

PSIR Pulse

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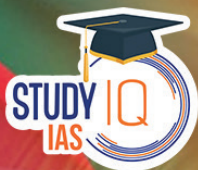


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GEOPOLITICS AT GLANCE

INDIA-BANGLADESH TRADE DIPLOMACY



INDIA - BANGLADESH RELATIONS

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. Geostrategic 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 HAS OCCURRED RECENTLY?

In 2024, the U.S. imported nearly \$486 billion in electronics, including around \$200 billion worth of data processing machines, mostly from countries such as Mexico, Taiwan, China, and Vietnam, nations now subject to new tariffs.

By 2025, tariffs on essential AI hardware components, such as AI accelerators and high-end logic chips, have risen to as much as 27%.

Research suggests that a one standard deviation increase in tariffs could decrease economic output growth by roughly 0.4% over five years.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF TARIFFS?

Tariffs are taxes that a government imposes on imported products. These serve multiple goals, such as shielding local businesses, generating public revenue, or addressing global trade disparities. The main tariff types include:

- ☐ **Protective Tariffs:** Raise the cost of imports to protect domestic producers from foreign competition.
- ☐ **Revenue Tariffs:** Primarily designed to provide income for the government without focusing on industry protection.
- ☐ **Anti-Dumping Tariffs:** Aimed at stopping foreign companies from underpricing products to eliminate local competitors.
- ☐ **Countervailing Duties:** Imposed to neutralize unfair subsidies given by foreign states to their exporters.
- ☐ **Retaliatory Tariffs:** Used as a countermeasure when other nations impose tariffs, often to apply diplomatic or economic pressure.

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.

AFRICAN UNION'S DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY (2020-2030) AND INDIA



INTRODUCTION

The African Union's Digital Transformation Strategy (2020-2030) prioritizes digital innovation as a key driver for development, encouraging African governments to integrate digital tools to boost economic and social growth. This emphasis on digital advancement is also shaping India's engagement with Africa through digital diplomacy.

Historically, India's approach has blended government-backed financial support with grassroots initiatives, including skill development programs and infrastructure development funded through low-interest loans. However, India's strategy has recently expanded to incorporate social enterprises that provide cost-effective, scalable innovations, signaling a shift toward more inclusive and adaptable cooperation. This updated framework underscores the critical role of digital solutions and collaborative, flexible partnerships in promoting long-term development and strengthening India-Africa relations.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INDIA-AFRICA DIGITAL COMPACT

Advancing Digital Inclusion – India is sharing its successful Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) models, like Aadhaar (digital identity), UPI (instant payments), and DIKSHA (e-learning), to help African countries bypass

traditional development hurdles and widen access to critical services. These solutions are designed to be low-cost, customizable, and inclusive, particularly for marginalized communities.

Open-Source & Collaborative Model – Unlike proprietary or surveillance-driven alternatives from other nations, India's digital tools are open-source and treated as global public goods, allowing African partners to implement them without restrictive conditions or geopolitical influence.

Empowering Local Expertise – The partnership focuses on co-development and skills transfer rather than one-way technology exports. Programs like the IIT Madras campus in Zanzibar and joint digital ID initiatives help nurture homegrown talent and innovation.

Closing Socio-Economic Gaps – By targeting digital finance, healthcare, education, and governance, the compact helps mitigate challenges like urban-rural disparities, gender imbalances in tech access, and infrastructure deficits.

Strengthening Global South Cooperation – This collaboration fosters economic growth in both regions, reinforces India's role as a leader in the Global South, and amplifies Africa's influence in global digital governance. It is built on principles of mutual benefit and sustainable progress.

CHALLENGES TO THE INDIA-AFRICA DIGITAL COMPACT

High Cost of Connectivity – Internet and device expenses remain a major barrier in Africa, with mobile data often costing over 5% of average monthly income, limiting access for low-income and rural users.

Persistent Digital Divide – Disparities in internet access between cities and villages, along with a 37% gender gap in mobile internet usage in sub-Saharan Africa, exacerbate inequality.

Unreliable Infrastructure – Frequent power outages and weak digital networks hinder the rollout and stability of online services.

Skill Gaps & Digital Literacy – Both India and Africa face shortages in digital training and workforce readiness, requiring urgent investment in education to maximize tech adoption.

Weak Regulatory Frameworks – Many African nations lack strong data protection laws, cybersecurity policies, and governance structures, raising concerns about privacy and ethical tech deployment.

Affordability & Policy Shortfalls – Despite expanding broadband coverage, high costs and inadequate policies prevent equitable access, especially for vulnerable groups.

Funding Constraints – Africa's digital infrastructure needs an estimated \$100 billion in investment, but budget limitations and financing gaps slow progress.

Local Adaptation & Ownership – While India's digital models are adaptable, their success depends on local customization, community engagement, and long-term capacity-building.

WAY FORWARD FOR THE INDIA-AFRICA DIGITAL COMPACT

Expand Affordable Access – Invest in low-cost internet and subsidized devices for rural and underserved populations.

Strengthen Energy & Digital Networks – Prioritize renewable energy and resilient connectivity to overcome power shortages and unstable infrastructure.

Leverage Open-Source Solutions – Scale India's DPI models (Aadhaar, UPI, DIKSHA) as adaptable, open-access tools for African needs.

Boost Skills & Training – Enhance technical education, research collaborations, and vocational programs (e.g., IIT Madras-Zanzibar) to build digital expertise.

Encourage Public-Private Partnerships – Foster joint ventures between governments, startups, and tech firms to drive innovation and investment.

Promote Gender-Responsive Policies – Ensure digital programs actively include women and marginalized groups to bridge access gaps.

Prioritize Local Ownership – Co-design solutions with African stakeholders, avoiding one-size-fits-all approaches and respecting regional contexts.

Improve Digital Governance – Collaborate on data protection laws, cybersecurity, and ethical AI frameworks aligned with African rights standards.

Mobilize Sustainable Funding – Explore blended finance, multilateral aid, and private-sector investments to meet Africa's \$100 billion digital infrastructure gap.

Build Trust-Based Alliances – Focus on long-term, equitable partnerships that position India and Africa as leaders in inclusive digital growth.

CONCLUSION

A reimagined India-Africa digital compact, rooted in co-creation, shared governance, and institutional collaboration, can serve as a blueprint for inclusive and sustainable digital transformation across the Global South.

BANGLADESH'S POLITICAL CROSSROADS: UNREST UNDER THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

On June 7, Chief Adviser Dr. Muhammad Yunus addressed the nation ahead of Eid, announcing:

- ❑ **Postponed Elections:** Now scheduled for April 2026 (previously promised by December 2025).
- ❑ **July Proclamation:** A controversial constitutional reform initiative aimed at reshaping Bangladesh's political framework.

These moves have sparked fears of democratic erosion and prolonged unelected rule, drawing parallels with past caretaker governments while exhibiting far more ambitious, and contentious, reforms.

CONTROVERSIES SURROUNDING THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT

1. **Questionable Legitimacy and Extended Tenure:** Unlike the 90-day caretaker government model (1990), Yunus's administration is enacting sweeping constitutional changes without electoral mandate. The Army chief pushed for year-end elections, but Yunus cites "internal and external threats" to justify delays. Critics see this as a power grab, with the interim setup behaving like a permanent authority.
2. **Exclusion of Major Political Forces:** Awami League remains banned. BNP is sidelined, despite public dissatisfaction. Fringe political actors are gaining influence, raising concerns about radicalization (similar to Myanmar's political vacuum).

THE JULY PROCLAMATION: A CONSTITUTIONAL OVERHAUL?

1. **Objectives and Political Shift**
 - Aims to dilute the 1972 Constitution's influence, positioning itself as a new guiding charter.
 - Seeks to reframe national identity, downplaying historical milestones like December (Victory Day) and August (Mujib's assassination).
2. **Lack of Transparency and Consensus**
 - No clear authorship, Who drafted it? What are its exact provisions?
 - BNP and other major parties have not endorsed it, making claims of "political consensus" dubious.
3. **Risks of Instability**
 - Could empower extremist factions in the absence of mainstream political engagement.
 - Analysts warn of Myanmar-like chaos if radical groups fill the void.

HUMANITARIAN CORRIDOR TO MYANMAR: A SECURITY DILEMMA

1. **Unclear Enforcement Mechanism**
 - Proposed as a demilitarized zone for Rohingya aid, but who oversees it?
 - Bangladesh Army opposes foreign involvement, citing sovereignty concerns.
 - International bodies (UN, ASEAN) may demand oversight.
2. **Regional Security Threats**
 - Risk of arms smuggling to insurgent groups (Arakan Army, Rohingya militants).
 - India is wary of spillover effects in its northeastern states.

BNP'S PRECARIOUS POSITION

1. Leadership in Limbo

- Tarique Rahman (acting chairman) remains abroad due to legal cases, yet controls the party remotely.
- Lacks a strong ground strategy to capitalize on public discontent.

2. Emergence of a “King’s Party”?

- The National Citizens Party (NCP), backed by Yunus’s advisers, is suspected to be a puppet of the interim regime.
- BNP fears NCP may be favored in future elections, sidelining established parties.

BROADER IMPLICATIONS FOR BANGLADESH

1. Democratic Backsliding

- An unelected government rewriting the constitution sets a dangerous precedent.
- Risks institutionalizing authoritarianism under the guise of “reform.”

2. Uncertain Election Timeline

- April 2026 polls seem distant, will they even happen?
- Further delays could trigger public unrest or military intervention.

3. Regional and Global Concerns

- India watches closely, instability in Bangladesh affects regional security.
- Western nations may reassess aid and trade ties if democracy erodes further.

CONCLUSION: A NATION AT A CROSSROADS

Bangladesh faces a critical test of its democratic resilience. Will the July Proclamation redefine the country’s political future, or deepen instability? Can elections be held fairly, or will the interim regime consolidate power? How will regional players like India respond to prolonged uncertainty? The coming months will determine whether Bangladesh stabilizes through inclusive dialogue or descends into prolonged political crisis.

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ISRAEL-IRAN CONFLICT: ESCALATION AND STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS



OVERVIEW OF THE CONFLICT

On June 13, Israel launched a large-scale air offensive against Iran, targeting its nuclear infrastructure, military bases, and top leadership, including strikes on the Natanz nuclear facility and civilian sites like media headquarters. Iran retaliated with around 400 missiles, damaging key Israeli installations such as the Haifa oil refinery and a major research facility near Tel Aviv.

The conflict has now entered a dangerous phase, with no clear victor yet. While Israel maintains air superiority, it lacks the bunker-busting capabilities needed to destroy Iran's deeply fortified Fordow nuclear site. Meanwhile, Iranian missile and drone attacks continue, keeping Israeli civilians under threat.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES

1. Israel's Initial Strikes and Limited Success

- Targets Hit: Natanz nuclear site, missile bases, command centers, and leadership figures.
- Claimed Objective: Crippling Iran's nuclear program and deterring future threats.
- Reality Check:
 - ✓ Natanz and Isfahan suffered damage, but Fordow remains operational.

- ✓ Iran's missile and drone capabilities remain intact, allowing sustained retaliation.
- ✓ Civilian backlash in Israel due to airport closures, economic disruption, and casualties.

