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Geopolitics at Glance

India-Myanmar Relations

RELEVANCE

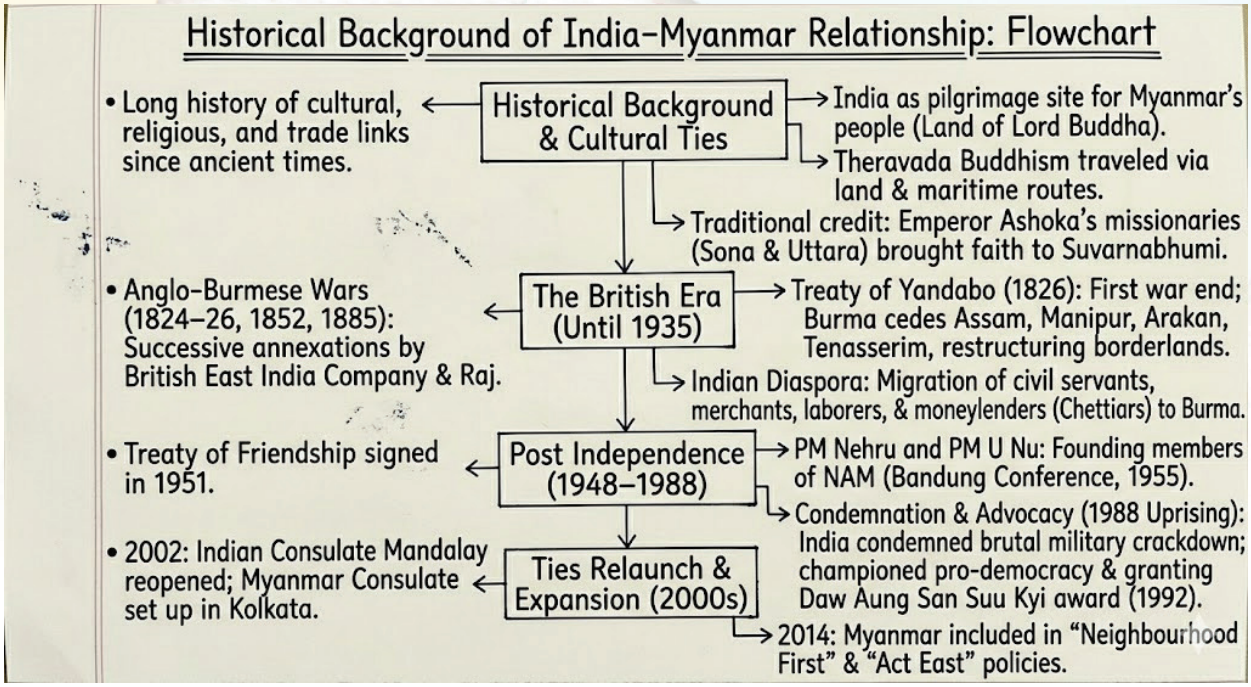
- **Syllabus:**
  - **PSIR:** India and South Asia
  - **GS2:** India and its neighbourhood relations



Introduction

The Head of State of Myanmar, President U Min Aung Hlaing, recently visited India. Marking his maiden official journey abroad since taking over the presidency, this visit underlines Myanmar's current focus on broadening its diplomatic relations within the region.

The geopolitical dynamic between India and Myanmar stands out as one of New Delhi's most vital yet intricately complex international partnerships. At present, this relationship is defined by India's delicate balancing act: addressing critical domestic frontier security requirements and fulfilling its strategic commitments under the Act East Policy, all while managing its diplomatic stance amid the domestic political turbulence triggered by the 2021 military takeover.



What is the Significance of Myanmar for India?

Geo-strategic

- Myanmar serves as the primary overland gateway connecting India to the wider South-East Asian region and plays a definitive role in the socio-economic advancement of India's North-Eastern states.
- The nation stands as a foundational pillar within both India's "Neighborhood First" approach and its broader "Act East" strategic framework.
- Key regional initiatives, such as the construction of the India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) trilateral highway and the operationalization of the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport (KMMTT) corridor, are entirely dependent on Myanmar's territorial cooperation.

Counter-Insurgency Operations

- For multiple decades, various rebel factions operating out of India's Northeast region (including the NSCN, ULFA, and several Manipuri insurgent outfits) have taken advantage of the dense, heavily forested terrain within Myanmar's Sagaing Region and Chin State to establish illicit base camps.
- New Delhi relies heavily on a cooperative relationship with the Myanmar armed forces (Tatmadaw) to execute synchronized frontier security maneuvers (such as Operation Sunrise) aimed at neutralising these militant sanctuaries.

Border Management and Stability

- The frontier zones feature deeply intertwined populations with shared cross-border ethnic ties, meaning that internal instability inside Myanmar (including the civil unrest following the 2021 coup) immediately impacts India's internal security.
- Effectively controlling the large-scale influx of displaced people, checking cross-border contraband smuggling, and defusing ethnic frictions along the boundary demands constant, formal institutional interaction with Myanmar's authorities.

Balancing China's Influence

- Beijing has established a massive economic and strategic presence inside Myanmar, spearheaded primarily by the development of the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC).
- This network features strategic energy pipelines and the construction of a deep-water port facility at Kyaukphyu, granting Beijing a direct land-to-sea route into the Indian Ocean that completely bypasses the traditional Malacca Strait shipping chokepoint.
- Consequently, India's assertive diplomatic, commercial, and defense engagement with Myanmar is paramount to prevent New Delhi from facing a permanent strategic encirclement across its eastern maritime frontier.

Energy Security

- Myanmar sits on substantial offshore natural gas deposits, a prime example being the Shwe gas exploration project.
- Prominent Indian public sector enterprises (such as ONGC Videsh and GAIL) have poured significant capital into these energy fields, offering India a crucial avenue to diversify its external energy sourcing.

Reduction of illegal migration in India

- Maintaining a peaceful and stable environment inside Myanmar is absolutely essential to curb the unauthorized cross-border migration of Rohingya and Chin populations into Indian territories.

Cultural Soft Power

- The deeply rooted, shared legacy of Theravada Buddhism serves as an enduring foundation for cultural affinity between the two societies.
- India actively leverages "Buddhist Circuit" pilgrimage tourism and provides technical support for restoring prominent historical monuments in Myanmar (like the Ananda Temple located in Bagan) to foster closer people-to-people connections.

What are the Major Areas of Cooperation Between India and Myanmar:

Bilateral Trade Dynamics

- The annual commercial exchange between the two neighboring states hovers around the $2.1 billion mark.
- India's import basket from Myanmar is overwhelmingly comprised of farming products (with beans, pulses, and forestry/timber items making up nearly 90% of the total), whereas India's primary exports to Myanmar consist of medical supplies, semi-processed steel, and heavy industrial machinery.
- Major Indian corporate entities, including Essar, GAIL, and ONGC Videsh Ltd., maintain active capital investments focused within Myanmar's domestic energy sectors.

Infrastructure and Connectivity

The bilateral architecture between India and Myanmar has been progressively strengthened through vital regional transit initiatives, with India funding major infrastructure developments across Myanmar's territory:

- In 2001, India and Myanmar jointly opened the 250-kilometer transit link connecting Tamu, Kalewa, and Kalemyo, a route widely recognized as the Indo-Myanmar Friendship Road.
- India is actively developing the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport project, designed to create a commercial shipping lane from Kolkata to the Myanmar port of Sittwe, continuing up the Kaladan River to establish direct access into India's landlocked North-East.
- Simultaneously, India, Myanmar, and Thailand are cooperating on the construction of the Asian Trilateral Highway, an ambitious project aimed at linking India directly with the broader ASEAN market.

Free Movement Regime (FMR)

- Boundary management includes an FMR agreement, which permits local residents living within a 16 km zone on either side of the border to cross over without requiring a formal visa.
- While this mechanism helps sustain traditional tribal and familial links (particularly across the Kuki-Chin-Mizo ethnic groups), it simultaneously presents a severe border security vulnerability, particularly during periods of active conflict.

Defence cooperation

- The armed forces of India and Myanmar regularly execute a joint training initiative known as the India–Myanmar Bilateral Military Exercise (IMBEX).
- Through Operation Sunrise, the respective armies coordinate targeted actions against insurgent networks attempting to operate across the shared border states.

Multilateral partnership

- Myanmar acts as a pivotal geographic and diplomatic link in India's regional strategy to connect South Asia with South-East Asia, utilizing multilateral forums such as ASEAN, BIMSTEC, and the Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC).

The Rakhine State Development Programme

- New Delhi extends dedicated economic grants to fund the construction of prefabricated housing, educational facilities, and localized infrastructure in volatile sectors to foster grassroots socio-economic stability.

Education and research

- India has spearheaded key educational institutions in the country, setting up the Myanmar Institute of Information and Technology alongside the Advanced Center for Agricultural Research and Education (ACARE), the latter focusing on scientific research into pulses and oilseeds.

Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief

- India has consistently stepped up as a reliable first responder, offering critical humanitarian assistance and emergency relief supplies during major natural disasters in Myanmar, such as Cyclone Mora (2017), Cyclone Komen (2015), the Shan State earthquake (2010), and throughout the global COVID-19 health crisis.

What are the Challenges in India-Myanmar Relations?

Political Unrest in Myanmar

- **Military Coup in 2021**: The landslide triumph of Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) in the 2020

polls raised alarms within the armed forces. Accusing the election process of fraud, the military (Tatmadaw) seized control via a coup in February 2021. The detention of Aung San Suu Kyi alongside other prominent politicians triggered widespread public demonstrations and a brutal response from the military forces.

- **Anti-Junta Armed Struggle**: Resistance against the ruling military administration intensified as various Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) and People's Defence Forces (PDFs) stepped up their combat operations, causing a sharp rise in violent clashes across the nation.
- **India's Policy Paradox with respect to Myanmar Coup**: New Delhi finds itself caught in a policy dilemma, balancing its ideological backing for democracy against vital domestic security priorities. On one hand, India maintains operational ties with the military junta to suppress rebel groups active along the shared frontier. On the other hand, India continues to advocate for the establishment of a democratic federal structure in Myanmar.

