the political spectrum. Yet, the Congress's leadership, particularly through figures like **Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, and Sardar Patel**, played a crucial role in ensuring that the Constitution was crafted through democratic deliberation, representing broader Indian aspirations.

While Austin's characterization highlights the Congress's dominance, the Constituent Assembly's work reflected democratic ideals, producing a Constitution that balanced the diverse needs of a newly independent nation.



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MORGENTHAU



INTRODUCTION

Hans Joachim Morgenthau, born on February 17, 1904, in Coburg, Germany, and passing away on July 19, 1980, in New York, New York, U.S., was a prominent German-born American political scientist and historian. He gained recognition for his expertise as a leading analyst, focusing on the significance of power in the realm of international politics.

EARLY LIFE & EDUCATION

Morgenthau's academic journey commenced in Germany, where he pursued his education at the esteemed Universities of Berlin, Frankfurt, and Munich. Following his studies in Germany, he furthered his knowledge through postgraduate work at the Graduate Institute for International Studies in Geneva. After being admitted to the bar in 1927, he gained valuable experience by serving as acting president of the Labour Law Court in Frankfurt.

In 1932, he had the opportunity to teach public law in Geneva for a year. However, the political climate drastically changed with Adolf Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933, compelling him to extend his stay in Switzerland until 1935. During this period, he also taught in Madrid from 1935 to 1936.

Due to the troubling developments in Europe, Morgenthau emigrated to the United States in 1937, where he would later become a naturalized citizen in 1943. Throughout his American academic career, he contributed his expertise as a professor at various institutions, including Brooklyn College (1937–39), the University of Missouri–Kansas City (1939–43), the University of Chicago (1943–71), the City College of the City University of New York (1968–74), and the New School for Social Research (1974–80).

MAJOR WORKS

In 1948, Morgenthau published “Politics Among Nations,” a highly esteemed study that introduced the classical realist approach to international politics. In this seminal work, Morgenthau argued that politics operates under distinct and unchangeable laws of nature, enabling states to deduce rational and objectively correct actions by understanding these laws. Central to his theory was the notion that power stands as the primary objective in international politics, defining a nation’s interests.

Morgenthau’s approach centered around the state, rejecting the idea that a state’s moral aspirations should be equated with the universal objective moral laws. Instead, he emphasized that all state actions are driven by the pursuit of acquiring, showcasing, or enhancing power. He advocated for acknowledging the nature and limitations of power and advocated for the use of conventional diplomatic methods, including the willingness to compromise.

Morgenthau’s “Politics Among Nations” laid the foundation for classical realism in international relations, stressing the centrality of power and state interests, while also cautioning against conflating moral aspirations with the practical realities of politics. He advocated for embracing traditional diplomatic approaches and finding common ground through compromise.

HANNAH ARENDT



INTRODUCTION

Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) was a renowned political philosopher whose works continue to shape and challenge our understanding of politics. Through her unique lens, she examined various political phenomena and concepts, offering profound insights that resonate within the field of political science.

THE NATURE OF POWER

Arendt’s examination of power is a key aspect of her political thought. She argued that power is not merely coercive force but a collective phenomenon that emerges from the actions and interactions of individuals in a public realm. Her emphasis on power as a relational concept informs discussions on power dynamics, democratic participation, and the role of citizens in political processes.

THE CONCEPT OF AUTHORITY

Arendt delved into the concept of authority, highlighting its distinction from power. She viewed authority as rooted in legitimacy, consent, and respect rather than coercion. Her analysis sheds light on the sources of authority, the relationship between authority and obedience, and the erosion of authority in modern societies.

TOTALITARIANISM AND THE BANALITY OF EVIL

Arendt's seminal work on totalitarianism, particularly in "The Origins of Totalitarianism," remains highly influential. She examined the rise of totalitarian regimes, the erosion of individual freedoms, and the manipulation of truth in such systems. Her concept of the "banality of evil" challenged prevailing notions of evil as a result of extraordinary acts, emphasizing instead the ordinary individuals who participate in oppressive systems.

THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPHERES

Arendt explored the distinction between the public and private realms, highlighting their significance in political life. She argued that genuine political action occurs in the public realm, characterized by plurality, freedom of speech, and public deliberation. In contrast, the private sphere represents the realm of necessity and personal affairs. Her analysis continues to shape discussions on the role of public engagement and the importance of political participation.

THE CRISIS OF MODERNITY AND THE HUMAN CONDITION

Arendt critically examined the impact of modernity on the human condition. She analyzed the loss of meaningful public spaces, the rise of bureaucracy, and the challenges of individual identity in mass societies. Her insights into the disintegration of public life and the consequences for human agency and political action offer valuable perspectives for understanding contemporary political challenges.

CONCLUSION

Hannah Arendt's contributions to political science have been far-reaching and continue to provoke intellectual inquiry and debate. Her writings on power, authority, totalitarianism, the public sphere, and the human condition provide valuable frameworks for analyzing political phenomena and understanding the complex dynamics of our contemporary political landscape. By engaging with Arendt's ideas, political scientists can deepen their understanding of the intricacies of power, authority, and the nature of politics itself.

ROBERT GILPIN



Robert Gilpin was a prominent American political scientist known for his significant contributions to the field of international relations, particularly in the study of political economy and global politics. Born on October 2, 1930, Gilpin's academic career spanned several decades, during which he produced influential works that continue to shape scholarly debates and understanding of international relations theory.

One of Gilpin's most notable contributions to the field was his concept of the "hegemonic stability theory." This theory, outlined in his seminal work "War and Change in World Politics," posits that the stability of the international system is often maintained by a dominant hegemon—a powerful state that provides leadership, stability, and order to the global economy. According to Gilpin, hegemonic stability is essential for ensuring economic openness, trade liberalization, and overall stability in the international system. He argued that periods of hegemonic decline or transition are often characterized by increased competition, protectionism, and geopolitical tensions.

Gilpin's analysis of hegemonic stability has been instrumental in shaping debates about the role of great powers in the international system and the dynamics of global economic governance. His work has influenced scholars, policymakers, and practitioners alike, providing valuable insights into the relationship between economic power, political influence, and international order.

In addition to his contributions to hegemonic stability theory, Gilpin also made significant contributions to the study of international political economy. His book "The Political Economy of International Relations" is considered a seminal work in the field, offering a comprehensive analysis of the complex interplay between economics and politics in the international arena. In this work, Gilpin explores how states and non-state actors navigate economic issues, such as trade, finance, and development, within the broader context of global power dynamics and geopolitical competition.

Gilpin's interdisciplinary approach to the study of international relations, drawing on insights from political science, economics, and history, has been praised for its analytical rigor and theoretical sophistication. His work continues to inspire scholars to explore the multifaceted nature of global politics and the complex interactions between states, markets, and societies in an interconnected world.

Beyond his academic contributions, Gilpin was also a respected educator and mentor, influencing generations of students and scholars through his teaching and mentorship. He held various academic positions throughout his career, including professorships at Princeton University and the University of Denver, where he made significant contributions to the development of international relations as a discipline.

Robert Gilpin's legacy as a pioneering scholar in the field of international relations continues to endure, with his work serving as a foundation for further research and inquiry into the complexities of global politics and economics. His insights into hegemonic stability, international political economy, and the nature of power in world politics have left an indelible mark on the study of international relations and continue to shape our understanding of the dynamics of the international system.



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ENRICH YOUR ANSWER

Circulation of elites. Comment

Approach to Answer

Intro: Start by explaining the concept of Power

Body

1 Explain the elitist theory of Power including Pareto's Circulation of Elites theory.

→ Elitist theory accepts broad division of society into dominant and dependent group.

→ Pareto's theory of Power divides society into 'governing elite' and 'non governing elite'.

→ Explain the 'governing elites' and 'non governing elites'.