2. Iran's Resilient Retaliation

- Missile Barrage: Over 400 fired, proving Iran's ability to strike deep inside Israel.
- Strategic Survival: Despite leadership losses, Iran's military and nuclear infrastructure remain partially functional.
- Psychological Warfare: Continued attacks pressure Netanyahu to seek a quick resolution.

3. Strategic Dilemmas for Israel

- Failed Decapitation Strategy: Bombing Iran's leadership has not caused regime collapse, instead, it may unite Iranians against Israel.
- Risk of Stalemate: Without destroying Fordow or Iran's missile stockpiles, Israel faces a protracted war with no clear exit.
- U.S. Reluctance: Despite Israel's push, Trump has avoided direct military involvement, complicating Israel's escalation plans.

POSSIBLE ENDGAMES

1. Continued Escalation (Netanyahu's Preferred Path)

- Goal: Regime change in Tehran via sustained bombing.
- Risks:
 - ✓ Iran may not collapse, instead, it could rally nationalist resistance.
 - ✓ Global backlash if civilian casualties mount.
 - ✓ U.S. may be dragged in, despite Trump's hesitance.

2. Diplomatic Off-Ramp (Unlikely but Possible)

- Iran's Signals: Reports suggest Tehran is open to talks if bombings stop.
- Obstacle: Israel's leadership seems committed to military victory, not negotiations.
- Trump's Role: If he pressures Netanyahu, a ceasefire or deal could emerge.

3. Regional Power Shift (Long-Term Impact)

- If Iran Weakens:
 - ✓ Israel solidifies dominance in West Asia.
 - ✓ Hezbollah, Hamas, and Syria's Assad lose a key backer.
- If Conflict Drags On:
 - Russia's influence wanes without Iranian support.
 - China faces energy disruptions, increasing Gulf dependence.
 - U.S. may be forced to intervene, risking a wider war.

CONCLUSION: A WAR WITH NO EASY EXIT

The Israel-Iran conflict is at a critical juncture. Israel's strikes have not achieved decisive victory, and Iran remains capable of retaliation. Netanyahu faces domestic pressure to end the war but lacks a clear path

forward. Diplomacy is possible but unlikely unless U.S. or regional powers intervene. Further escalation risks a broader regional war, drawing in global players. The coming days will determine whether this conflict ends in a bloody stalemate, a negotiated pause, or an uncontrollable regional war.

THE INDIA–UK BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP: EVOLVING FROM HISTORY TO STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP



INTRODUCTION

The bond between India and the United Kingdom, grounded in a shared historical legacy, has gradually developed into a broad-based strategic alliance. Though trade and security form key focal points, the partnership is truly multidimensional, spanning defense, technology, education, and deep-rooted people-to-people engagement.

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF INDIA–UK RELATIONS

India and the UK have maintained a relationship marked by a long, intricate past that stretches across centuries.

Colonial Period (1858–1947): Following the 1857 uprising, India came directly under British Crown rule in 1858, and the British monarch assumed the title of Emperor or Empress of India.

Post-Independence Period: After becoming a Republic in 1950, India chose to stay within the Commonwealth of Nations.

Tense Relations During the Cold War: During the Cold War, bilateral ties were marked by friction. India followed a path of non-alignment, while the UK was firmly aligned with NATO and the United States. The UK disapproved of India's conflicts with Pakistan and its nuclear program.

Improved Ties Post-1990s: After the Cold War ended and India initiated economic liberalization in the 1990s, the UK showed greater interest in fostering commercial ties with India, initiating a more cooperative phase.

Strategic Partnership Phase: The relationship was elevated to a Strategic Partnership in 2004. Frequent high-level visits and institutional dialogues have strengthened collaboration in key areas like trade, defense, investment, and cultural exchange.

Today, India and the UK maintain a modern relationship grounded in historical connections and shared membership in the Commonwealth. Both countries are committed to expanding this partnership into a fully developed strategic alliance by 2030.

KEY AREAS OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN INDIA AND THE UK

- 1. Geopolitical Cooperation:** The UK backs India's bid for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. It serves as a vital diplomatic partner for India in global bodies such as the EU, G7, G20, and other international forums. Political dialogue is also reinforced through platforms like the India–UK Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Dialogue, the India–UK Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism, and India–UK Foreign Office Consultations.
- 2. Economic Engagement:** The Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO), set up in 2005, has significantly deepened bilateral economic ties.
 - Trade volume between India and the UK more than doubled from 2007 to 2019.
 - In 2022–23, bilateral trade reached USD 20.36 billion.
 - As of 2022, India ranked as the UK's 12th largest trading partner, making up 2% of its total trade.
 - Indian enterprises have launched 120 new projects in the UK, generating over 5,000 jobs, making India the UK's second-largest source of FDI after the US.
 - The India–UK Free Trade Agreement was ratified in May 2025.
- 3. Defence and Security Ties:** A Defence and International Security Partnership (DISP) was signed in November 2015. This agreement outlines a strategic blueprint for advancing bilateral defence cooperation. Presently, around 70 UK firms provide parts and support for aircraft platforms such as the Jaguar, Mirage, and Kiran.
- 4. Nuclear Collaboration:** In 2010, India and the UK inked a Civil Nuclear Cooperation Declaration to enhance collaboration in nuclear energy. This was followed in 2015 by a Nuclear Collaboration Agreement, which formed part of a broader agreement on energy and climate cooperation.
- 5. Educational Collaboration:** India and the UK maintain a strong partnership in education, illustrated by the following:
 - ☐ The 'UKEIRI Mobility Programme: Study in India' was launched in 2019, facilitating collaborations between British and Indian universities and promoting student exchanges.
 - ☐ The UK remains one of the top destinations for Indian students, with approximately 50,000 Indian nationals enrolled in UK institutions.
- 6. Health Sector Cooperation:** The two nations have been actively collaborating in healthcare, particularly in areas such as:
 - ☐ The co-development of the COVID-19 vaccine by Oxford University, AstraZeneca, and Serum Institute of India highlighted the value of Indo-UK scientific synergy.

- ❑ Joint efforts are underway in pandemic preparedness, Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), digital health, traditional medicine systems like Ayurveda, and facilitating health workforce mobility.
- 7. **Climate and Environmental Initiatives:** India and the UK have established a Green Growth Equity Fund to attract institutional investments in sectors such as renewable energy, electric vehicles, waste management, and environmental technologies in India.
- 8. **Cultural Engagement:** A Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Cooperation was signed in 2010. The Nehru Centre, inaugurated in London in 1992, acts as the cultural wing of India's High Commission in the UK.
- 9. **Diaspora and Community Ties:** With an Indian-origin population of about 1.5 million, the Indian diaspora plays a major role in British public life. Their growing representation in the UK's Parliament underscores their influence. Notably, the UK's previous Prime Minister was of Indian heritage.
- 10. **Cultural Partnership Agreements:** India and the UK signed a Programme of Cultural Cooperation (POCC), a landmark accord that enhances cultural exchange. This agreement reflects both countries' shared commitment to artistic collaboration and creative industry-driven economic growth

SIGNIFICANCE OF STRENGTHENED INDIA–UK TIES

1. **Geo-Strategic Importance:** Expanding engagement with the UK allows India to counterbalance China's growing footprint in the Indian Ocean Region. The UK, in turn, sees India as a viable alternative under its 'China Plus One' strategy—an approach where businesses look to reduce dependency on China by investing in other countries like India.
2. **Geo-Political Significance:** A solid India–UK relationship is crucial for collaborative efforts in regions and platforms such as the Indo-Pacific, Afghanistan, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), G20, and the Commonwealth. For example, India welcomed the UK's entry into the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative under its Maritime Security pillar.
3. **Economic Relevance:** The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the UK is poised to enhance India's export-driven industries, especially those reliant on labor, while boosting service exports and diversifying trading partners. Simultaneously, the FTA will strengthen British sectors like beverages and automobiles, alongside stimulating UK investment in India.
4. **Climate Collaboration:** Closer India–UK ties will aid in achieving the climate goals set by the Paris Agreement and help implement the Glasgow Climate Pact. Notably, both countries have agreed to accelerate the operationalisation of the Global Green Grids—One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG) initiative under the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

MAJOR CHALLENGES IN INDIA–UK RELATIONS

1. **Divergent Approaches to the Russia–Ukraine Crisis:** While the UK has taken a firm stance condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine, India has refrained from doing so, potentially creating friction in diplomatic alignment going forward.
2. **The UK's Relations with Pakistan and China:** Britain's close connections with Pakistan complicate efforts to build stronger defense and strategic ties with India. Historically, the UK has both armed and restricted weapons exports to India and Pakistan simultaneously. In contrast to India's caution regarding China's

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in the Indo-Pacific, the UK has actively engaged with BRI, signaling differing strategic approaches.

3. **Khalistan-Related Concerns:** India remains wary of the UK allegedly providing space to separatist Khalistani groups. These concerns continue to act as a roadblock in deepening bilateral trust.
4. **Sluggish Defence Cooperation:** The UK has been slow to align with India's current preference for defense procurements through Government-to-Government (G2G) deals or Foreign Military Sales (FMS), impeding faster defense collaboration.
5. **Extradition Delays:** Though both nations have an extradition treaty, practical implementation remains difficult. High-profile fugitives like Nirav Modi and Vijay Mallya continue to reside in the UK, highlighting the inefficiency of current procedures.
6. **Issue of Undocumented Migrants:** An estimated 100,000 Indians are living illegally in the UK. Despite British pressure for their return, the two countries have yet to finalize a Migration and Mobility Agreement to address the situation formally.
7. **Historical Resentment:** Colonial-era grievances still influence bilateral perceptions. Partition-related issues, such as India's strained ties with Pakistan and the Kashmir dispute, continue to be seen as legacies of British colonial policies.

SUGGESTED PATH AHEAD

1. **Reviving Multilateralism Together:** India and the UK should work jointly to rejuvenate multilateral platforms like the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the UNFCCC. The UK ought to support the interests of developing and underdeveloped nations, instead of aligning solely with developed countries.
2. **Signing a Migration and Mobility Agreement:** To enable lawful movement of Indian citizens to Britain, both countries should finalize a pact focused on migration and workforce mobility.
3. **Speeding Up Extradition Mechanisms:** The UK must fulfill its commitment to return fugitives sought by Indian authorities. For example, Nirav Modi's extradition should be executed without further delays, especially since legal processes are nearly complete.
4. **Strengthening Defence and Security Engagement:** With overlapping interests in the Indian Ocean, both countries must enhance defense cooperation and promote transparent, sustainable infrastructure development across the region.
5. **Managing Ties with Third Countries Wisely:** The UK must ensure that its diplomatic relations with Pakistan and China do not hinder deeper engagement with India. Balanced foreign policy will help build mutual trust and strengthen bilateral ties.

CONCLUSION

As of 2025, India–UK relations have reached a pivotal moment. The newly inked Free Trade Agreement, expanding strategic engagements, and shared commitments to global priorities have revitalized the partnership. Both countries are now poised to drive innovation, spur economic development, and tackle global challenges collaboratively—ushering in a dynamic and more cohesive future for their bilateral journey.