Massive Influx of Refugees in India

- The ongoing military battles between the ruling Junta forces and the People's Defence Forces in regions like Chin and Sagaing have pushed a large wave of displaced people across the border into India, particularly impacting states like Mizoram and Manipur.
- This large-scale migration has turned into a major point of friction between the two nations, as these population movements have been closely associated with local ethnic violence, narcotics trafficking, and contraband smuggling.

Misuse of Free Movement Regime

- The Free Movement Regime (FMR) operating along the border areas is being taken advantage of by insurgent elements and transnational lawbreakers to illegally ferry armaments, illicit merchandise, and fake Indian currency notes.

Safe Havens for Indian Insurgents

- Rebel networks from India (including ULFA, NSCN, and various Manipuri militant factions) consistently exploit the unmonitored and lawless pockets of Myanmar's Sagaing Region to run training centers, execute cross-border raids, and retreat back into secure territories.

The "Golden Triangle" Nexus

- Being located right next to the infamous Golden Triangle turns this poorly monitored border into a primary trafficking route for high-grade illicit drugs, illegal weaponry, and synthetic narcotics.

Massive Footprint of China

- Beijing leverages the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC) to supply the financially strained military regime with substantial capital investments, diplomatic immunity through its veto power at the UN, and critical infrastructure assets like the Kyaukphyu deep-sea port.
- This direct entry into the Bay of Bengal allows Beijing to entirely avoid the vulnerable Malacca Strait bottleneck, presenting a long-term maritime threat to India's security dominance in the Indian Ocean zone. Consequently, India faces massive hurdles in competing with China's deep financial reserves and rapid infrastructure deployment capabilities.

Delays in Regional Connectivity Projects

- Exceptional delays in executing crucial cross-border transit initiatives, such as the Kaladan Multimodal Connectivity project, have aggravated the deficit of mutual trust between New Delhi and Naypyidaw.

Cyber Scam Centers

- A major new hazard is the swift expansion of highly organized digital fraud syndicates and human trafficking rings running out of Myanmar's lawless frontier territories, forcing thousands of overseas citizens—including hundreds of Indians—into digital servitude.

What should be the Way Forward?

Support for Democracy and Human Rights

- Reports from the United Nations Special Rapporteur highlight that India has increased its supply of military hardware to the junta post-coup. Supplying weaponry to the Tatmadaw (Myanmar Military) dilutes New Delhi's stance on the revival of democratic processes.
- India must persist in championing the comeback of democratic governance and the preservation of human rights in Myanmar, pushing for the liberation of political detainees and an end to the junta's violent suppression of political dissent.

Engagement with all Stakeholders

- New Delhi should utilize its diplomatic leverage to set up open communication channels with and between the ruling junta, the political opposition, and the various armed ethnic factions.

Use of Regional Organisations for Enhanced Cooperation

- India needs to work in close coordination with ASEAN member states to formulate and back a viable peace roadmap for Myanmar.

Enhanced Economic Engagement

- India should sustain its economic interactions with Myanmar to foster long-term, sustainable development that directly advantages the local population. Stalled transit initiatives, particularly the Kaladan and the Asian Trilateral Highways, must be fast-tracked for completion without further delay.

Closer Security Cooperation

- It is vital for India to strengthen bilateral ties with Myanmar through robust intelligence sharing and well-coordinated joint initiatives aimed at neutralizing rebel outfits and drug cartels.

Grassroots Development Grants

- Direct development resources toward high-impact, community-level programs, such as distributing essential healthcare items, building mobile medical centers, and subsidizing local primary education facilities through frameworks like the Rakhine State Development Programme.

Leverage Spiritual Diplomacy

- Strengthen ties by building on the shared foundation of Theravada Buddhism. Simplifying and providing financial concessions for travel along the "Buddhist Circuit" for Myanmar citizens wanting to tour holy sites like Bodh Gaya and Sarnath can serve as a long-lasting bridge for grassroots human connection.

Targeting Cyber Scam Syndicates

- New Delhi must place top priority on high-level intelligence integration and joint law enforcement actions with regional partners to trace, shut down, and liberate Indian citizens held captive in forced labor camps inside the digital fraud hubs operating out of Myanmar's unmonitored zones.

Conclusion

Bilateral ties with Myanmar remain indispensable for India's eastern geopolitical blueprint, the integration of its Northeast states, overall regional equilibrium, and countering China's growing presence. This demands steady diplomatic commitment, swift execution of infrastructure initiatives, and a carefully calibrated approach to foreign policy.

India-Nepal Relations

Relevance

- **Syllabus:**
  - **PSIR:** India and south Asia
  - **GS2**: India and its neighbourhood



Introduction

India and Nepal share deep civilizational, cultural, and people-to-people ties, underpinned by an open border and close economic cooperation. However, periodic disagreements over boundary issues, including recent remarks by Nepal's Prime Minister on the border dispute, highlight persistent sensitivities. Nepal's PM indicated that the boundary dispute is not one-sided & should be resolved through diplomatic channels – suggest a cautious move towards a more rational approach in India-Nepal relations.

Evolution of India-Nepal Relationship:

Civilisational & Colonial Foundations	• The relationship predates modern statehood. The relationship is built on deep-rooted historical, cultural, and geographical ties, often referred to as "**Roti-Beti ka Rishta**" – ties of food and family. • The **Treaty of Sugauli (1816)** between Nepal and British India defined Nepal's boundaries along the Kali River, laying the groundwork for later territorial interpretations and disputes like Kalapani and Susta. • The British also began recruiting **Gorkha soldiers** – a tradition that continues to define the human dimension of the relationship.
The Foundational Era (1950-1962)	• Following the Chinese annexation of Tibet, India and the ruling Rana dynasty of Nepal signed the **1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship**. Driven by mutual security fears, the treaty established an open border and gave reciprocal rights to citizens. • During this period, India acted as a security guarantor, even placing military checkposts along Nepal's northern border with Tibet.
Era of Divergence & the 'China Card' (1962-1990)	• To balance India's overwhelming influence, the monarchy began playing the **"China Card" –** cultivating ties with China to gain diplomatic leverage over India. • When Nepal attempted to purchase weaponry from China, India allowed a key trade treaty to lapse, leading to a 15-month economic crisis in 1989 that severely damaged Nepal's economy and nationalist sentiment.
Democratic Transition & Crisis (1990-2015)	• This era shifted the relationship toward economic and developmental frameworks. It saw a focus on developmental partnerships, marked by key agreements like the **Mahakali Treaty (1996)** to harness Nepal's hydropower potential. • Nepal's decade-long Maoist insurgency (1996–2006) and subsequent transition to a federal republic created political turbulence, but also an opportunity. • Relations hit a historic low in 2015 over Nepal's new constitution. The Madhesi population in the plains felt marginalized, and an informal border blockade led to severe fuel shortages in Nepal, fueling widespread anti-India sentiment and pushing Nepal closer to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
Geopolitical Diversification & the "Cartographic War" (2015–2024)	• This phase was defined by Nepal asserting strategic autonomy and using China as a counterweight. • The 2020 dispute over the **Kalapani-Lipulekh region** led to Nepal's "New Map" amendment, signalling that Nepal would no longer accept the status quo in border management.
Recalibration & Regional Reset (2024–Present)	• Realizing that a heavy-handed approach pushed Nepal closer to Beijing, India pivoted to economic pragmatism. Prime Minister Modi introduced the **HIT formula** (Highways, Information ways, Transways). • Energy has become a primary pillar. India finalized agreements to import up to 10,000 MW of electricity from Nepal and greenlighted a breakthrough trilateral energy trade allowing Nepal to export electricity to Bangladesh via the Indian grid.

What are the various areas of cooperation between India & Nepal?

1. **Connectivity and Infrastructure**: Physical and digital connectivity is the cornerstone of the modern partnership, helping landlocked Nepal access maritime trade:
   - **Rail Links:** The **Jaynagar–Kurtha–Bijalpura** rail link is Nepal's first-ever operational broad-gauge railway line built with Indian assistance. Plans are underway for a direct line connecting Raxaul to Kathmandu.
   - **Integrated Check Posts (ICPs):** To streamline cross-border trade, ICPs have been operationalized at vital border points like **Birgunj**, **Biratnagar**, **Nepalgunj**, and **Bhairahawa**.
   - **Roads:** India has actively assisted in upgrading the **Hulaki Rajmarg (Postal Highway)** across the Terai region of Nepal.
2. **Energy and Power Trade**: Energy has evolved into one of the most successful areas of bilateral cooperation:
   - **Hydropower Development:** Indian companies are heavily investing in mega projects in Nepal, such as the **Arun-3** and West Seti hydroelectric projects.
   - **Power Grid & Export:** Under a **Long-Term Power Trade Agreement**, India imports electricity from Nepal, allowing Kathmandu to monetize its surplus energy. A trilateral agreement also allows Nepal to export electricity to Bangladesh via the Indian grid.
   - **Petroleum Pipelines:** The **Motihari–Amlekhgunj pipeline** is South Asia's first cross-border petroleum products pipeline. Work continues to extend this network further into Chitwan and Jhapa.
3. **Culture and People-to-People Ties**: The **1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship** allows citizens of both countries to move freely across the border without passports or visas to live, work, and own businesses. Cultural ties are formally anchored by **Sister-City Agreements** that link shared heritage sites for e.g. Kathmandu – Varanasi, Janakpur – Ayodhya, Lumbini – Bodhgaya.
4. **High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs)**: Since 2003, India has undertaken nearly 600 HICDPs across all seven provinces of Nepal. These projects are in sectors like education, health, agriculture, drinking water, and sanitation. Recently, the cost limit for individual projects was increased to Rs 20 crore.
5. **Joint Exercises:** The two armies conduct a regular, major annual joint military exercise called **Exercise Surya Kiran** to enhance interoperability in mountain warfare and counter-insurgency.
6. **Disaster Relief:** India acts as a first responder during humanitarian crises in Nepal – most notably during the devastating 2015 earthquake, deploying specialized NDRF teams and massive relief materials.
7. **Multilateral Forums:** Nepal and India maintain close coordination in the UN, SAARC, and BIMSTEC. Nepal consistently supports India's bid for permanent UNSC membership, while India supports Nepal's "Landlocked Developing Country" interests.