→ Can give criticism of his theory

Conclusion

Show the significance of Pareto's theory in understanding the concept of Power

Q1) Compare Ambedkar and Gandhi's views on Social Justice.

Intro: Start answer by defining social justice.
Also give general introduction about Gandhi & Ambedkar

Body

① Mention the differences between views of Gandhi & Ambedkar

- ① Ambedkar was critic of Manusmriti (Manuvad) while Gandhi believed in Varna system.
- ② Ambedkar held Vedas and Manusmriti responsible for social injustice while Gandhi didn't believe in it.
- ③ To achieve social justice
→ Ambedkar emphasised on Affirmative Actions
→ Gandhi emphasised on social reforms (raising the conscience of people)
- ④ Ambedkar preconditioned social justice to Nationalism while Gandhi believed that freedom struggle will result into social justice.

② Mention similarities

- ① Both believed in social justice and eradication of poverty.
- ② Both have vision of egalitarian society.
Ambedkar → a society free of contradictions
Gandhi → Ramrajya.

Conclusion

Can mention that both Gandhian and Ambedkar's ideas on social justice found place in Indian Constitution

Introduction:

→ Start with key tenets of Rawlsian theory:

- i) Individualism
- ii) Original position
- iii) Justice as fairness
- iv) Veil of ignorance

→ Mention Rawls book - "A theory of Justice"

→ Communitarian critique of key tenets

→ use Michael Sandel

↳ book - "Liberalism & the limits of justice"

→ Michael Walzer

↳ book → "spheres of justice"

Conclusion

→ Rawls accepted reasonable pluralism as pre-condition in book 'Political Liberalism'

→ gave concept of overlapping consenses.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. According to the Constitution of India, it is the duty of the President of India to cause to be laid before the Parliament which of the following?

1. The Recommendations of the Union Finance Commission
2. The Report of the Public Accounts Committee
3. The Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General
4. The Report of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes

Select the correct answer using the codes given below :

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| (a) 1 only | (b) 2 and 4 only |
| (c) 1, 3 and 4 only | (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4 |

2. Which of the following is/are among the Fundamental Duties of citizens laid down in the Indian Constitution?

1. To preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture
2. To protect the weaker sections from social injustice
3. To develop the scientific temper and spirit of inquiry
4. To strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity

Select the correct answer using the codes given below :

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| (a) 1 and 2 only | (b) 2 only |
| (c) 1, 3 and 4 only | (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4 |

3. The distribution of powers between the Centre and the States in the Indian Constitution is based on the Act provided in the

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (a) Morley-Minto Reforms, 1909 | (b) Montagu-Chelmsford Act, 1919 |
| (c) Government of India Act, 1935 | (d) Indian Independence Act, 1947 |

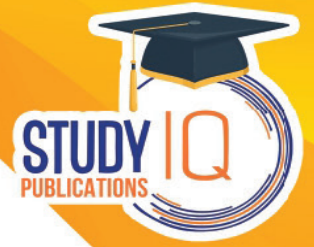
4. With reference to Indian History, the Members of the Constituent Assembly from the Provinces were

- (a) directly elected by the people of those Provinces
- (b) nominated by the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League
- (c) elected by the Provincial Legislative Assemblies
- (d) selected by the Government for their expertise in constitutional matters

Answers

1. (c) CAG gives three audit reports to president which are laid by the president before both the houses of the parliament. Subsequently the Public Accounts committee examines them and reports its findings to the parliament.
2. (c) All the statements except 2 regarding the Fundamental Duties of citizens are correct.
3. (c) Distribution of power between the Centre and the States in the Indian Constitution is based on the Government of India Act. 1935.
4. (c) The members of the constituent Assembly from the provinces were indirectly elected by the members of the provincial assemblies, who themselves were elected on a limited franchise.

UPSC IAS (Mains)



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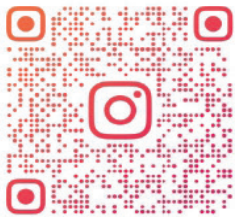
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