INDIA AND THE G7: A GROWING PARTNERSHIP WITHOUT FORMAL MEMBERSHIP



INTRODUCTION

Although India is not an official member of the Group of Seven (G7)—which consists of the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Canada, and Japan—it has become a prominent and consistent participant in the group’s outreach sessions. As of 2025, India has joined twelve G7 Outreach Summits, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi attending for the sixth time in a row this year.

India’s inclusion reflects its status as a rising economic power, a leading voice from the Global South, and a vital player on issues such as energy security, technological advancement, climate action, and international stability. Host nations regularly extend invitations to India to ensure broader international representation and to address global concerns that go beyond the core G7 membership.

WHAT IS THE G7? ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION

The G7 is a coalition of some of the world’s most industrialized and economically advanced countries. Its current members include France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Japan, the United States, and Canada. Each year, one member nation hosts the annual summit, with the chair rotating among members.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The G7 traces its roots back to the 1973 oil crisis and the subsequent financial turmoil, which prompted leaders of six leading economies to meet in 1975. The founding participants were the United States, the

United Kingdom, France, West Germany, Japan, and Italy. Canada became part of the group in 1976, formally creating the G7.

For several years, the group functioned as the G8 following Russia's addition in 1997. However, Russia was expelled in 2014 after its annexation of Crimea from Ukraine, and the group reverted to being known as the G7.

WHY IS THE G7 IMPORTANT?

- 1. Alliance of Major Economies:** The G7 represents a powerful segment of the global economy. As of 2024, the bloc accounts for over 44% of the world's nominal GDP and nearly 30% when measured by purchasing power parity. This gives the group significant sway over international trade and economic policymaking.
- 2. Platform for Addressing Global Challenges:** Though it started with a primary focus on economic matters, the G7's scope has broadened to include various pressing global issues:
 - **Peace and Security:** Tackling geopolitical conflicts, such as the Russia–Ukraine war, and addressing terrorism.
 - **Climate and Energy:** Coordinating global climate initiatives and transitioning toward clean and affordable energy.
 - **Public Health:** Planning responses to pandemics and bolstering international health systems.
 - **Technology and AI:** Discussing governance, ethical implications, and innovation in emerging tech.
 - **Trade and Supply Chains:** Supporting transparent trade practices and resilient global supply chains.
 - **Development Aid and Humanitarian Relief:** Cooperating to assist developing countries and respond to humanitarian emergencies.
- 3. Representation of Democratic and Economic Ideals:** The G7 unites countries that uphold liberal democracy, economic freedom, and pluralistic governance. It serves as a platform for advocating a rules-based international system and reinforcing these core values.
- 4. Mechanism for Building Consensus:** Despite lacking a permanent institutional structure or legally binding powers, the G7's strength lies in consensus-driven dialogue. The summits are significant for fostering collective decisions and shared strategies among major powers.
- 5. Agenda-Setting Influence:** The G7 often initiates global debates and sets key standards, which then influence discussions in broader multilateral organizations such as the United Nations, World Bank, IMF, and WTO.
- 6. Crisis Response Hub:** The group plays a vital role in coordinating joint responses during global emergencies—whether economic collapses, armed conflicts, pandemics, or rising geopolitical threats.

CHALLENGES CONFRONTING THE G7 GROUP

- 1. Outdated Representation Structure:** In its early decades, the G7 accounted for around two-thirds of global GDP. Today, however, its share has declined to roughly one-third in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP), and below half at market exchange rates. Key emerging economies such as India, China, Indonesia, Brazil, Mexico, Russia, and Turkey—collectively termed the Emerging 7 (E7)—are not included in this grouping.

2. **Ineffectiveness in Delivering on Global Commitments:** Despite releasing bold declarations and ambitious statements on global concerns like climate change, development finance, and pandemic readiness, the G7 has often struggled to follow through on its promises. Critics frequently highlight the gap between rhetoric and reality, as seen in the slow progress on phasing out fossil fuels and in meeting climate finance goals.
3. **Responsibility for Historical Emissions:** The G7 is responsible for about 59% of the world's cumulative carbon emissions. Although the group has pledged to end fossil fuel dependence, tangible action remains minimal. G7 countries continue to emit double the amount of CO₂ compared to the entire African continent.
4. **Trade Tensions and Protectionism:** Disagreements over trade policies among G7 nations—and with external countries—have unsettled global economic dynamics. The erosion of multilateral trade principles, especially through weakening the WTO framework and engaging in tariff wars, has seen active participation from G7 nations themselves.
5. **Internal Political Fragmentation:** The resurgence of nationalist and populist movements within G7 states has undermined the spirit of multilateral cooperation. A case in point is the 2025 G7 Summit in Canada, where sharp divisions over issues such as the Russia–Ukraine war prevented the issuance of a consensus statement. The early exit of the U.S. President only added to the lack of cohesive dialogue.
6. **Conflicting National Agendas:** Despite being united by liberal democratic ideals, G7 countries often diverge on specific matters like trade regulations, climate strategies, and responses to geopolitical tensions, particularly regarding their engagement with powers such as China and Russia.
7. **Rising Influence of G20 and Other Forums:** The G20, which includes a wider range of emerging economies, has increasingly become the central platform for global economic coordination. Its inclusive nature makes it better equipped to tackle today's interconnected challenges. Additionally, the growth of alternative forums—both multilateral and minilateral—has reduced the G7's exclusivity and influence.
8. **Ongoing Geopolitical Crises:**
 - **Russia–Ukraine Conflict:** Although the G7 has shown collective resolve against Russia's actions, maintaining this unity remains difficult due to varying energy dependencies, economic strains, and policy preferences.
 - **Tensions with China:** Balancing cooperation on shared global issues with growing concerns over China's trade practices, human rights record, and assertive diplomacy poses an ongoing dilemma.
 - **Middle East Volatility:** The recent summit in Canada was overshadowed by escalations in the Israel–Iran conflict, revealing the group's limited ability to resolve such regional crises without broader global involvement. Tensions between the U.S. and French presidents further fractured the discussions. Ultimately, the summit failed to produce a joint declaration, issuing only a Chair's Summary—prompting many to label it a “failed summit.”

INDIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH G7: IMPORTANCE AND OPPORTUNITIES

1. **Economic Influence:** According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), India remains among the fastest-expanding major economies. It has surpassed the economies of five G7 members—France, Italy, the UK, Canada, and now even Japan. With a youthful and skilled labor pool, cost-effective production,

vast market potential, and favorable investment policies, India is increasingly attractive for global investors.

2. **Strategic Role in the Indo-Pacific:** India has emerged as a key geopolitical partner for Western powers, aiding in efforts to counterbalance China's growing influence, especially across the Indian Ocean Region. This strategic alignment has deepened India's importance to the G7 bloc.
3. **Contribution to Global Conflict Resolution:** India's balanced and pragmatic approach to international disputes—whether concerning the Russia–Ukraine war, Middle East turmoil, or terrorism—makes it a credible mediator and stabilizing force with wide diplomatic reach.
4. **Strengthening Global Supply Chains:** Amid post-COVID supply chain disruptions and rising geopolitical risks, G7 nations are actively seeking to diversify away from China. India stands out as a dependable alternative hub in areas like pharmaceuticals, electronics, and manufacturing.
5. **Leadership in Digital Governance and AI:** India's achievements in digital public goods—such as UPI and Aadhaar—offer valuable models for inclusive digital development. Its involvement in shaping norms around artificial intelligence, digital security, and misinformation (e.g., deepfakes) is gaining global recognition, particularly in the G7's AI governance dialogues.
6. **Voice for the Global South:** As the G7 faces criticism for being a club of wealthy nations, India's consistent participation brings in the concerns and perspectives of developing countries. From climate justice and development finance to food security and technology access, India amplifies the priorities of the Global South.

OBSTACLES TO DEEPER INDIA–G7 ENGAGEMENT

1. **Lack of Formal Membership:** India remains an invited guest rather than a permanent member. The G7's outdated membership structure excludes major emerging economies. As a result, India does not have year-round representation in G7 ministerial discussions or policy-formulation processes, limiting its influence to select outreach sessions.
2. **Disagreements over Climate Obligations:** While India supports climate action, it upholds the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities," emphasizing the disproportionate role of developed countries in historical emissions and calling for greater financial and technological support. G7 countries, on the other hand, often face domestic political constraints in fulfilling such obligations.
3. **Energy Security Versus Green Transition:** Although India is investing heavily in renewable energy, its vast population still relies heavily on fossil fuels. G7's push for faster decarbonization can sometimes clash with India's need for a phased and just energy transition that ensures affordability and accessibility.
4. **Neutral Stance on Russia:** India's approach to the Russia–Ukraine conflict—maintaining trade relations and advocating for diplomacy—diverges from the G7's more confrontational stance, including sanctions. This creates a diplomatic tightrope for India, which faces pressures to more closely align with G7 positions.
5. **Bilateral Tensions Within the G7 Framework:** India's strained relationship with Canada—due to incidents such as the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar and Canada's handling of pro-Khalistan elements—can cloud broader cooperation efforts within G7 meetings, as bilateral disputes sometimes spill into multilateral spaces.
6. **Hypocrisy in Counterterrorism Stances:** India has criticized the double standards of developed nations on terrorism. While they impose swift sanctions on some countries, others—like Pakistan—are overlooked

or even supported, despite their links to cross-border terror. This selective enforcement undermines mutual trust and genuine cooperation.

RECOMMENDED PATH AHEAD FOR INDIA–G7 ENGAGEMENT

1. **Enhancing Economic Linkages:** A concerted push toward expanding investments in critical areas such as green energy, digital technologies, and infrastructure, along with advancing trade openness, can significantly reinforce economic cooperation between India and the G7 bloc.
2. **Building Strategic Partnerships:** Bolstering defense ties through joint military exercises, intelligence cooperation, and technology exchange would help both sides address shared security threats more effectively.
3. **Engaging in Global Forums:** India's proactive role in G7 deliberations can contribute to shaping fairer international governance structures. Collaborative initiatives on environmental sustainability, particularly in renewable technology and climate action, can serve as global standards.
4. **Driving Technological Growth:** Partnerships in emerging domains like artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and digital infrastructure can accelerate tech development. Joint ventures in biotech, clean energy, and space science can spark innovation and expand research frontiers.
5. **Advocating for a More Inclusive G7 (Long-Term Goal):** Although structural expansion of the G7 remains uncertain in the near future, India should persist in diplomatically promoting a more inclusive model (G7+) that integrates major emerging economies into the core decision-making process.

NOTABLE DEVELOPMENTS FROM THE 2025 G7 SUMMIT

1. **Launch of Critical Minerals Production Alliance:** Canada spearheaded a new initiative under the G7 banner to collaborate with reliable international partners on ensuring secure access to critical minerals vital for advanced industries and defense needs. The move seeks to strengthen global supply chains in this strategic sector.
2. **Continued Support for Ukraine:** G7 leaders reaffirmed their collective backing for a just and enduring resolution in Ukraine. They welcomed Kyiv's willingness to pursue an unconditional ceasefire and called on Moscow to reciprocate the gesture.
3. **Middle East Peace Efforts:** The summit underscored a shared commitment to regional stability amid ongoing Israel–Iran tensions. Leaders advocated for unrestricted humanitarian aid in Gaza, the immediate and permanent release of hostages, and a sustainable ceasefire. They identified Iran as a central destabilizing force in the region.
4. **Indo-Pacific Strategy:** G7 emphasized its commitment to a secure, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific region. While acknowledging the importance of constructive engagement with China, members raised concerns over China's economic distortions, industrial overcapacity, and provocative behavior in the East and South China Seas. The statement also reinforced the necessity of maintaining peace in the Taiwan Strait.
5. **Responsible AI and Digital Equity:** The group pledged to foster secure, ethical, and reliable AI deployment across sectors. Canada launched the G7 GovAI Grand Challenge aimed at scalable public sector AI use and bridging global digital inequalities. The summit reaffirmed support for global AI governance standards.