What is the Significance of India-Nepal Relationship?

1. **Geopolitical & Strategic Significance**:
   - **The Himalayan Buffer:** Nepal serves as a vital geographic buffer zone between India and China. The northern border of Nepal is guarded by the Himalayas, making its territory India's first line of defense in the central Himalayan region.
   - **The Shared Border Vulnerability:** India and Nepal share a 1,850 km long, porous border that touches five Indian states (Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, and Sikkim). Because the border is open, political stability and effective security cooperation in Nepal are critical to preventing transnational crime, smuggling, and the infiltration of hostile actors into India's heartland.
2. **Economic & Commercial Significance**:
   - **Economic Interdependence:** India is **Nepal's largest trading partner**, accounting for over 60–65% of Nepal's trade (USD 8.5 billion in 2024). India provides petroleum, electricity, and essential commodities, while Nepal's vast hydropower potential offers clean energy opportunities for India. Remittances from 600,000 Nepali workers in India sustain Nepal's economy.
   - **Gateway for a Landlocked Nation:** Nepal is geographically landlocked and surrounded by India on three sides. India provides Nepal with essential transit access to sea ports (like Kolkata and Vishakhapatnam) for its third-country trade, acting as its largest trading partner and economic lifeline.
   - **India's Energy Security:** Nepal possesses immense hydropower potential (estimated at over 40,000 MW of commercially viable power). By investing in Nepalese hydro projects, India gains clean energy to fuel its growing economy, while Nepal earns revenue by exporting its surplus electricity to India and Bangladesh.

3. **Cultural & Civilizational Significance:**
   - **Open Border & Shared Lives:** Unlike any other two sovereign neighbors in the region, citizens of India and Nepal do not need visas or passports to cross the border. Millions of Nepalese citizens live, work, own property, and do business in India on equal terms with Indian citizens.
   - **Religious & Spiritual Geography:** Both countries share deep Hindu and Buddhist roots. The sacred geography of the region is deeply intertwined – linking Pashupatinath (Kathmandu) with Kashi Vishwanath (Varanasi), and Muktinath with temples across India. Janakpur (the birthplace of Goddess Sita in Nepal) is culturally tied to Ayodhya (the birthplace of Lord Ram in India), and Lumbini (the birthplace of Buddha in Nepal) connects seamlessly to India's Buddhist circuit (Bodhgaya, Sarnath, and Kushinagar).
   - **Gurkha Legacy:** The recruitment of Gurkha soldiers into the Indian Army (under the 1947 Tripartite Agreement) is a historic symbol of shared valor. These soldiers serve as a living bridge between the two nations.
4. **Political & Security Significance**:
   - **Border Security:** Cross-border crimes (smuggling of narcotics, counterfeit currency, and wildlife parts) and the movement of insurgent groups (from India's northeast) require daily, seamless coordination between the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and Nepal's Armed Police Force (APF).
   - **Constitutional Stability:** India has a direct stake in Nepal's political stability. A functioning, democratic, and inclusive Nepal prevents the emergence of safe havens for anti-India elements and ensures the smooth flow of economic activity.
   - **Disaster Response:** During the 2015 earthquake (**Operation Maitri**) and the 2014 floods in Uttarakhand, India acted as the "first responder" for Nepal. This capability is unmatched by any other country.

What are the challenges in the relations between the two countries?

1. **Territorial and Boundary Disputes**:
   - **The Western Tri-junction (Kalapani, Lipulekh, and Limpiyadhura):** This region sits at a crucial India-Nepal-China tri-junction. India administers the territory. Nepal, however, claims the river Kali originates further west, placing the entire region within its borders. Tensions flared when Nepal published a new political map incorporating these areas, cementing the dispute into its constitution.
   - **The Susta Dispute:** Located in the south, this dispute is driven by nature rather than maps. Over decades, the changing, shifting course of the **Gandak River** has altered the physical landscape, leading to constant cross-border disagreements over agricultural land ownership.
2. **Economic Dependence**:
   - **Dependence on Trade Routes**: Nepal's access to the sea for its global trade is entirely dependent on transit routes through India. This has, in the past, led to economic blockades and supply disruptions when bilateral relations are strained.
   - **Trade Asymmetry**: Nepal imports over 64% from India but exports less than 10% to India, creating persistent economic asymmetry. While this is a standard trade relationship, it contributes to a feeling of economic dependency in Nepal.
3. **The China Factor**:
   - **BRI & Chicken's Neck:** Nepal officially joined China's **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**. This led to growing unease from India, particularly concerning the strategic implications of BRI projects near the vulnerable Siliguri Corridor – the narrow 20–22 km stretch connecting India's mainland to its northeastern states.
   - **Trans-Himalayan Railway:** Nepal's growing engagement with China's BRI, including USD 3 billion in loans and projects like the Trans-Himalayan Railway, increases Beijing's influence, challenges India's traditional primacy, and heightens strategic competition in the Himalayas.
4. **Security and the Challenge of an Open Border**:
   - **Security Vulnerabilities**: The border is not continuously fenced, and in some stretches, particularly in Bihar's Seemanchal region, there are significant gaps (4-5 km) between border outposts. This creates blind spots that are exploited by criminals.
   - **Cross-Border Crime**: This open border facilitates the **smuggling of narcotics, counterfeit currency, and goods**, as well as the movement of insurgent groups who can use Nepali territory as a safe haven.
5. **The Gurkha Recruitment & "Agnipath" Deadlock**: With India's introduction of the **Agnipath Scheme**-which transitioned military recruitment into short-term, 4-year tours of duty rather than permanent pensions – the Nepalese government suspended the recruitment of Gurkhas into the Indian Army. Kathmandu argues that the new terms violate the 1947 Tripartite Agreement

and leave young Nepalese veterans vulnerable without long-term retirement security.

6. **The "Big Brother" Syndrome:** Many within Nepal's political elite and growing youth population view the **1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship** as unequal and paternalistic. They argue it infringes on Nepal's sovereign autonomy, particularly regarding independent weapons procurement and foreign policy choices.
7. **Hydro-Hegemony**: India's position as the primary market and sole transit route for Nepali power gives it significant leverage. This has led to concerns in Nepal about a "hydro-hegemonic" relationship where India has a dominant say in Nepal's water resource development.
8. **Political Instability in Nepal**: Nepal's foreign policy is shaped by its turbulent internal politics. Governments change frequently, and no government has completed a full five-year term in decades. Now, heavily influenced by youth-led anti-corruption movements (often referred to as Nepal's "**Gen Z movement**"), the rise of non-traditional parties, such as the **Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP)**, means India can no longer rely on long-standing relationships with old-guard elites.

What should be the way forward?

1. **Acknowledge Strategic Autonomy:** India must recognize that a democratic, modern Nepal will naturally engage with multiple global powers, including China and the United States. New Delhi should avoid treating Kathmandu's foreign policy as a zero-sum game, focusing instead on being a more efficient, reliable, and non-interfering partner.
2. **Rebalance Trade: From Dependence to Interdependence**:
   - **Market Access for Nepali Exports:** India should reduce non-tariff barriers on Nepal's goods, particularly in agro-processing, herbs, and light manufacturing, where Nepal has genuine comparative advantage.
   - **Joint Industrial Corridors:** Establishing SEZ-linked industrial zones along the border – connecting Nepali labour and Indian capital and logistics – could transform the trade relationship from extractive to productive.
3. **Border Dispute Settlement**: Open, public debate over territorial disputes like Kalapani, Lipulekh, and Susta often triggers nationalist rhetoric that stalls progress. The path forward lies in activating high-level technical boundary committees to map, clear, and resolve disputes quietly based on historical evidence.
4. **Smart Border Management:** The open border must be preserved for citizens, but security against transnational crime must be modernized. Transitioning to digital profiling, biometric monitoring, and real-time intelligence-sharing between security agencies will secure the border without disrupting the daily lives of local communities.
5. **Modernize People-to-People Connections**: The "Roti-Beti" narrative resonates deeply with older generations, but a younger, hyper-connected Nepalese population prioritizes digital innovation, entrepreneurship, and job creation. India should expand tech-driven partnerships, such as cross-border startup incubators, space-tech collaborations, and deeper UPI digital financial integration.
6. **Resolve the Agnipath Impasse**: India and Nepal should negotiate a special dispensation or post-service rehabilitation framework under the Agnipath scheme to address Nepal's concerns regarding the long-term financial security and employment of its young veterans. A tailored recruitment model for Nepalese Gorkhas – perhaps offering longer service or clear post-service pathways – could resolve the current recruitment deadlock.
7. **Make Energy the Anchor of the New Partnership**: By strengthening grid connectivity, simplifying trade regulations, and ensuring long-term power purchase agreements, Nepal and India are transforming energy from a domestic challenge into a shared regional opportunity. The landmark 10,000 MW deal and the first tri-national energy transit to Bangladesh are the right template — but execution must improve.

Conclusion

The India-Nepal relationship remains a structural necessity. By shifting from a security-first approach to infrastructure connectivity, water cooperation, and mutual respect, both nations can transform historic ties into a resilient, prosperous partnership.

India-Indonesia Relations

RELEVANCE

- **Syllabus:**
  - **PSIR:** India and south Asia
  - **GS2**: India and its neighbourhood



Introduction

India and Indonesia recently held high-level diplomatic talks as External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met Indonesian Foreign Minister Sugiono in New Delhi during the 8th India-Indonesia Joint Commission Meeting. The discussions focused on strengthening the India-Indonesia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, with emphasis on defence cooperation, maritime security, trade, investment, connectivity, food security, and regional issues.

The two nations share deep historical, cultural, and trade ties. Their partnership is increasingly significant for promoting regional stability, economic growth, and rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region.

How have India-Indonesia Relations evolved over time?

Ancient Era

Long before modern diplomacy, India and Indonesia were deeply connected via maritime trade routes linking Indian coastal states to Java, Sumatra, and Bali.