6. **Wildfire Response and Resilience:** In response to an unprecedented year of global wildfires, the G7 initiated collaborative efforts to enhance wildfire prevention, response, and recovery. Plans included scaling up Canada's WildFireSat satellite program to track fires globally and enhancing international data sharing. India formally backed the Kananaskis Wildfire Charter.

CONCLUSION

India's deepening ties with the G7 reflect its rising profile in both economic and geopolitical spheres. The convergence of interests and values between India and the G7 offers fertile ground for wide-ranging cooperation. As India asserts itself as a major global stakeholder, its evolving partnership with the G7 will be crucial in fostering a more equitable, stable, and representative world order.



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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 'RISING 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 Urjamitra, 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.

ELECTORAL TRANSPARENCY



INTRODUCTION

Recently, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha expressed concerns over the conduct of the 2024 Maharashtra Assembly elections, particularly criticizing the process of appointing Election Commissioners after the Union Government declined to follow the Supreme Court's directive to include the Chief Justice of India in the selection panel. In the past too, various political parties have raised doubts about Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). These recurring issues highlight the urgent need to examine the concept, importance, challenges, and reforms associated with electoral transparency in India.

WHAT IS ELECTORAL TRANSPARENCY?

Electoral transparency refers to the clear, open, and accessible nature of all electoral processes: including voting, candidate information, campaign financing, and institutional accountability. It allows citizens, political stakeholders, and oversight bodies to observe and evaluate the system's fairness and credibility. As a core principle of democratic functioning, transparency helps ensure public trust, reduces corruption, and enhances the legitimacy of election outcomes.

WHY ELECTORAL TRANSPARENCY MATTERS

Strengthens Legitimacy and Public Confidence: A transparent electoral framework reassures voters, candidates, and political actors that the process is fair and impartial. This sense of trust reinforces the legitimacy of elected representatives and contributes to democratic stability.

Example: Openness in the functioning of the Election Commission boosts public confidence in electoral outcomes.

Ensures Accountability Across the System: Transparency compels election-related institutions, political parties, and candidates to act responsibly. It deters malpractice by making actions visible to the public and oversight bodies.

Example: The mandated disclosure of campaign expenditures enables citizens and monitoring organizations to track financial conduct and report violations.

Prevents Electoral Misconduct: Clearly defined and openly implemented procedures reduce the scope for manipulation or fraud. Transparency acts as both a deterrent and a mechanism for early detection.

Example: The presence of polling agents from different political parties and video surveillance at polling booths helps prevent practices like booth capturing or impersonation.

Supports Informed Voting Choices: Electoral transparency ensures that voters can access vital information about candidates, such as criminal history, wealth, or funding sources. This empowers voters to make knowledgeable decisions.

Example: The Election Commission's rule requiring candidates to declare assets and liabilities helps voters evaluate their financial integrity.

Encourages Broader Participation: When elections are perceived as free and fair, citizens are more likely to engage by registering to vote, participating in campaigns, or casting their votes.

Example: Public access to updated voter rolls allows people to verify their details, promoting greater turnout and inclusivity.

Protects Constitutional Rights: Transparency upholds key democratic rights, especially the right to information and the right to vote. Without it, these rights risk being rendered ineffective.

Example: The Supreme Court's decision to scrap the Electoral Bond Scheme reaffirmed the citizen's right to know the sources of political donations, reinforcing electoral integrity and public oversight.

CHALLENGES TO ELECTORAL TRANSPARENCY IN INDIA

Despite being the world's largest democracy, India continues to grapple with several issues that undermine electoral transparency. These challenges affect public trust, institutional credibility, and the democratic process itself.

- 1. Opaque Political Funding:** One of the most pressing concerns is the lack of clarity regarding political donations. Anonymous contributions make it difficult to identify who is financing political parties, raising fears of corporate lobbying and policy manipulation. The Electoral Bond Scheme, introduced in 2017, was intended to promote transparency by channeling donations through banks. However, critics, including the Election Commission, argued it worsened the problem by concealing donor identities, thereby weakening accountability and enabling quid pro quo politics.
- 2. Trust Deficit in Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs):** EVMs have repeatedly come under scrutiny by opposition parties, who label them as "black boxes" due to the inability of voters to verify if their vote was correctly recorded. Though the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) mechanism was introduced to address this, only five VVPATs per Assembly segment are counted, which many believe is insufficient. Political parties are now demanding 100% VVPAT-EVM match to ensure electoral integrity.
- 3. Flaws in Electoral Roll Management:**
 - Issues related to voter lists also persist:

- ✓ **Duplicate Registrations:** Instances of voters appearing in multiple constituencies undermine the integrity of the voter base.
 - ✓ **Exclusion of Genuine Voters:** Many eligible voters, particularly from vulnerable communities or migrant groups, find themselves missing from the rolls.
 - ✓ **Aadhaar Linkage Concerns:** Although the Election Commission pushed for linking Aadhaar with voter IDs to eliminate duplicates, critics raised fears over privacy breaches and exclusion due to authentication errors.
 - ✓ **Suspicious Additions:** The Leader of Opposition raised concerns about a sudden spike in voter numbers between the general and Assembly elections in Maharashtra, around 4 million new names added in just six months.
4. **Controversial Appointment of Election Commissioners:** The 2023 Act on the Appointment of Election Commissioners replaced the earlier collegium system, comprising the Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition, and Chief Justice of India, with one that substitutes the CJI with a Union Minister. This has triggered worries about executive overreach, reducing the perceived neutrality of the Election Commission.
 5. **Limited Access to Polling Day Surveillance:** Recent amendments to the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, reportedly restrict access to CCTV recordings of polling booths. The Leader of Opposition criticized this move, stressing the importance of granting political party representatives access to surveillance footage to ensure proper scrutiny and investigate complaints of irregularities.

INITIATIVES TO STRENGTHEN ELECTORAL TRANSPARENCY

Despite the challenges, several reforms have been introduced to bolster electoral transparency:

1. **Mandatory Asset Disclosure by Candidates:** Following the Supreme Court's ruling in *Union of India v. Association for Democratic Reforms* (2002), candidates are now required to submit affidavits detailing their criminal history, wealth, debts, and educational background, enabling voters to make informed choices.
2. **Electoral Bonds Verdict:** In a landmark 2024 ruling, the Supreme Court struck down the Electoral Bonds scheme, declaring it unconstitutional. The court directed SBI to reveal full details of bond transactions, which the Election Commission later made public, reaffirming the citizen's right to know the financial backers of political parties.
3. **First-Level Checks of EVMs and VVPATs:** Ahead of elections, EVMs and VVPATs undergo rigorous testing, called First Level Checks, by engineers from BEL and ECIL in the presence of party representatives. This helps ensure the machines' credibility and builds stakeholder confidence.
4. **ERO Net for Electoral Roll Management:** The Election Commission launched ERO Net, an integrated digital platform that streamlines the voter registration process. It reduces human error, prevents duplication, and allows voters to track changes, enhancing accuracy and transparency.
5. **Four Enrollment Dates in a Year:** New provisions now allow youth who turn 18 on January 1, April 1, July 1, or October 1 to register as voters. This ensures more inclusive and regular enrolment, avoiding delays and improving the responsiveness of the electoral system.
6. **Citizen Vigilance via cVIGIL App:** The Election Commission's cVIGIL app empowers citizens to report Model Code of Conduct violations with geo-tagged photos or videos. Promising redress within 100 minutes, the app enables real-time monitoring and strengthens enforcement.

WAY FORWARD: STEPS TO DEEPEN ELECTORAL TRANSPARENCY

To further restore and enhance voter confidence, India needs structural and procedural reforms:

1. **Bring Political Parties Under RTI:** Given their public funding and centrality to democracy, political parties must be brought under the Right to Information Act. This would allow citizens to seek details about internal finances, donations, and decision-making structures.
2. **End Anonymous Donations:** The current ₹20,000 threshold for anonymous donations should be drastically lowered, or ideally eliminated. All contributions must be through traceable digital platforms to curb black money and ensure donor accountability.
3. **Expand VVPAT Counting:** Instead of just five machines per constituency, a statistically valid sample or full verification (in case of any mismatch) should be done to instill greater trust in electronic voting.
4. **Dynamic Electoral Roll Updates:** Make the voter registration process more agile with real-time updates, and ensure every modification is publicly accessible. This will help identify irregularities and enable timely correction.
5. **Publish Real-Time Turnout and Roll Data:** The ECI should release standardized, machine-readable electoral rolls and real-time turnout figures. Additionally, Form 17C data and CCTV footage from polling booths should be made available for public inspection to address suspicions of manipulation.
6. **Ensure Unrestricted Access for Observers:** To ensure complete monitoring, party agents, civil society observers, and international monitors should be allowed full access to polling stations and counting centers.

CONCLUSION

Ensuring transparency in the electoral process is not merely about technical safeguards, it is about preserving the sanctity of democracy. The Election Commission must act as a neutral constitutional guardian and reinforce citizens' trust by ensuring that elections are genuinely free, fair, and verifiable.