Hinduism and Buddhism traveled seamlessly across the Indian Ocean. This legacy remains vibrant in Indonesia today – from the magnificent 9th-century monuments of **Borobudur** and **Prambanan** to the enduring prominence of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* in Indonesian art, shadow puppetry (**Wayang**), and the unique Hindu culture of Bali.

Early Post-Independence Period (1940s-1950s)	India played a crucial role in supporting Indonesia's struggle for independence from Dutch colonial rule. Under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, India emerged as a strong advocate for Indonesia's freedom on the global stage. Key developments during this period included: **a. Treaty of Friendship (1951)**: Strengthening cooperation in trade, culture, and military affairs. **b. Non-Alignment and Anti-Colonialism**: Both nations were aligned on principles of non-alignment, peaceful coexistence, and anti-colonialism, leading to their active participation in the 1955 Bandung Conference and the formation of the **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)** in 1961.
Deterioration in Ties (1960s)	Despite early cooperation, India-Indonesia relations faced setbacks in the 1960s due to geopolitical shifts: **a. India-China Conflict (1962):** India's ties with China worsened post the 1959 Tibetan uprising and the 1962 war, while Indonesia maintained cordial relations with China. **b. India-Pakistan Conflict (1965):** Indonesia openly sided with Pakistan during the 1965 India-Pakistan war, even providing military assistance to Pakistan, causing a strain in Indo-Indonesian ties.
Cold War Era (1966-1980s)	A shift in Indonesia's political landscape led to the gradual revival of ties: **a. President Suharto's Era**: Indonesia distanced itself from China and sought to rebuild relations with India. **b. Maritime Boundary Agreement (1977):** Strengthened cooperation in maritime affairs and regional security. **c. Suharto's Visit to India (1980):** Marked a new phase of improved diplomatic relations between the two nations.
Look East Policy (1990s)	India's economic liberalization in the 1990s and the launch of the **'Look East' Policy** in 1991 significantly boosted Indo-Indonesian ties: **a. Expansion of Economic Ties:** Trade and investment between the two countries witnessed substantial growth. **b. Comprehensive Partnership:** Economic, security, and cultural cooperation became key aspects of bilateral relations.
Act East Policy and Recent Developments (Since 2000s)	With the launch of India's **'Act East' Policy** in 2014, Indonesia emerged as a key regional partner. Notable advancements include: **a. Trade Relations**: Indonesia is India's 2nd largest trading partner in ASEAN (after Singapore), with trade growing from USD 4.3 billion in 2005-06 to US$ 29.40 billion in 2023-24. **b. Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2018):** PM Modi's visit to Jakarta led to the signing of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and a shared vision on Indo-Pacific maritime cooperation. **c. Maritime Cooperation**: Both nations jointly advocate for the resolution of maritime disputes and the finalization of the South China Sea Code of Conduct as per UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea). **d. Defense Cooperation**: Indonesia is negotiating with India for the BrahMos missile system, with an estimated deal worth USD 450 million.

What are the key pillars of cooperation between India-Indonesia?

1. Economic & Trade Relations:

- **Bilateral Trade**: Indonesia is India's **second-largest trading partner** in the ASEAN region, with bilateral trade reaching **$28.15 billion in 2024-25.** The goal is to increase the bilateral trade to $50bn.
- **Key Exports & Imports**: India's key imports include coal, palm oil, and rubber, while its key exports are refined petroleum, telecom equipment, and agricultural products.
- **Investment**: Indian investment in Indonesia stands at $1.56 billion, with a focus on mining, textiles, and infrastructure, while Indonesian investment in India totals $653.8 million, primarily in manufacturing and trade.

- **Trade Facilitation**: India and Indonesia have made efforts in trade facilitation, including the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) review to reduce trade barriers, and the Local Currency Settlement MoU, which encourages trade in local currencies.
- **Fintech & Digital Payments:** Discussions are underway to link India's Unified Payments Interface (**UPI**) with Indonesia's Quick Response Code Indonesian Standard (**QRIS**) to seamless cross-border retail payments.
- **Andaman-Sumatra Connectivity:** The governments are working to build direct economic and tourism links between India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Indonesia's Aceh province, which are separated by less than 150 nautical miles.

2. Strategic & Security Cooperation:

- **Vision Alignment:** India's **Act East Policy** and **SAGAR** (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision align directly with Indonesia's **Global Maritime Fulcrum** concept.
- **The Sabang Port Project:** The most significant geopolitical initiative is the joint development of the **Sabang Deep-Sea Port** in Sumatra. Located at the western entrance of the Malacca Strait, this port provides India with strategic maritime access to one of the world's busiest choke points.
- **Defence & Security:** Both countries pledged to enhance defense cooperation through initiatives such as Coordinated Patrol, Ex Garuda Shakti (Army), and Ex Samudra Shakti (Naval). Additionally, both sides agreed to set up a Bilateral Maritime Dialogue and a Cyber Security Dialogue.
- **Defense Industry Collaboration**: India-Indonesia Defense Industry Exhibition (2024) focused on co-producing defense equipment, sharing military technology, and increasing maintenance and logistical support for naval vessels.

3. Energy & Health Security:

- **Renewable Energy & Critical Minerals**: Both countries are focused on joint exploration of nickel and bauxite for clean energy and biofuel collaboration for sustainability.
- **Health Cooperation**: Both countries signed MoUs on Health Cooperation and Traditional Medicine Quality Assurance, focusing on digital health and capacity-building for healthcare professionals.

4. Technological Cooperation:

- India's digital initiatives, such as Aadhaar, UPI, and CoWIN, serve as models for Indonesia's digital growth.
- Collaborative efforts in quantum communication, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and space technology.

5. Cultural & Educational Cooperation:

- **Language and Symbolism:** The Indonesian national language (Bahasa Indonesia) contains thousands of Sanskrit loanwords, and the national symbol, the *Garuda*, draws directly from Indian mythology.
- **Heritage & Arts**: India supports the restoration of the Prambanan Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Indonesia, and the Indian Cultural Centers in Jakarta and Bali promote Indian arts and yoga.
- **Education**: Scholarships for Indonesian students available through ITEC (Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation) and ICCR (Indian Council for Cultural Relations) programs

6. Multilateral Cooperation:

- Both countries emphasise the necessity of a free, open, stable, and peaceful Indo-Pacific based on international law.
- Both countries highlighted the significance of ASEAN centrality and collaboration on regional matters such as the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, the India-Indonesia-Australia Trilateral, the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), as well as BRICS and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).

What are the challenges in India-Indonesia relations?

1. Trade and Economic Barriers:

- **Missed Targets**: Bilateral trade for 2024-25 stood at $28.15 billion, falling well short of the ambitious $50 billion target set for 2025. This gap highlights the gap between ambition and current economic traction.
- **Lack of Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)**: Unlike Malaysia and Singapore, Indonesia does not have a CECA with India, reducing its competitiveness, particularly in sectors like palm oil.
- **Low utilization of AITIGA**: The ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) has a utilization rate of only 25%, limiting the benefits that could be gained from the agreement.
- **Trade Imbalance**: While bilateral trade is robust, it is profoundly asymmetrical and heavily skewed in Indonesia's favor. India imports significant quantities of palm oil ($11 billion in 2022) and coal from Indonesia, contributing to a trade imbalance that favors Indonesia.
- **Unrealized trade potential**: Bilateral trade could increase by 33% to reach $61 billion, indicating untapped opportunities for growth in trade.

- **Market Access & Tariffs:** Indian exporters face significant non-tariff barriers in Indonesia, particularly in the pharmaceutical, dairy, and bovine meat sectors.

2. Investment and Competition with China:

- **Dominance of Chinese investments**: Under President Joko Widodo, Chinese investments have overshadowed Indian investments. In 2024, Indonesia signed $10 billion worth of business deals with China, further intensifying competition for investment.
- **Protectionist policies in India**: Indian industries, especially textiles, have raised concerns about the influx of Indonesian products like Viscose Staple Fibre (VSF), fearing increased competition.

3. Geopolitical and Strategic Constraints:

- **Strategic Ambiguity:** Indonesia adheres strictly to its **Bebas-Aktif** (Independent and Active) foreign policy. It fiercely avoids taking sides in the U.S.–China rivalry and looks at minilateral groupings like the **Quad** (which includes India) with a degree of caution, fearing they could destabilize ASEAN centrality.
- **The South China Sea vs. Indian Ocean:** While Jakarta faces incursions by Chinese coast guard vessels in its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around the Natuna Islands, it is highly protective of its economic ties with Beijing (China remains Indonesia's largest trading partner). Indonesia is hesitant to form an overt anti-China military alignment with India, preferring quiet, localized maritime capacity building over aggressive balancing.
- **Regulatory challenges in defence**: Differences in defense procurement processes have delayed joint defense projects, limiting the scope of strategic cooperation between the two nations.
- **The Sabang Port Sluggishness:** The development of the **Sabang Deep-Sea Port** in Aceh is hailed as a geopolitical game-changer due to its proximity to the Malacca Strait. However, actual construction, feasibility studies, and joint investments have moved at a bureaucratic crawl. Delays in upgrading this infrastructure limit the immediate interoperability of the Indian and Indonesian navies.

4. Connectivity and People-to-People Barriers:

- **Limited air connectivity**: Direct flights between India and Indonesia are limited, restricting tourism, business expansion, and people-to-people exchanges.
- **The Andaman-Aceh Gap:** Plans to establish thriving commercial shipping routes, institutional trade, and eco-tourism links between the Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Sumatra have remained mostly on paper due to strict regulatory frameworks on both sides.
- **Visa barriers**: Restrictive visa policies hinder student exchanges, business travel, and cultural engagement, limiting deeper bilateral ties.
- **Underdeveloped People-to-People Ties**: Compared to the high-level diplomatic engagement, connections at the grassroots level – among youth, students, academics, and civil society – remain weak. This lack of societal integration prevents the relationship from developing a strong, self-sustaining foundation beyond government initiatives.

What should be the way forward?

1. **Expand Economic and Trade Integration:** Accelerate negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) to address existing trade and investment barriers. This is essential for boosting bilateral commerce, which has historically fallen short of targeted goals.
2. **The Shared Economic Zone:** Finalizing the legal and customs frameworks for direct shipping lines between Aceh and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands would create a sub-regional economic hub, cutting down transit times for goods moving between South and Southeast Asia.
3. **Securing Critical Minerals:** As both countries push for green energy and EV manufacturing, establishing supply chains for Indonesia's massive **nickel** reserves and India's processing capacities is a natural win-win.
4. **Leverage Tourism and Cultural Diplomacy:** Build robust people-to-people ties, particularly among youth and women, by advancing theme-based tourism routes like the RICH (Religious, Cultural & History) plan to connect shared ancient maritime legacies and traditions.
5. **Deepened Collaborations**: Expanding partnerships in IT, energy, and tourism, while fostering cultural ties, positions India as a reliable partner for Indonesia's growth trajectory.
6. **Aviation and Tourism Push:** Both governments need to incentivize airlines to establish direct, daily commercial flights connecting major Indian cities (like Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru) directly to Jakarta and Sumatra, reducing the current over-reliance on connecting hubs like Singapore or Kuala Lumpur.
7. **Manage the China Question Tactfully**: India and Indonesia must identify areas of collaboration beyond the China factor. Both countries can use platforms like BRICS to collectively advocate for the Global South, effectively diluting Beijing's ability to monopolize the

developing-world narrative. Acting as co-anchors of a multipolar world order allows India and Indonesia to push back against economic coercion while maintaining pragmatic channels of communication with China.

8. **Multilateral Co-Leadership**: India and Indonesia should expand cooperation in global and regional forums such as the UN, G20, and ASEAN, where countries can only hope to avoid being caught in a US-China bifurcation if they scale up alternative forms of collective action.

Conclusion

India & Indonesia relationship requires a shift from broad-stroke ambition to detailed, coordinated execution. The two nations need to finally fulfill the immense promise of their ancient and modern relationship, becoming true anchors of stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific.

India-France Relations

RELEVANCE

- **Syllabus:**
  - **PSIR:** India and the Global Powers
  - **GS2**: India and its bilateral relations



Introduction

PM Narendra Modi is scheduled to travel to France for the G7 Summit, marking his seventh official trip there since taking office in 2014. The India-France bond has long rested on deep mutual confidence, spanning defence, space exploration, atomic energy, naval security, and environmental cooperation. This relationship plays a key role in helping India pursue strategic independence and its broader global ambitions. That said, friction points remain — an uneven trade balance, hurdles around sharing technology, restricted market entry, and the need to navigate a shifting geopolitical landscape.

What is the History of India-France Relations?

France and India have historically enjoyed a warm and cooperative bond.

Pre-Independence Era

The French East India Company (1664): Founded under the reign of Louis XIV, this company set up major trading hubs across India — chiefly in Pondicherry (Puducherry), Chandernagore, Karikal, Mahé, and Yanam.

The Anglo-French Wars: The 18th century witnessed the Carnatic Wars, where French and British forces clashed for control over the subcontinent. Talented French administrators such as Joseph François Dupleix forged partnerships with regional Indian kings to push back against British advances.

Post Independence Era

Establishing Ties (1947): Diplomatic relations between the two nations began right after India won its freedom.

The Treaty of Cession (1956/1962): France consented to hand over its Indian holdings to the Indian Republic without conflict. The actual handover took place in 1954, with the official Treaty of Cession following in 1956 and getting ratified by France's Parliament in 1962. Pondicherry and the remaining French enclaves merged into India peacefully, with no bloodshed.

French-made aircraft and helicopters — including the Ouragan, Mystere, Alize, Alouette, and Jaguar — have served in India's air force since the 1960s.

When the United States withdrew nuclear fuel supplies to the Tarapur facility in 1984 due to internal restrictions, France stepped forward to fill that gap.

India's space ambitions also benefited from French backing from the early days, with assistance in building the Sriharikota launch facility and providing Centaure and Viking rocket designs during the 1970s.

That said, the broader Cold War environment placed limits on how far this partnership could mature.

Post Cold War Era

Strategic Partnership: The two countries formalized a Strategic Partnership in 1998, anchored by three core pillars — defence and security collaboration, space cooperation, and civilian nuclear energy ties.

The 1998 Nuclear Tests: Following India's Pokhran-II tests, Western powers including the US and UK responded with stiff economic and tech-related sanctions. France, however, declined to penalize India and instead kept diplomatic channels open.

Special Global Strategic Partnership: As of February 2026, the two nations upgraded their relationship into a Special Global Strategic Partnership — a landmark shift that pushes collaboration well past traditional defence matters into artificial intelligence, space, and green energy.

Horizon 2047 Agreement: This pact charts out the trajectory for India-France collaboration over the coming quarter-century. Joint work in cutting-edge fields like supercomputing, cloud infrastructure, AI, and quantum tech is seen as critical to shaping India's future trajectory.

What are the areas of cooperation between India and France?

Geo-Political: The political relationship between the two nations has only deepened with time.

- France was the very first permanent UNSC member to back India's bid for a council seat, along with broader UN reform.
- French backing proved essential for India joining the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the Wassenaar Arrangement, and the Australia Group.
- France holds the distinction of being invited more often than any other nation to serve as Republic Day chief guest.

Geo-Strategic: France has been sensitive to India's strategic concerns and has taken concrete steps to deepen this dimension of the relationship.

- France has extended one of its most valuable Indo-Pacific assets to India — for instance, Indian Air Force aircraft have operated out of Réunion Island.
- France has also given India a stake in regional bodies such as the Indian Ocean Commission, and participates alongside India and Australia in a trilateral dialogue promoting a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific.
- France has backed India's stance on Jammu and Kashmir, joined India in opposing Pakistan-backed terror activity, and helped strengthen India's hand against Chinese pressure.

Defence and Security: This dimension of the partnership has expanded considerably.

- France became India's second-largest arms supplier between 2017 and 2021, with major procurements including Rafale and Mirage 2000 jets and Scorpene-class submarines.
- The two militaries regularly hold joint drills — Varuna (navy), Garuda (air force), and Shakti (army).
- Both nations conduct joint maritime patrols across the Indian Ocean, working toward shared maritime awareness in the region.
- During a recent visit, India proposed offering France its DRDO-built Pinaka rocket launcher system.

Economic cooperation:

- Bilateral trade hit a record USD 13.4 billion in FY 2022-23, with Indian exports alone surpassing USD 7 billion.

- France ranks as India's 11th-largest source of foreign investment, having pumped in a cumulative USD 10.49 billion between April 2000 and December 2022.
- Over 1,000 French companies operate in India, collectively generating roughly US$ 20 billion in turnover and employing about 300,000 people.

Energy and Climate: Cooperation here centres heavily on renewable energy and tackling climate change.

- French support was instrumental in India securing a waiver from the Nuclear Suppliers Group in 2008, reopening the door to global civil nuclear collaboration.
- France continues to advocate for India's formal NSG membership.
- The two countries jointly spearheaded the creation of the International Solar Alliance.

Science and Technology:

- The space agencies CNES (France) and ISRO (India) deepened ties through a Joint Vision for Space Cooperation signed in 2018.
- Ongoing joint efforts include the TRISHNA earth-observation mission, a shared Mars mission, and work on clearing space debris.
- Both countries are building what will be the world's largest nuclear power complex at Jaitapur, Maharashtra.
- France became the first European nation to adopt India's UPI payment system.
- At the 2026 AI Impact Summit, both sides committed to making AI resources more widely accessible and launched a joint AI-in-Healthcare research centre.

Diaspora: Roughly 109,000 people of Indian descent — mostly tracing back to the former French territories of Puducherry, Karaikal, Yanam, Mahe, and Chandernagore — currently reside in France. Beyond mainland France, substantial Indian-origin communities also live across French overseas territories: Réunion Island (280,000), Guadeloupe (60,000), Martinique (6,000), and Saint Martin (300).

Connectivity: The two governments have reaffirmed their intent to advance the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor — an idea first floated at the 2023 G20 Summit in New Delhi. The corridor envisions an Eastern leg connecting India to the Gulf and a Northern leg linking the Gulf onward to Europe, combining rail networks, ship-to-rail transfer systems, and connecting road infrastructure.

What is the significance of India-France Relations?

Securing the Indo-Pacific: Through territories like Réunion and French Polynesia, France maintains a permanent foothold in the Indo-Pacific, while India anchors the region geographically. Both countries champion a "rules-based order" and uphold freedom of navigation under UNCLOS amid intensifying maritime rivalry. India relies on French cooperation to help preserve stability in the Indo-Pacific and push back against assertive Chinese behaviour — exemplified by the 2018 India-France Joint Strategic Vision for the Indian Ocean Region.

Technology and Defence Sovereignty: France has long offered India a viable alternative to depending solely on Russian or American defence equipment. From the Mirage 2000 jets of the 1980s to today's Rafale fighters and Scorpene submarines, France delivers advanced technology free of political conditions — a major boost to India's defence modernization drive and its Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliance) push.

Strategic Autonomy: What makes the India-France relationship genuinely autonomous is that it isn't shaped by Anglo-American leanings on France's side, nor by anti-Western sentiment on India's — as demonstrated when France stood by India following the 1998 Pokhran tests.

Entry to Key Organisations: French support remains pivotal to India's aspirations of joining bodies like the UNSC and the NSG.

Global Stability: This partnership also serves a broader purpose — restraining Russian assertiveness within Europe and Chinese assertiveness across Asia — thereby contributing to overall global equilibrium and a more balanced emerging world order.

What are the challenges in India-France Relationship?

Trade Imbalances and IPR issues: The economic relationship tilts in France's favour, with French exports to India exceeding the reverse flow — and overall trade volumes still trail well behind India's engagement with the US, China, the UAE, or even Germany. France has also voiced concerns about weak enforcement of intellectual property protections for French firms operating in India.

The "Defense-Heavy" Basket: Much of the economic relationship remains concentrated in government-led defence and aerospace deals. Expansion into consumer goods, agriculture, or broader manufacturing sectors has been slow to materialize.