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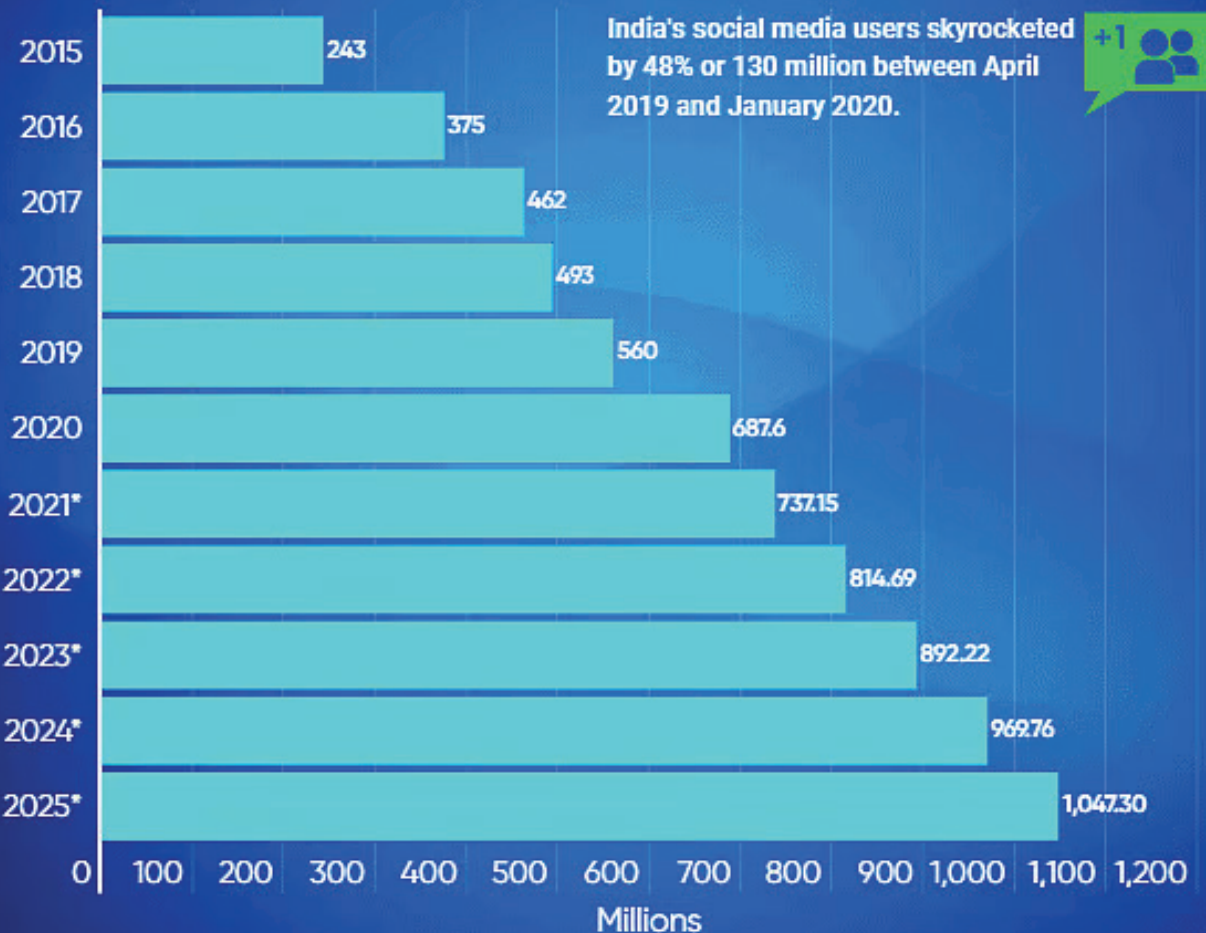
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Internet users in India forecast until 2025, in millions



INTRODUCTION

As per Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, India is now the second-largest telecom market globally, with internet users surging from 250 million to 974 million over the past decade. The country is poised to cross 1 billion users soon. This article examines the impact of expanding internet access, associated challenges, government measures, and future opportunities.

KEY DATA ON INTERNET PENETRATION

974 million users (~56% penetration), with rural users (488 million) now outnumbering urban (397 million) for four straight years.

Plummeting data costs: Prices dropped from ₹287/GB (2014) to ₹9/GB (2024).

Call rates: Reduced from 50 paise/minute to 0.003 paise/minute.

Data usage: Soared from 0.26 GB/user (2014) to 20.27 GB/user (2024).

Speed improvements: India climbed from 130th to 16th in global download speed rankings (Ookla, 2024).

WHY RISING CONNECTIVITY MATTERS

Economic Catalyst: The digital economy may contribute 20% of GDP by 2030, growing faster than agriculture or manufacturing.

Employment Boom: Created 14.67 million jobs (2022-23) in IT, e-commerce, and FinTech, while helping SMEs expand online.

E-Commerce Surge: Enabled small businesses to tap into wider markets, fueling sectors like online retail and food delivery.

Financial Access: Combined with PMJDY, internet connectivity supports Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT), reducing leakage in welfare schemes.

E-Governance: Digitized services (e.g., land records, tax filing, licenses) improve efficiency and transparency.

Education Shift: Platforms like SWAYAM and DIKSHA widened access to learning, especially during the pandemic.

CHALLENGES IN INDIA'S INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

Urban-Rural Digital Divide – While internet access is expanding, rural areas still face poorer service quality and reliability compared to urban centers.

Infrastructure Gaps – Deploying fiber optics in remote, hilly, or sparsely populated regions remains costly and logistically difficult.

Device Affordability – Despite cheap data, smartphones and internet-enabled devices remain unaffordable for low-income groups.

Low Digital Literacy – Many, especially older adults and rural populations, lack the skills to effectively use digital services.

Unstable Power Supply – Frequent electricity outages in villages disrupt telecom towers and broadband services.

Cybersecurity Risks – Rising internet usage has increased exposure to cyber threats, fraud, and data breaches.

Last-Mile Connectivity Issues – Extending reliable internet beyond Gram Panchayats to individual households remains a hurdle.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY

Digital India (2015) – Aims to transform India into a digitally empowered society through broadband expansion, mobile connectivity, and public internet access.

BharatNet – World's largest rural broadband project, connecting 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs) via optical fiber: 2.14 lakh GPs service-ready (March 2025).

BharatNet-II (2023) enhances connectivity with ring topology fiber networks and extends coverage to non-GP villages.

PM-WANI – Establishes public Wi-Fi hotspots in rural and remote areas through Public Data Offices (PDOs).

National Broadband Mission (NBM 2.0, 2025) – Accelerates broadband infrastructure growth.

Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN) – Replaces USOF to fund rural digital inclusion projects.

PMGDISHA – A digital literacy program certifying 47.8 million rural users.

Gati Shakti Sanchar Portal – Simplifies Right of Way (RoW) approvals for telecom infrastructure.

PLI Scheme for Electronics – Boosts local smartphone manufacturing, turning India into a mobile-exporting hub (e.g., Apple, Samsung).

WAY FORWARD FOR INDIA'S INTERNET GROWTH

Faster BharatNet Rollout – Prioritize fiber-to-home (FTTH) connections and complete ring topology networks in all GPs.

5G for Rural Connectivity – Use Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) to deliver high-speed broadband where fiber is impractical.

Alternative Technologies – Deploy satellite broadband (LEO), microwave, and wireless solutions in tough terrains.

Affordable Smart Devices – Expand PLI schemes to incentivize low-cost smartphone production.

Regional Language Content – Increase local-language digital content to drive adoption among non-English speakers.

Stable Regulations – Ensure policy predictability to attract long-term telecom investments.

Stronger Data Protection – Implement robust cybersecurity laws to build user trust in digital transactions.

CONCLUSION

India's multi-strategy approach, combining BharatNet, NBM, regulatory reforms, and PPPs, has significantly boosted internet access, particularly in rural areas. Sustained efforts in infrastructure, affordability, and digital literacy are crucial to bridging the digital divide and solidifying India's position as a global digital leader.

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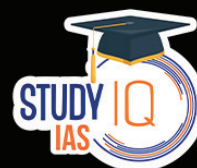
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JUDICIARY AS A PILLAR OF DEMOCRACY AND CONCERNS OVER ACCOUNTABILITY



JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY



INTRODUCTION

The judiciary is one of the three foundational pillars of democracy, drawing its authority from the Constitution. However, recent incidents, such as the recovery of a significant amount of cash from the official residence of Delhi High Court Justice Yashwant Verma after a fire, and the Supreme Court discontinuing its probe into alleged hate speech by Allahabad High Court Justice Shekhar Yadav following Rajya Sabha's intervention, have sparked concerns about judicial accountability and independence. These events raise a pivotal question: Who judges the judge?

MEANING OF JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Judicial accountability refers to the systems and duties that ensure judges and courts answer for their actions, decisions, and behavior, especially when these deviate from constitutional or legal norms. It is a cornerstone of a just legal system, balancing judicial independence with transparency, integrity, and public trust.

In India, the judiciary does not face the same accountability as the executive or legislature. This stems from the perception that judicial independence, viewed as crucial for safeguarding liberty and the rule of law, clashes with accountability. Making the judiciary accountable to the legislature or executive could compromise its autonomy. Thus, unique provisions exist to enforce judicial accountability while protecting independence.

CURRENT FRAMEWORK OF JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN INDIA

❑ **Constitutional Provisions for Impeachment:**

- Articles 124(4) (Supreme Court judges) and 217(1)(b) (High Court judges) permit judges' removal for misconduct or incapacity via impeachment.
- Only one impeachment motion against a Supreme Court judge has been attempted (unsuccessfully), and no High Court judge has ever been impeached.
- ❑ **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968:** Governs the process for investigating judicial misconduct or incapacity.
- ❑ **Article 235 – Oversight of Subordinate Judiciary:** Grants High Courts authority to ensure accountability in lower courts.
- ❑ **Restatement of Values of Judicial Life (1997):** A voluntary code of conduct adopted by the Supreme Court and High Courts, outlining ethical standards for judges.
- ❑ **In-House Procedure (1999):** Allows the Chief Justice to convene a 3-judge committee to examine complaints against judges. Its impact is limited, no judge has resigned due to adverse findings, and serious complaints have been dismissed without deeper scrutiny.
- ❑ **Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill (2010, Lapsed):** Proposed an external oversight body (National Judicial Oversight Committee) but lapsed in Rajya Sabha.

NEED TO STRENGTHEN JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- ❑ **Enhancing Judicial Performance:** Accountability would encourage better rulings, avoiding contentious judgments (e.g., Bombay HC's "skin-to-skin contact" POCSO verdict).
- ❑ **Rebuilding Public Confidence:** Transparent handling of misconduct cases (e.g., the sexual harassment allegation against a former CJI, investigated internally without the complainant's legal representation) is vital for institutional credibility.
- ❑ **Reducing Case Pendency:** With over 4 crore pending cases, accountability could push the judiciary to address delays.
- ❑ **Ineffective Existing Systems:** The Judges (Inquiry) Act and in-house processes are slow, opaque, and rarely lead to consequences, no judge has been impeached despite grave allegations. FIRs against sitting judges require the CJI's approval, obstructing probes (e.g., the burnt cash case involving a judge).
- ❑ **Balancing Independence and Oversight:** While independence shields judges from political interference, excessive autonomy risks abuse. A middle ground is essential.
- ❑ **Curbing Corruption and Misconduct:** Weak accountability fosters corruption and arbitrary decisions.
- ❑ **RTI Limitations:** Courts limit RTI disclosures (e.g., Bombay HC exempting file notings), fueling opacity concerns. A former CJI remarked, "Judiciary can't be destroyed in the name of transparency."
- ❑ **Absence of Annual Reporting:** Unlike the executive, courts aren't mandated to publish annual reports, only Madras, Himachal Pradesh, and Tripura High Courts have done so sporadically.
- ❑ **No External Review of Supreme Court Rulings:** The Constitution lacks provisions for reviewing Supreme Court decisions outside the Court itself.

CHALLENGES IN ENHANCING JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- ❑ **Cumbersome and Ineffective Impeachment Process:** The only formal removal mechanism for higher judiciary judges is impeachment, requiring a two-thirds parliamentary majority and limited to "proved misbehaviour or incapacity." This high threshold makes consensus difficult, especially in a polarized

political climate. No judge has been successfully impeached since 1993, underscoring the process's futility.