Stalled Projects: Several agreed-upon initiatives have failed to move forward. The Jaitapur nuclear reactor project, for instance, remains stuck amid delays, ballooning costs, and legal disputes tied to India's Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act of 2010 — legislation that holds suppliers financially accountable in the event of an accident, something French companies see as discouraging investment.

Differences in geopolitical approaches: Although both countries prize "strategic autonomy," this often translates into divergent threat priorities shaped by their respective geographies:

- **Ukraine:** France has firmly backed Ukraine against Russian aggression, whereas India has stayed neutral, regularly abstaining on related UNGA votes.
- **West Asia:** The two diverge on matters concerning Iran and the Israel-Palestine question.
- **China:** France's economic stakes in China could limit how closely it aligns with India's Indo-Pacific strategy.

Technology Transfer Friction: France keeps tight controls over high-end military technology exports. Negotiating the depth of technology-sharing for local manufacturing — such as the joint development of high-thrust jet engines with Safran — tends to be a slow and demanding process.

What should be the Way Forward?

Leveraging the India-EU FTA: Both governments should apply political weight toward pushing the broader India-EU Free Trade Agreement talks to a conclusion. Settling specific tariff disagreements over automobiles, spirits, textiles, and carbon levies would meaningfully lift bilateral trade beyond its current sluggish $15 billion mark.

Implementation of Agreement on Migration and Mobility: Both nations should collaborate to ease movement for students, graduates, and skilled professionals, while simultaneously tightening efforts against unauthorized migration.

Increased Trade and Investment: Both sides need to work toward expanding commercial ties — through joint ventures, broader trade pacts, and encouraging cross-border investment flows.

Broadening the International Solar Alliance (ISA): Rather than focusing purely on institution-building, the ISA should pivot toward directly funding and rolling out decentralized solar power grids across Africa and the wider Global South — turning the alliance into a practical vehicle for delivering climate-resilient infrastructure.

Expedition on stalled projects: A dedicated joint task force should be formed to push forward stalled initiatives like the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Plant — resolving liability concerns under the 2010 Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act through a bilateral add-on agreement or insurance arrangement, finally enabling construction to begin after years of holdup.

India and G7

RELEVANCE

- **Syllabus:**
  - **PSIR:** India and Global Power
  - **GS2**: India and Multilateral Groupings



France played host to the 52nd edition of the G7 Summit at Évian-les-Bains, drawing together world leaders to tackle pressing matters such as the war in Ukraine, diplomatic efforts in West Asia, imbalances in the global economy, and the regulation of artificial intelligence.

India does not hold membership in the G7, yet it has steadily become a recurring and influential guest at the bloc's outreach sessions. By 2025, India had taken part in thirteen such outreach sessions, and this year marked Prime Minister Narendra Modi's seventh straight appearance.

India is widely regarded as a leading emerging economy, a representative voice for the Global South, and an indispensable partner on matters spanning energy security, technological progress, climate action, and geopolitical balance. The hosting nation extends an invitation to India to broaden the summit's representativeness and tackle global concerns that demand cooperation extending past the G7's core membership.

What does G-7 mean, and what has the bloc accomplished?

The G-7 brings together the world's most economically advanced and developed nations.

Its membership consists of France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Japan, the United States, and Canada.

Beyond these seven, the European Union also takes part in every discussion as an unofficial member, represented through the European Council and European Commission presidents.

Unlike formal bodies such as the UN or NATO, the G7 lacks a fixed headquarters or any legal standing — it functions purely as a platform for dialogue rather than a structured international organization with a standing secretariat or legal foundation.

Hosting duties rotate yearly between member countries, with the presiding nation responsible for organizing the summit and shaping that year's agenda.

Decisions reached at the close of a summit carry no legal weight. Rather, they represent political commitments signaling collective intent among the world's most affluent democracies.

Origin

The G-7's roots trace back to the 1973 oil shock and the financial turmoil it triggered, which pushed leaders of six leading industrial powers (the G6) to hold a gathering in 1975.

The founding members were the US, UK, France, West Germany, Japan, and Italy, with Canada joining the following year in 1976 to form the G-7.

For a stretch of years, the group operated as the 'G8' once Russia became part of it in 1997 — but it reverted to being called the G-7 after Russia's removal in 2014 following its takeover of Crimea from Ukraine.

Why does the G7 matter?

A Bloc of Leading Economies: Together, G7 nations account for a substantial chunk of the world's economic output and commerce, granting the group considerable sway over global markets and economic decision-making. By 2026 figures, they make up over 44% of nominal global GDP and roughly 30% when measured by purchasing power parity (alongside controlling about 60% of the world's net wealth).

A Venue for Tackling Urgent Worldwide Issues: Although the G7 began with an economic focus, its scope has broadened considerably over time to cover a wide spectrum of global concerns. Because the member states share core principles — democratic governance, free-market economics, and respect for human rights — they're able to reach alignment on major issues far more swiftly than larger, more diverse bodies. Such issues include:

- **International peace and security:** Tackling geopolitical friction, armed conflicts (such as the Russia-Ukraine war), and terrorism.
- **Climate change and energy security:** Aligning on climate efforts, the shift to clean energy, and securing dependable, affordable energy access.
- **Global health:** Deliberating on pandemic response, health emergencies, and reinforcing global health infrastructure.
- **Technology and Artificial Intelligence:** Tackling the consequences of emerging tech, including questions of ethics and oversight.
- **Trade policies and supply chains:** Encouraging open and equitable trade while managing disruptions.
- **Development and humanitarian aid:** Coordinating support for developing nations and responding to humanitarian emergencies.

An Emblem of Multilateralism and Common Values: From a geopolitical lens, the G7 represents the heart of the Western-led liberal order. Its members are bound together by shared commitments to liberal democracy, pluralism, and market-based economics. The forum reinforces these ideals while championing a rules-based global system.

Building Agreement: Despite having no standing secretariat or binding legal power, the G7 operates through consensus-driven decision-making. Its summits hold importance precisely because they reflect multilateral cooperation and collective agreement among leading global powers.

Shaping Norms and Setting Agendas: The G7 acts as a global trendsetter on norms — flagging important issues, elevating

their priority, and frequently steering the broader conversation within other international platforms like the UN, IMF, World Bank, and WTO. Examples include:

- **Climate Change:** The G7 was among the first major forums to pledge phasing out fossil fuels and lay down firm decarbonization timelines.
- **Global Taxation:** Back in 2021, the G7 negotiated a landmark agreement establishing a 15% global minimum corporate tax, designed to prevent major tech firms from funneling profits into tax havens. This essentially paved the way for more than 130 nations to revise their tax frameworks and close loopholes exploited by multinationals.
- **Technology and AI:** The G7 introduced the "Hiroshima AI Process" — the first global framework aimed at overseeing generative AI.

A Platform for Crisis Response: Unlike the UN Security Council, which can be stalled by veto power, the G7 tends to act with greater agility. It's capable of organizing emergency summits within a matter of days when crises erupt. During the COVID-19 outbreak, for example, the G7 mobilized quick funding and coordinated vaccine distribution worldwide (through COVAX) well before the WHO could secure wider international agreement.

What obstacles does the G-7 currently face?

A Diminishing Economic Share: Back in the late 1980s, the G7 commanded nearly 70% of worldwide GDP. That figure has since fallen to roughly 43-44%. The emergence of the BRICS coalition (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, plus newer entrants) has significantly redistributed economic clout away from Western nations.

Leaving Out Major Powers: The fact that China — the world's second-largest economy — sits outside the group is widely seen as an anomaly that undermines the bloc's relevance and effectiveness. Numerous analysts have long contended that the G7 ought to expand to include nations like China, India, and Brazil if it hopes to stay meaningful.

A Gap Between Promises and Action: Although the G7 regularly issues bold pledges and joint statements on issues ranging from climate change to development aid and pandemic readiness, critics frequently point out gaps in actually delivering on these commitments, along with weak accountability mechanisms. Progress on retiring fossil fuels or fulfilling climate finance pledges, for instance, has been notably sluggish.

Legacy of Pollution: The G7 bloc is responsible for 59% of cumulative historical CO2 emissions and has committed to phasing out fossil fuels — yet tangible progress remains largely absent, with the group still emitting roughly twice as much CO2 as the entire African continent.

Widening Transatlantic Divides: Ties between the US and its longstanding European allies have grown tense, marked by disputes over trade, tariffs, and differing strategies for handling global conflicts. Washington's tilt toward unilateralism and "America First" thinking has chipped away at mutual trust.

Rising Populism and Nationalism: Nationalist and populist movements gaining ground within G7 member states are testing the bloc's dedication to multilateralism and its foundational commitment to globalism and liberal democratic norms. The 2025 G7 Summit in Canada, for instance, exposed difficulties in agreeing on a joint statement regarding the Russia-Ukraine war owing to conflicting viewpoints, compounded by the premature exit of a key leader — the US President — which further disrupted meaningful dialogue.

Conflicting National Priorities: Even though member nations are united by shared democratic principles, their individual national interests frequently diverge — particularly around trade, environmental policy, and approaches to geopolitical flashpoints such as relations with China or Russia.

The Ascendance of the G20 and Other Platforms: The G20, encompassing major emerging economies, has largely overtaken the G7 as the foremost venue for steering global economic policy. Its wider representation makes it better equipped to grapple with today's deeply interconnected economic challenges. The growing number of multilateral and "minilateral" groupings means the G7 no longer serves as the exclusive — or even the leading — space for addressing every global issue.

The China Conundrum: Managing China's rise stands out as perhaps the G7's thorniest strategic dilemma:

- Member nations remain economically intertwined with China even as they regard it as a strategic competitor.
- Crafting a cohesive stance on trade, technology, Taiwan, and human rights proves exceedingly difficult.
- China actively champions rival institutions (BRICS, SCO, BRI) that challenge the G7-dominated global framework.

Geopolitical Hurdles:

- **Russia's War in Ukraine:** Though the G7 has displayed notable solidarity in confronting Russian aggression, maintaining that unity amid economic strain, energy worries, and disagreements over long-term approaches remains an ongoing test.
- **Turmoil in West Asia:** The G7 has drawn sharp criticism from global human rights bodies and developing nations over its handling of conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon, as well

as the worsening Iran situation. Even when diplomatic breakthroughs occur — such as recent tentative negotiations between the U.S. and Iran over the conflict and the blockade at the Strait of Hormuz — the G7 finds it difficult to exert real influence on ground realities.

Inability to Forge Agreement: The group has consistently found it hard to release unified joint statements, a clear indicator of underlying discord. This shortfall was evident at the 2025 summit, and similarly modest expectations surrounded the 2026 gathering.

Why does India's relationship with G-7 nations matter?

India's Economic Weight: Per IMF assessments, India ranks among the fastest-expanding economies globally, with an economy now larger than three G-7 members — France, Italy, and Canada. Its vast pool of young, skilled workers, combined with strong market potential, competitive manufacturing costs, and a business-friendly climate, positions India as an appealing destination for investment. This places India at the center of conversations on global economic resilience and supply chain protection.

India's Rising Strategic Weight in the Indo-Pacific: India has positioned itself as a key strategic ally for the Western G-7 bloc, aiding efforts to limit China's expanding footprint, especially throughout the Indian Ocean region.

Navigating Global Flashpoints: Be it the Russia-Ukraine standoff, tensions in West Asia, or the broader fight against terrorism, India's calibrated diplomatic style and its standing among diverse global players make it a valuable conversational partner and a potential mediator toward resolving conflicts and restoring stability.

Reducing Dependence on Global Supply Chains (The "China+1" Approach): A top priority for the G7 involves cutting down its heavy economic dependence on China, particularly in areas like semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, and critical minerals. The G7 regards India as the sole democratic nation possessing the scale, manpower, and tech infrastructure needed to serve as a credible alternative global manufacturing base.

Cooperation on Advanced Tech and AI: Global policymaking is racing to keep pace with developments in artificial intelligence, deep technology, and cybersecurity. Given India's enormous pool of software talent and digital infrastructure (such as its UPI payments network), the G7 cannot establish worldwide tech benchmarks or AI safety standards without India's buy-in.

Giving Voice to Developing Nations (Representing the Global South): The G7 has long faced criticism for functioning as an exclusive club of wealthy nations. India's continued presence helps narrow this gap, channeling the concerns, struggles, and priorities of the Global South into the conversation — an especially crucial role on matters like climate financing, development assistance, food security, and tech transfer.

What are the key obstacles to deepening India's ties with the G7 bloc?

Lack of Permanent Membership Status for India: The G7's membership framework remains outdated, failing to accommodate rising economies such as India. India consistently occupies the role of "invitee" or "outreach partner" rather than a full member. This means India lacks a permanent place at the core decision-making table and does not take part in every G7 ministerial gathering or year-round preparatory dialogue. Its influence stays confined to whichever specific outreach sessions it's asked to join.

Balancing Multiple Forums: India holds significant standing across the G7, BRICS, the Quad, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) simultaneously. While this versatility gives India leverage, it also makes consistent alignment with Western priorities improbable. India's involvement in BRICS, along with its substantial ties to Russia, creates points of tension with G7 objectives.

Differing Views on Climate Responsibility: While India remains dedicated to climate action, it routinely advocates for the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities — stressing that developed nations bear historical responsibility for emissions and should therefore shoulder greater obligations around financing and technology transfer. G7 nations, despite their climate commitments, often contend with domestic political resistance to fulfilling these obligations.

Energy Transition Versus Energy Security: India's energy requirements are enormous, and despite rapidly scaling up renewable capacity, it remains heavily dependent on fossil fuels. G7 nations frequently push for an accelerated transition, whereas India insists on a just transition that safeguards both energy security and affordability for its massive population.

Ties with Russia: India has chosen a neutral position on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, favoring dialogue and diplomatic resolution while sustaining its economic relationship with Russia. This stance frequently diverges from the G7's unified approach of condemnation and sanctions. Although the G7 may value India's role as a bridge-builder, this also exposes India to pressure to fall more closely in line with G7 positions.

The West Asia Crisis: While the G7 tends to lean heavily on particular Western frameworks when responding to security disruptions in West Asia, India must carefully balance its

enormous diaspora and trade interests spanning both Israel and the Arab world.

Persistent Trade Friction Points: Longstanding disagreements over India's steep tariffs on American agricultural and industrial products, combined with Western calls for broader access to India's digital markets and tighter intellectual property safeguards, have repeatedly delayed major trade agreements.

Sovereignty Over Data and Technology: The G7 is working to set rigid global benchmarks for artificial intelligence and cross-border data movement. India often pushes back against such efforts whenever they threaten to compromise its data sovereignty or impede the growth of its domestic tech sector.

Bilateral Friction with Individual G7 Members: Last year's summit underscored specific bilateral strains. The India-Canada relationship, for example, has soured over matters such as the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar and concerns about pro-Khalistan activity within Canada. Although the G7 summit provides a space for dialogue, such bilateral disputes risk overshadowing broader cooperative efforts.

Inconsistent Standards Among Developed Nations on Terrorism: India's PM pointed to the double standards practiced by developed nations regarding terrorism — readily imposing sanctions on certain countries based on selective preference, while simultaneously rewarding nations like Pakistan that actively sponsor cross-border terrorism.

What path should be taken going forward?

Strengthening Economic Bonds: Encouraging greater investment across renewable energy, technology, and infrastructure sectors, alongside pushing trade liberalization measures, can help reinforce the economic relationship between India and the G-7 bloc.

Building Strategic Partnerships: Reinforcing defense ties through joint military exercises, intelligence cooperation, and technology sharing can help address shared security concerns.

Engaging Through Multilateral Channels: India's continued, active role in G7 forums can help shape more inclusive frameworks of global governance. Collaborative work on climate initiatives, with emphasis on sustainable development and green technology, can establish benchmarks for environmental policy worldwide.

Driving Technological Progress: Joint efforts in digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence can fuel the next phase of technological breakthroughs. Collaborative research in areas such as biotechnology, space exploration, and renewable energy can further spur innovation.

Advocating for Fairer Frameworks: India has already made clear its intent to resist frameworks that put developing nations at a disadvantage. For example, it has criticized the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) as a disguised trade barrier, and continues pressing for climate finance to be provided as grants rather than loans.

Maintaining Multiple Engagements Simultaneously: India's involvement in both the G7 and BRICS isn't contradictory — it's a deliberate strategy. Its capacity to engage across multiple centers of power allows it to shape G7 debates before they solidify into policies that affect the broader world.

Long-Term Push for G7 Expansion: Though unlikely to materialize soon, India should continue quietly advocating for a more representative G7 structure (or a "G7+" model) that formally brings in major emerging economies.

Key Takeaways from the 2026 G-7 Summit:

Backing the Iran-US Agreement: The summit's most notable outcome was the G7's unified endorsement of the preliminary U.S.-Iran agreement aimed at ending hostilities. The G7 leaders' joint declaration reaffirmed their rejection of a nuclear-armed Iran and their backing for implementing the deal. They threw their support behind a French and British-led maritime effort to safeguard shipping lanes and clear mines from the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz. Leaders stressed the importance of unimpeded, toll-free passage through the strait and pledged to diversify global energy routes to lessen reliance on this critical chokepoint.

Backing for Ukraine: Despite internal disagreements, the G7 reiterated its "unwavering support for Ukraine." Leaders agreed to ramp up military assistance, including providing additional air defense interceptors and long-range weaponry.

Worldwide AI Governance: Leaders reached agreement on building technical and ethical guidelines to enable the safe and swift rollout of artificial intelligence, with priority given to ensuring digital tools remain secure and globally accessible.

Economic Stability Measures: Member nations committed jointly to narrowing macroeconomic imbalances, curbing unfair competitive practices, and tackling industrial overcapacity in order to fortify and protect fragile international supply chains.

Action on Environment and Biodiversity: The summit included a five-year progress assessment of the G7 2030 Nature Compact, an expansion of the Nature and People Finance Alliance, and the formal designation of land degradation, drought, and desertification as systemic security threats.

Reform of Development Financing: The G7 endorsed new strategies aimed at mobilizing private capital, easing debt burdens, and ensuring development financing is more responsive and catalytic toward the priorities of partner nations.

Reinforced Global Partnerships: The summit underscored the importance of rebuilding international solidarity and dialogue among major powers to confront ongoing geopolitical crises and conflicts.

Global Health Priorities – Ebola and Cancer: Leaders issued a coordinated response plan addressing the Bundibugyo Ebola outbreak, alongside a declaration committing to the fight against cancer — reflecting a wider dedication to global health sovereignty and pandemic readiness.