- ❑ **Judicial Independence vs. Accountability Conflict:** While judicial independence is essential, unchecked autonomy has led to minimal external scrutiny, fostering a culture of impunity. The judiciary often invokes independence to resist accountability, eroding public trust.
- ❑ **Opacity in Appointments and Disciplinary Mechanisms:** The collegium system lacks transparency and external oversight, raising concerns about favoritism and homogeneity. Internal disciplinary processes (e.g., in-house committees) operate confidentially, with outcomes rarely disclosed, diminishing systemic credibility.
- ❑ **Immunity and Evasion Tactics:** Judges enjoy substantial immunity and can resign before formal disciplinary action, retaining post-retirement benefits despite misconduct allegations (e.g., Justice Soumitra Sen and Justice P.D. Dinakaran). This loophole enables evasion of consequences.
- ❑ **No Independent Oversight Body:** Complaints against judges are either handled internally or require parliamentary intervention, with no dedicated external agency for impartial investigations.

WAY FORWARD TO STRENGTHEN JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- ❑ **National Judicial Oversight Committee:** Establish a statutory, independent body (with retired judges, legal experts, and civil society members) to investigate judicial misconduct impartially, free from political influence.
- ❑ **Reforming Impeachment and Inquiry Procedures:** Introduce transparency and deadlines in impeachment proceedings. Mandate public disclosure of inquiry reports to prevent delays and political interference.
- ❑ **Mandatory Public Asset Declarations:** Legally require all judges (SC, HC, and district courts) to disclose their and their families' assets annually, moving beyond voluntary resolutions.
- ❑ **e-Courts and Performance Monitoring:** Expand digital platforms (e.g., National Judicial Data Grid) to track caseloads, pendency, and disposal rates, making judicial performance data publicly accessible.
- ❑ **Full RTI Implementation in Judiciary:** Enforce RTI compliance for administrative matters and appointments, addressing delays and denials (as upheld by the SC in Central Public Information Officer v. Subhash Chandra Agarwal).
- ❑ **Mandatory Annual Judicial Reports:** Enact a law requiring courts to publish annual reports detailing performance, pending cases, and reforms, with fixed timelines for submission.
- ❑ **Contempt of Court Act Reforms:** Narrow the "scandalizing the court" provision to balance judicial dignity with free speech, aligning with global trends (e.g., the UK abolished this clause in 2013).
- ❑ **Performance Review System:** Introduce periodic, anonymized evaluations of judges (judgment quality, ethics, disposal rates) with aggregate results made public. Individual data should guide internal improvements.
- ❑ **Bringing Judiciary Under Lokpal:** Include judges within the Lokpal's jurisdiction, as seen in Sweden's ombudsman model, to bolster accountability.
- ❑ **Adopting Law Commission Recommendations:** Implement the 195th Report's proposal for a National Judicial Council (headed by the CJI) to inquire into misconduct, aligning with international standards like the Siracusa Principles (1981).

CONCLUSION

The judiciary must be accountable, but within a framework that safeguards its independence from political pressures. The rule of law requires justice to be delivered not just fairly, but through transparent and equitable processes. Reforms balancing autonomy with oversight are vital to restore public confidence while preserving judicial integrity.

JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN INDIA: WHO JUDGES THE JUDGE?



THE LIVING FRAMEWORK OF INDIA'S CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

The judiciary, as one of the three essential pillars of a democracy, draws its legitimacy and powers from the Constitution. However, recent events—such as the discovery of large sums of cash at Justice Yashwant Verma's official Delhi High Court residence after a fire incident, or the Supreme Court's decision to drop an investigation into alleged hate speech by Justice Shekhar Yadav of the Allahabad High Court following Rajya Sabha's intervention—have sparked a critical debate. These episodes raise a pressing question: who holds the judiciary accountable?

WHAT DOES JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY MEAN?

Judicial accountability refers to a framework of responsibilities and procedures designed to ensure that judges, both personally and institutionally, answer for their decisions, actions, and behaviour—especially when they deviate from legal or constitutional norms. It serves as a fundamental element of a trustworthy legal system, aiming to preserve judicial independence while reinforcing transparency, public confidence, and integrity.

In India, unlike the Executive and Legislature, the Judiciary operates with limited public accountability. This is due to the delicate balance between judicial autonomy and external oversight. Since judicial independence is considered essential for safeguarding liberty and the rule of law, making the judiciary answerable to the executive or legislature could threaten its impartiality. Therefore, judicial accountability is safeguarded through specially designed mechanisms.

WHAT MECHANISMS CURRENTLY EXIST FOR JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN INDIA?

1. **Impeachment under the Constitution:** The Indian Constitution allows for the removal of Supreme Court and High Court judges for “proved misbehaviour or incapacity” under Articles 124(4) and 217(1)(b). Yet, despite serious charges over the years, no High Court judge has ever been impeached, and only one impeachment attempt against a Supreme Court judge has been initiated—and it failed.
2. **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968:** This law outlines the investigation process for complaints against judges. It provides a statutory route for probing allegations of misconduct or incapacity among judges of higher courts.
3. **Article 235 – Oversight of Subordinate Judiciary:** High Courts have administrative control over lower courts under Article 235, which helps maintain accountability within the subordinate judiciary.
4. **Restatement of Values of Judicial Life (1997):** The Supreme Court, in 1997, codified existing ethical norms through this Charter. Adopted by all High Courts, it lays down the expected code of conduct for judges. However, it lacks enforceability and is not a binding accountability tool.
5. **In-House Procedure (1999):** In December 1999, the Supreme Court devised an internal mechanism to handle complaints against judges. It allows a Chief Justice to set up a panel of three judges for preliminary inquiry. In severe cases, the panel can recommend impeachment. But this system too lacks statutory force and has rarely led to tangible action.
6. **Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill (2010):** This proposed legislation aimed to create an external body (National Judicial Oversight Committee) to deal with complaints. Though passed by the Lok Sabha, it lapsed in the Rajya Sabha and never became law.

WHY IS STRENGTHENING JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY CRUCIAL?

1. **To Improve Efficiency and Quality of Judgments:** Greater accountability could prompt judges to work more efficiently and deliver sound legal decisions. For instance, the Bombay High Court once controversially ruled that touching a child without “skin-to-skin” contact does not amount to sexual assault under POCSO, leading to outrage.
2. **To Safeguard Judicial Impartiality and Public Trust:** An incident involving a Chief Justice of India accused of sexual misconduct raised eyebrows when he formed an internal committee of judges appointed by himself. The complainant wasn’t allowed legal representation, and the CJI was eventually exonerated, creating a credibility crisis.
3. **To Address Judicial Backlogs:** With over 4 crore cases pending in lower courts, accountability mechanisms could exert necessary pressure on the system to expedite justice. The lack of external checks has contributed to institutional inertia on this front.
4. **Existing Mechanisms Are Weak and Opaque:** The Judges (Inquiry) Act and the in-house procedure are largely ineffective. They lack transparency, statutory backing, and fail to result in resignations or thorough

probes. No sitting judge can be investigated without CJI approval, and even when cash was discovered at a judge's home, no FIR could be filed due to this limitation.

5. **Balancing Accountability and Judicial Independence:** While judicial autonomy is essential, unchecked freedom may lead to abuse of power. Oversight should not weaken independence but ensure that judges remain transparent and responsible.
6. **To Curb Misconduct and Corruption:** In the absence of effective deterrents, corruption and abuse of office remain serious risks. Allegations often go unpunished, and meaningful consequences are rare.
7. **Limited Transparency via RTI:** The judiciary often restricts what information it shares under the Right to Information Act. For instance, the Bombay High Court ruled that administrative file notings aren't subject to RTI. A former Chief Justice once said, "Judiciary can't be destroyed in the name of transparency," highlighting institutional resistance.
8. **No Reporting Obligations to Legislature:** Unlike the Executive, the Judiciary isn't legally bound to submit annual performance reports to Parliament or state legislatures. Only three High Courts—Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, and Madras—have published such reports in recent years.
9. **No External Review of Supreme Court Judgments:** The Constitution offers no provision to scrutinize or review Supreme Court verdicts through any external body. This means the apex court remains unchecked, with only internal review mechanisms available.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES IN STRENGTHENING JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY?

1. **Cumbersome and Ineffective Removal Mechanism:** The sole formal procedure for ousting judges of the higher judiciary is through impeachment, which demands a two-thirds majority in Parliament and is applicable only in instances of "proven misbehaviour or incapacity." This stringent threshold makes political consensus nearly impossible, especially in a polarized environment. Consequently, since 1993, no judge has been successfully impeached despite numerous allegations, underscoring the system's ineffectiveness.
2. **Conflict Between Judicial Independence and Accountability:** Although judicial independence is vital for upholding the rule of law, excessive insulation from oversight has bred a lack of external scrutiny. At times, the judiciary invokes independence as a defense against accountability, eroding public faith in the institution.
3. **Opaque Appointment and Disciplinary Practices:** The collegium model for appointing judges is secretive and devoid of legislative or public oversight, raising concerns over favoritism and lack of representativeness. Similarly, internal disciplinary methods like the in-house mechanism are confidential, and their findings are rarely made public, thereby weakening institutional credibility.
4. **Immunity and Escape from Responsibility:** Judges enjoy broad protections and often resign before formal inquiries conclude, enabling them to retain post-retirement perks even amid serious allegations. Such exits, like those of Justice P.D. Dinakaran and Justice Soumitra Sen, have allowed evasion of accountability.
5. **Lack of Independent External Oversight:** Presently, no autonomous body exists to examine complaints against judges. All monitoring is conducted either internally or through Parliament, leaving little room for prompt and impartial redressal.

WHAT STEPS CAN BE TAKEN TO IMPROVE JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY?

1. **Creation of a National Judicial Oversight Authority:** An independent statutory entity should be established, comprising retired judges, legal scholars, and distinguished civil society members. This body must be empowered to investigate judicial misconduct impartially and free from political interference.
2. **Overhaul of Impeachment and Inquiry Framework:** The removal process should be made more transparent, bound by specific timelines, and accessible to the public. Clear investigation schedules and open proceedings can help prevent political delays and inaction.
3. **Mandatory Annual Declaration of Assets:** All judges—from district courts to the Supreme Court—should be legally required to declare their assets, as well as those of their spouses and dependents, annually. This must be enacted through law, not left to voluntary declarations or resolutions.
4. **Digital Courts and Case Management Tools:** Enhance the use of digital platforms like the National Judicial Data Grid to enable real-time tracking of pending cases, case disposals, and judge workloads, while also making such performance metrics publicly viewable.
5. **Full Application of the RTI Act to Judiciary:** The judiciary should come fully under the Right to Information Act, especially in relation to administrative actions and appointments. Any reluctance to disclose such information should be addressed, in keeping with previous rulings by the Supreme Court.
6. **Mandatory Annual Reporting:** Parliament should legislate a requirement for the judiciary to publish comprehensive annual reports detailing institutional performance. The law should outline report components and set strict timelines for publication.
7. **Review of the Contempt of Courts Act (1971):** The provision on “scandalizing the court” is often seen as too broad and capable of suppressing legitimate criticism. Narrowing this provision to align with international norms (such as the UK, where it has been abolished) can promote constructive public engagement without diminishing judicial dignity.
8. **Performance Appraisal System:** A mechanism for regular, anonymous, and overall performance evaluations of judges should be instituted. These assessments should cover quality of judgments, ethical conduct, disposal rates, and judicial demeanor. While collective results can be shared publicly, individual assessments should be reserved for internal improvements.
9. **Bringing Judiciary under the Lokpal:** Including the judiciary within the purview of the Lokpal could enhance accountability. This is in line with models like Sweden, where the judiciary falls under the jurisdiction of the national ombudsman.
10. **Implement Law Commission Proposals:** The Law Commission’s 195th Report proposed the Judicial Inquiry Bill, 2005, which called for the creation of a National Judicial Council comprising five judges, headed by the Chief Justice of India. This structure mirrors global standards such as the Siracusa Principles (1981) and the Latimer House Guidelines (1998), reinforcing transparency and fairness.

CONCLUSION

The judiciary, just like other pillars of democracy, must remain accountable. However, such accountability must exist within a constitutional framework that shields the judiciary from undue political pressure. Upholding the rule of law means not only delivering justice but ensuring it is dispensed transparently, fairly, and in a manner that commands public trust.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

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.

Q. Political theory is much more than mere science. Comment

According to Rajeev Bhargava, political theory is a form of systematic reflection characterized by conceptual sensitivity, rational structure, aspiration for a humanly achievable truth and objectivity, generality, and an explicit mandate to uncover deeper insights. Scholars assert that political theory transcends mere scientific knowledge. George Catlin notes that political theory is divided into political science and political philosophy. It is scientific in nature as it incorporates concepts like justice and equality, which are observable and testable, and adheres to the principles of reason and rationalism.

Conversely, political philosophy is a part of normative political theory, addressing questions such as the nature of justice, the concept of rights, and the distinction between 'is' and 'ought.' Additionally, political philosophy seeks to resolve conflicts between political theories that might appear equally valid under certain circumstances.

Andrew Hacker, in his work "Political Theory: Philosophy, Ideology, Science" (1961), highlights the dual nature of political theory. He contends that every political theorist must fulfill both the roles of a scientist and a philosopher, arguing that lasting contributions to political knowledge require integrating these dual roles in both science and philosophy.

Thus, political theory broadly encompasses political science and political philosophy, collectively performing three functions: description, criticism, and reconstruction.

Q. "Men being by nature all free, equal and independent, no one can be put out of his estate and subjected to the political power of another without his own consent." (Locke). Elucidate. (20 Marks)

Demand- Basically explain Locke's conception of limited state in detail (As the keyword is 'Elucidate')

Structure:

- ☐ Introduction with book, school of thought and basic idea of Lockean state.
- ☐ Body- Give background and elaborate on his ideas with emphasis on consent
- ☐ Conclude with contemporary linkage/relevance/significance etc.

John Locke, widely known as the "Father of liberalism," emphasized the supremacy of natural rights over state authority in his work, the 'Second Treatise of Government.' He viewed the state as a social construct and advocated for its limitations based on the rights inherently bestowed upon individuals by nature.

Locke's optimistic outlook on human nature stemmed from the peaceful transition from absolute monarchy to parliamentary democracy during the Glorious Revolution. He believed that reason should prevail over base desires, rejecting the concept of absolute state authority.

In contrast to Hobbes' depiction of the state of nature as a chaotic "war of all against all," where appetite dominates reason, Locke envisioned it as a state of peace, cooperation, and goodwill. In this natural state, people enjoyed fundamental rights such as life, liberty, and property, protected by the guiding force of natural law. According to Locke, reason serves as the law that governs individuals in the state of nature.

Locke considered government not as a necessity but as a practical arrangement. The political sovereign is seen as a participant in the social contract. Locke placed great importance on the primary purpose of establishing a state or commonwealth, which is to safeguard the natural rights of citizens, life, liberty, and property, which they possessed in the state of nature. He referred to these rights as inalienable, meaning they cannot be violated by the state. The state is prohibited from enacting laws that infringe upon these rights since individuals have not consented to transfer them to the state in the social contract.

Consequently, the state is bound to act in accordance with the will of the people. Locke envisioned the state as a trust, with the people serving as trustees. The trust must act in alignment with the wishes of the trustees. Should the state act contrary to the consent of the people, they retain the right to revolt. However, Locke expressed hope for peaceful revolutions due to the rationality of citizens and their entitlement to freedom of speech and expression under the social contract.

Thus, Locke emerges as a proponent of the theory of consent. In contrast to Filmer, who attributed the right of rulers as a divine gift from God (the theory of divine rights of the state), Locke argued that political authority only becomes legitimate when based on consent. The significance of Locke's ideas can be observed in their influence on neo-liberal scholars like Nozick. His conception of a limited state has become the prevailing discourse, not only in political theory but also in international forums such as the UNHRC.

Q. Critically evaluate Kautilya's concept of "danda" (coercion) in the context of maintaining internal security and external relations.

Kautilya's Arthashastra, a seminal text on statecraft, posits "danda" (coercion) as a key pillar of state power. While essential for maintaining internal security and navigating external relations, a critical evaluation reveals both its strengths and limitations, raising questions about its compatibility with contemporary democratic principles.

STRENGTHS

- ❑ **Internal Security:** Danda acts as a deterrent against crime and rebellion, ensuring stability and order within the kingdom. Kautilya outlines a meticulous system of law enforcement, espionage, and surveillance, aimed at preventing internal threats and punishing transgressors.
- ❑ **External Relations:** Danda enables a state to deter aggression, defend its borders, and enforce treaties. Kautilya advocates for strategic alliances, vyuha formations for warfare, and skillful diplomacy, all backed by military prowess. This pragmatic approach to foreign policy allowed the Mauryan empire to expand its territory and command respect on the international stage.
- ❑ **Effective Governance:** Danda, when exercised judiciously, can be a tool for social justice and efficient administration. Kautilya prescribes graded punishments for different offenses, ensuring proportional justice. He also suggests utilizing danda to enforce fair taxation and protect vulnerable sections of society.

LIMITATIONS

- ❑ **Potential for Abuse:** Unchecked danda can morph into tyranny and oppression. The emphasis on coercion and surveillance can stifle dissent, freedom of expression, and individual liberties.
- ❑ **Moral Implications:** Kautilya's danda, while pragmatic, often blurs the lines between ethical and ruthless statecraft. This raises concerns about whether the ends justify the means, especially in a contemporary context.
- ❑ **Contextual Relevance:** The rigid hierarchical structure and harsh punishments prescribed by Kautilya's danda might not be compatible with modern democratic societies. Contemporary approaches to security and diplomacy emphasize dialogue, cooperation, and international law, rendering Kautilya's purely coercive methods outdated in certain aspects.

Kautilya's danda remains a fascinating concept that offers valuable insights into statecraft and diplomacy. However, a critical evaluation reveals its potential dangers and limitations. In a contemporary world that values democracy and human rights, it's crucial to acknowledge the need for alternative approaches to security and international relations that prioritize dialogue, cooperation, and the rule of law.

SCHOLAR DIGEST: KNOW YOUR SCHOLARS

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.

A.G. FRANK



INTRODUCTION

Andre Gunder Frank, born on February 24, 1929, and passing away on April 25, 2005, was a prominent figure in the fields of sociology and economic history. Andre Gunder Frank, a German national, was a prominent

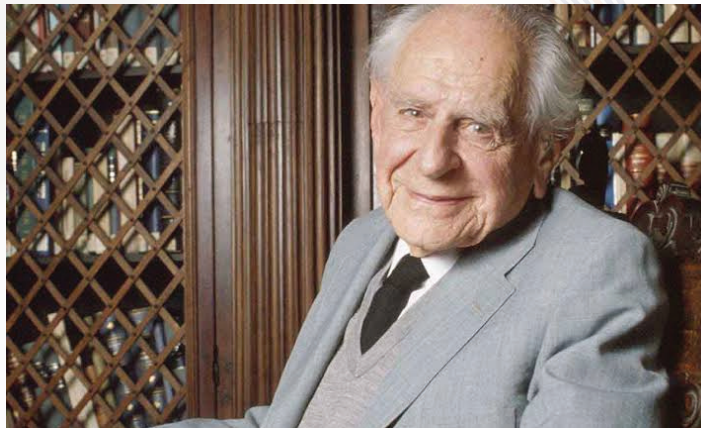
left-wing economist and political activist. His extensive body of work spanned various domains, including economics, social and political history, development studies, and international relations. His most enduring legacy lies in his exploration of concepts such as the 'development of underdevelopment' and 'dependency theory.' Furthermore, he offered critical insights into the 'world system' of the 1970s and 1980s, shedding light on how it perpetuated global inequality.

DEPENDENCY THEORY

Frank's central argument revolved around the idea that in our interconnected and globalized world, some countries thrive while others suffer. According to dependency theory, the citizens of less-developed countries should not be held responsible for the lack of progress in their societies. Instead, Frank posited that Western nations actively hindered the development of these countries. He contended that historically, the "core" nations like the USA and UK, forming the privileged "metropolis," exploited the "peripheral" nations by keeping them in a state of dependency and underdevelopment. Developed nations accumulated wealth by exploiting the poorest nations, utilizing them as sources of cheap raw materials and labor.

Frank asserted that this exploitative relationship had persisted throughout history, evident in practices like slavery and Western colonization of various regions. Moreover, he argued that this pattern continued into the twentieth century, facilitated by Western countries' domination of international trade, the rise of large multinational corporations, and the reliance of less-developed nations on Western aid.

KARL POPPER: DEFENDER OF THE OPEN SOCIETY



Karl Popper (1902–1994) was a staunch advocate of **liberal democracy, individual freedom, and rationalism**. His political philosophy, primarily expressed in *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945), was a response to the rise of **totalitarian ideologies** in the 20th century, particularly **Marxism, fascism, and nationalism**.

CRITIQUE OF HISTORICISM

Popper's central political argument was against **historicism**, the belief that history follows inevitable laws of progress. He criticized thinkers like **Plato, Hegel, and Marx**, who he believed justified **authoritarian rule** by claiming access to historical truths. He argued that historicism leads to **dogmatism and tyranny**, as rulers use it to impose rigid social structures in the name of an inevitable future.

THE OPEN VS. CLOSED SOCIETY

Popper distinguished between **open and closed societies**:

- ❑ A **closed society** is **authoritarian**, valuing tradition and unquestioned obedience.
- ❑ An **open society** is based on **democracy, individual rights, and institutional accountability**. It thrives on **critical discourse and adaptability**, allowing societies to improve through **trial and error** rather than revolutionary upheavals.

PIECEMEAL SOCIAL ENGINEERING

Rejecting **utopian revolutions**, Popper proposed **piecemeal social engineering**, gradual reforms based on **problem-solving and evidence-based policies**. He argued that **social experiments** should be **reversible**, unlike radical ideologies that impose irreversible societal changes.

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND CRITICISM

Popper viewed **democracy not as rule by the people, but as a system where governments can be peacefully replaced**. He emphasized **institutional checks and balances**, arguing that **the ability to remove bad leaders without violence is the true strength of democracy**.

Karl Popper's **political philosophy** remains influential in defending **democratic governance, individual liberty, and rational policymaking**. His critique of totalitarianism and advocacy for **open societies** continue to shape modern political thought.

SAMUEL P. HUNTINGTON



INTRODUCTION

Samuel P. Huntington was an American political scientist known for his role as a consultant to several U.S. government agencies and his significant contributions to national discussions concerning U.S. foreign policy during the late 20th and early 21st centuries. He was born on April 18, 1927, in New York, N.Y., and passed away on December 24, 2008, on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts.

CLASH OF CIVILIZATION THESIS

"The Clash of Civilizations" is a thesis put forth by American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington, which posits that in the post-Cold War world, cultural and religious identities will be the primary sources of conflict. According to Huntington, wars in this new era will not be fought between countries, but rather between different cultures.

Huntington's line of thought began by examining various theories about the nature of global politics in the post-Cold War era. Some thinkers argued that human rights, liberal democracy, and the capitalist free market economy had become the sole remaining ideological options for nations. Francis Fukuyama, for instance, suggested that the world had reached the 'end of history' in a Hegelian sense.

However, Huntington contended that the age of ideology had concluded, and the world had returned to a more typical state of affairs characterized by cultural conflicts. In his thesis, he proposed that cultural lines would be the primary source of conflict in the future.

Huntington went on to predict and describe major clashes that would occur among different civilizations. He anticipated potential cooperation between Islamic and Sinic cultures in opposition to the West, identifying three key issues that separated the West from the rest. These issues included the West's ability to maintain military superiority by controlling the proliferation of emerging powers, the promotion of Western political values like human rights and democracy, and the restrictions on non-Western immigrants and refugees entering Western societies. Non-Western countries saw these actions as Western attempts to impose and preserve their cultural dominance.

In one of his chapters, titled "The Global Politics of Civilizations," Huntington foresaw a "small, fault line war" between Islam and the West, as well as the potential for an "intercivilizational war of core states" between the United States and China.



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ENRICH YOUR ANSWER

Compare Ambedkar and Gandhi's views on Social Justice.

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

A) Mention the differences between views of Gandhi & Ambedkar

- ① Ambedkar was critic of Manusmriti (Manusmriti) 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.

B) 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

1. Examine communitarian critique of Rawls theory of Justice.

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 consensus.

Q. How does the government's philosophy of maximum governance and minimum governance coincide with the idea of competitive and cooperative federalism? Give reasons.

Q: How the government's philosophy of 'maximum governance and minimum government' coincide with the idea of competitive and cooperative federalism? Give reasons?

Ans

Approach

Intro

→ Define 'maximum governance and minimum government'.

Body

→ Elaborate on idea of competitive and cooperative federalism.

→ Give steps taken by Government based on this principle

eg * NITI Aayog replaced Planning Comm.

* Enhanced financial devolution to states

* Rationalisation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

Conclusion: give some suggestions.

eg Reform 7th Schedule list in the direction of empowerment of states

Q. Analyze the concept of ideology from various viewpoints and distinguish between the ideas of the "End of Ideology" and the "End of History."

Approach to Answer

Intro: Define ideology
eg coherent set of ideas that provides the basis for organised political action which is intended to either preserve, modify or overthrow the existing political order.

Body

① Give different perspectives on ideology.

→ Marxist perspective

→ linked ideology to delusion & mystification
→ Gramsci linked it to hegemony.

→ Liberal Perspective

* ideology as 'closed system of thoughts'

→ Conservative Perspective

* ideology is equated with dogmatism of beliefs that are divorced from complex real world.

② Distinguish between 'End of Ideology' and 'End of History'

End of Ideology

Daniel Bell

* Economics has triumphed over politics and political ideology has come to an end

End of History

Francis Fukuyama

* With triumph of liberalism, the history of ideas has ended.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS - 01

1. Which one of the following statements correctly describes the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution of India?
 - (a) It contains the scheme of the distribution of powers between the Union and the States
 - (b) It contains the languages listed in the Constitution
 - (c) It contains the provisions regarding the administration of tribal areas
 - (d) It allocates seats in the Council of States
2. Which one of the following Articles of the Constitution of India says that the executive power of every State shall be so exercised as not to impede or prejudice the exercise of the executive power of the Union?
 - (a) Article 257
 - (b) Article 258
 - (c) Article 355
 - (d) Article 358
3. Which Article of the Constitution of India says, 'No child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment'?
 - (a) Article 24
 - (b) Article 45
 - (c) Article 330
 - (d) Article 368
4. Consider the following statements:
 1. Part IX of the Constitution of India provisions for Panchyats and was inserted by the Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1992.
 2. Part IX A of the Constitution of India contains provisions for Municipalities and the Article 243 Q envisages two types of Municipalities a Municipal Council and a Municipal Corporation for every State.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - (a) Only 1
 - (b) Only 2
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWERS

1. (d) Fourth schedule allocates seats in the Council of States i.e. Rajya Sabha (Upper House of Parliament).
2. (a) Article 257 in the Constitution states that the executive power of every State shall be so exercised as not to impede or prejudice the exercise of the executive power of the Union, and the executive power of the Union shall extend to the giving of such directions to a State as may appear to the Government of India to be necessary for that purpose. Article 258: Power of the Union to confer powers on the States in certain cases; Article 355: Duty of the Union to protect States against external aggression and internal disturbance; Article 358: Suspension of provisions of Article 19 during emergencies.
3. (a) Article 24 of the constitution states that, no child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.
4. (a) 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments were passed by Parliament in December, 1992. Through these amendments local self-governance was introduced in rural and urban India. The Acts came into force as the constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 on April 24, 1993 and the constitution (74th Amendment) Act, 1992 on June 1, 1993. These amendments added two new parts to the constitution, namely, 73rd Amendment added part IX titled "The Panchayats" and 74th Amendment added part IXA titled "The Municipalities". The Local bodies-'Panchayats' and 'Municipalities' came under Part IX and IXA of the Constitution after 43 years of India becoming a republic.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS - 02

1. Consider the following statements:

With reference to the Constitution of India, the Directive Principles of State Policy constitute limitations upon

1. legislative function.

2. executive function.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

2. Consider the following statements :

1. The Parliament of India can place a particular law in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

2. The validity of a law placed in the Ninth Schedule cannot be examined by any court and no judgement can be made on it.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

3. In the federation established by The Government of India Act of 1935. Residuary Power were given to the

(a) Federal Legislature

(b) Governor General

(c) Provincial Legislature

(d) Provincial Governors

4. With reference to the "G20 Common Framework", consider the following statements

1. It is an initiative endorsed by the G20 together with the Paris Club.

2. It is an initiative to support Low Income Countries with unsustainable debt.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answers

1. **(d)** The term 'Directive Principles of State Policy' refers to the guiding principles that the State should consider when creating policies and passing laws. These principles serve as constitutional directives or recommendations to the State in legislative, executive, and administrative affairs. Prominent constitutional scholar Granville Austin characterizes DPSP as the "affirmative duties" of the state. Contrary to the initial statements, the correct answer is (d).
2. **(a)** The first statement correctly states that the 1st Amendment to the Constitution in 1951 introduced new Articles 31A and 31B along with the Ninth Schedule, which aimed to secure the constitutional validity of zamindari abolition laws and similar legislation. These provisions specified that such laws could not be challenged on the grounds of violating Fundamental Rights. Subsequent governments have also added other progressive laws to the Ninth Schedule through parliamentary action, thus confirming the accuracy of the first statement.
However, the second statement is incorrect. In the I.R. Coelho case of 2007, the Supreme Court did indeed rule that there cannot be a blanket immunity from judicial review for laws included in the Ninth Schedule. Therefore, the second statement is inaccurate.
3. **(b)** Residuary powers were in the hands of Governor General.
4. **(c)**

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS - 03

1. In which one of the following groups are all four countries members of G20?
 - (a) Argentina, Mexico, South Africa and Turkey
 - (b) Australia, Canada, Malaysia and New Zealand
 - (c) Brazil, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam
 - (d) Indonesia, Japan, Singapore and South Korea
2. The Parliament of India acquires the power to legislate on any item in the State List in the national interest if a resolution to that effect is passed by the
 - (a) Lok Sabha by a simple majority of its total membership
 - (b) Lok Sabha by a majority of not less than two-thirds of its total membership
 - (c) Rajya Sabha by a simple majority of its total membership
3. In the federation established by The Government of India Act of 1935. Residuary Power were given to the
 - (a) Federal Legislature
 - (b) Governor General
 - (c) Provincial Legislature
 - (d) Provincial Governors
4. With reference to the "G20 Common Framework", consider the following statements
 1. It is an initiative endorsed by the G20 together with the Paris Club.
 2. It is an initiative to support Low Income Countries with unsustainable debt.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWERS

1. (a)
2. (d) If the Rajya Sabha declares that it is necessary in the national interest that Parliament should make laws on a matter in the State List, then the Parliament becomes competent to make laws on that matter. Such a resolution must be passed by the Rajya Sabha by a majority of not less than two-third of its members present and voting.
3. (b) Residuary powers were in the hands of the Governor General.
4. (c)

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS - 04

1. **Under which schedule of the Constitution of India can the transfer of tribal land to private parties for mining be declared null and void?**
 - (a) Third Schedule
 - (b) Fifth Schedule
 - (c) Ninth Schedule
 - (d) Twelfth Schedule
2. **With reference to the constitution of India, prohibition or limitations or provisions contained in ordinary laws cannot act as prohibitions or limitations on the constitutional powers under Article 142. It could mean which one of the following?**
 - (a) The decisions taken by the Election Commission of India while discharging its duties can not be challenged in any court of law.
 - (b) The Supreme Court of India is not constrained in the exercise of its powers by laws made by the parliament.
 - (c) In the event of grave financial crises in the country, the President of India can declare Financial Emergency without the counsel from the cabinet.
 - (d) State Legislatures can not make laws on certain matters without the concurrence of the Union legislature.
3. **Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017?**
 1. Pregnant women are entitled for three months predelivery and three months post-delivery paid leave
 2. Enterprises with creches must allow the mother minimum six creche visits daily
 3. Women with two children get reduced entitlements.

Select the correct answer using the code given below

 - (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) 3 only
 - (d) 1,2 and 3
4. **With reference to the Constitution of India, consider the following statements :**
 1. No High Court shall have the jurisdiction to declare any central law to be constitutionally invalid.
 2. An amendment to the Constitution of India cannot be called into question by the Supreme Court of India.

Which of the statements given above is/ are correct?

 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. **Which concept in international relations refers to the use of nuclear weapons as a means of preventing an adversary from taking aggressive actions?**
 - (a) Non-proliferation
 - (b) Deterrence
 - (c) Containment
 - (d) Disarmament
6. **The term “nuclear taboo” refers to:**
 - (a) A legal framework for regulating nuclear weapons
 - (b) A collective norm opposing the use of nuclear weapons
 - (c) A doctrine encouraging nuclear proliferation
 - (d) A strategy for nuclear disarmament

ANSWERS

1. (b)
2. (b)
3. (c)
4. (d)
5. (b) Deterrence
6. (b) A collective norm opposing the use of nuclear weapons

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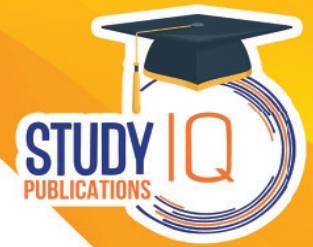
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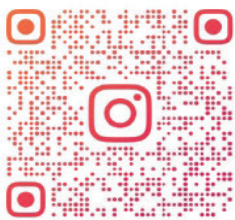
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