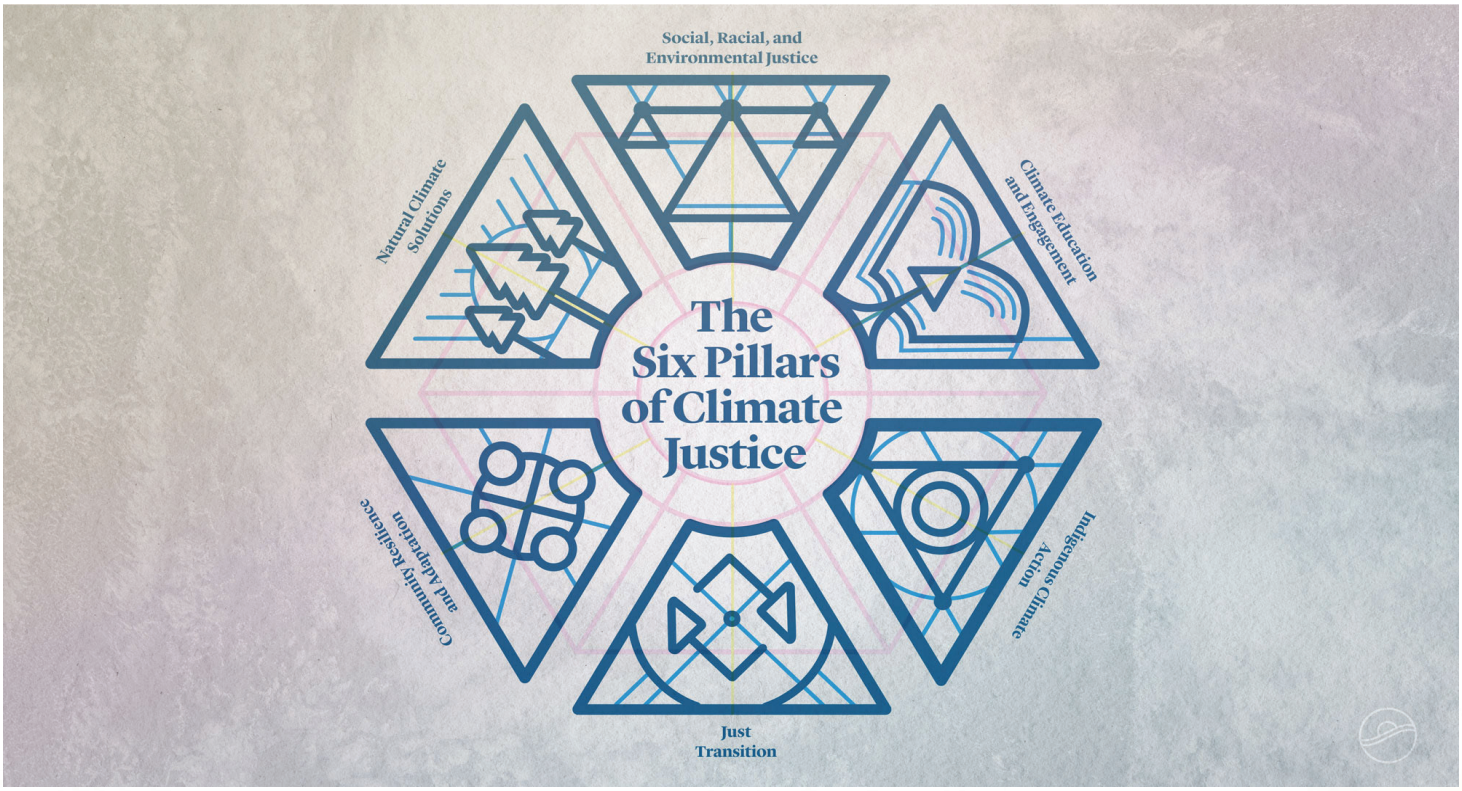
Conclusion

India's evolving rapport with the G7 reflects its expanding significance within global economic and strategic affairs. The complementary strengths shared between India and G7 nations, fueled by common values and mutual interests, open up considerable scope for collaborative progress. As India's global standing continues to rise, its partnership with the G7 will remain instrumental in shaping a more balanced and inclusive world order.

Climate Justice

RELEVANCE

- **Syllabus:**
  - **PSIR:** Contemporary global concerns
  - **GS2:** International Relations



Introduction

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has officially approved a Resolution on Climate Justice, marking a defining moment for global environmental accountability. This legislative measure serves as the political and structural vehicle to implement the historic July 2025 Advisory Opinion delivered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Consequently, this development transforms the global discourse by reclassifying climate action from an optional political choice into a binding legal obligation under international frameworks.

The passage of the resolution saw widespread international backing, securing 141 affirmative votes against 8 negative votes. Meanwhile, a group of 28 nations—which featured India—chose to abstain from the voting process.

What is the Meaning of Climate Justice?

- **Ethical and Political Framework**: Climate justice functions as a conceptual approach that repositions global warming as a fundamental ethical and political challenge, moving

beyond looking at it as an exclusively environmental or physical phenomenon.

- **Disproportionate Impacts**: This principle acknowledges that the fallout of climate instability yields highly unequal social, economic, and public health consequences for disadvantaged populations. The burdens generated by a changing climate are inequitably distributed between wealthy and impoverished nations, varying demographics, and across different age groups.
- **Vulnerability of Marginalized Groups**: From intensifying meteorological anomalies to rising sea levels, environmental disruptions routinely inflict the most severe damage on historically underserved or marginalized populations.
- **Holistic Correction of Injustices**: Advancing climate justice demands a comprehensive resolution of social, gender-based, financial, cross-generational, and ecological imbalances. Because these distinct layers of inequality intersect, they must be addressed collectively. For instance, certain environmental initiatives inadvertently trigger local hardships when indigenous populations face displacement to make way for conservation zones or clean energy infrastructure.
- **Strategic Goals**: Proponents of this movement work toward correcting these systemic imbalances by embedding equity directly into long-term environmental mitigation and adaptation policies.

What are the Various Dimensions of Climate Justice?

The core tenets of this framework are categorized under four primary expressions of equity:

Procedural Climate Justice

- This dimension focuses on establishing fair, accountable, and transparent protocols for making decisions regarding climate impacts and response strategies.
- It emphasizes the necessity of fair administrative procedures to guarantee that public assets and protections are distributed in an open and responsible manner.
- This institutional fairness is maintained through due process, robust civic engagement, and representative equity.
- Key components include securing unrestricted access to information, guaranteeing meaningful public involvement in governance, and removing institutional bias or favoritism among policy developers.
- It relies on core principles such as operational transparency, fair societal representation, administrative neutrality, and analytical objectivity.

Distributive Climate Justice

- This element is concerned with the equitable allocation of both the financial burdens and environmental benefits resulting from climate shifts.
- It evaluates distribution through three primary operational steps:

1. **Identifying the specific resources in question**: This involves tracking the allocation of baseline essentials like food supplies, apparel, potable water, electrical energy, financial capital, or societal respect.
2. **Pinpointing the receiving parties**: This entails identifying the targeted groups, ranging from specific community stakeholders and distinct generational brackets to the entirety of global mankind.
3. **Determining the optimal allocation model**: This requires selecting the most appropriate criteria for distribution, which can be based on social standing, immediate human need, earned merit, legally protected rights, or historical identity factors.

Recognitional Climate Justice

- This facet prioritizes the explicit acknowledgement of human differences and unique local contexts.
- It involves proactively identifying highly exposed demographic groups whose vulnerabilities risk being intensified by systemic economic changes, such as a shift toward a low-carbon footprint.
- It highlights the importance of appreciating distinct societal realities while simultaneously defending equal human rights for all populations, particularly given the highly asymmetric capacity of different groups to protect their legal interests.

Intergenerational Climate Justice

- This concept was formally integrated into the global discourse via the landmark 1987 Brundtland Report, titled *'Our Common Future'*.
- It frames sustainable development around the core moral duty of current generations to fulfill their immediate socio-economic requirements without degrading the environment or reducing the capacity of future generations to satisfy their own needs.

What are the Main Pillars of Climate Justice?

According to framework criteria established by the Center for Climate Justice at the University of California, the pursuit of environmental equity rests upon six foundational pillars:

Just Transition

- This principle advocates for a managed shift away from extraction-based, fossil-fuel-reliant economies toward equitable, self-sustaining, and renewable energy production models.

Social, Racial, and Environmental Justice

- This pillar confronts the reality that low-income and socio-economically vulnerable populations across the globe bear the most destructive consequences of climate instability, despite having contributed the least to global emissions.

Indigenous Climate Action

- Native and tribal populations worldwide face some of the most immediate and intense hazards from climate shifts due to their direct economic and cultural reliance on surrounding natural habitats.
- Because indigenous communities are actively spearheading environmental protection and resilience efforts globally, formal climate strategies must value and incorporate their traditional ecological knowledge and leadership roles.

Community Resilience and Adaptation

- Efforts to build local durability must be designed through a lens of social equity and systemic fairness.
- This paradigm encourages democratic resource models, including local food sovereignty, collective forest management networks, and decentralized energy democracy.
- It focuses on empowering local neighborhoods to engineer their own custom strategies, ensuring they directly enjoy the rewards of localized environmental planning.

Natural Climate Solutions

- Looked at from an equity standpoint, nature-based interventions use a comprehensive systems methodology.
- This approach champions practical techniques such as regenerative agriculture, integrated agroforestry, permaculture design, urban community gardens, and large-scale forest ecosystem restoration.

Climate Education and Engagement

- Broadening public environmental literacy and civic participation is essential to dismantling the structural causes of global warming.
- Cultivating a society that understands the social dynamics of environmental change offers the most viable path toward resolve the global climate crisis through an equity-first approach

What are the Challenges in Ensuring Climate Justice?

Gradual Dilution of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR)

- Article 3 of the UNFCCC explicitly acknowledges the CBDR framework, which accounts for the varying socioeconomic realities and historical emissions records of developed and developing nations.
- Despite this framework, developed nations continuously press developing countries to shoulder heavier mitigation targets.
- A prominent example occurred during the Glasgow summit in 2021, where Western countries pushed for an outright “phase-out” of coal before ultimately compromising on a “phase-down” agreement.
- Because coal remains a cheap and highly accessible source of power, forcing its complete elimination places an immense financial burden on developing economies.

Economic and Development Trade-Offs

- Economically disadvantaged regions must frequently prioritize immediate public needs, such as poverty eradication and industrial expansion, over cutting their carbon footprint.
- Mandating that these nations implement expensive clean technologies without providing external financial backing risks deepening global economic disparity.

Vulnerability and Adaptation Gaps

- The populations most vulnerable to climate change—such as low-lying island nations, indigenous groups, and societies dependent on agriculture—typically lack the capital, infrastructure, and political leverage needed to build resilience.
- Consequently, global adaptation financing consistently falls critically short of actual requirements.

Avoidance of Binding Targets

- The Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) outlined within the Paris Agreement are entirely voluntary, meaning they lack legal enforceability and binding power.
- While the older Kyoto Protocol did impose legally binding emission limits on developed countries, it has since become non-functional.
- By steering clear of legally binding commitments, wealthy countries have effectively backed away from the accountability tied to their historical contribution to global emissions.

Shortfall in Climate Finance

- Developed economies have consistently failed to deliver on their official pledge to provide US$ 100 billion annually in climate finance to developing countries.
- Furthermore, environmental specialists point out that this US$ 100 billion target is entirely inadequate.
- The IPCC estimates that a realistic budget of US$ 1.6 to 3.8 trillion is needed every single year to prevent global warming from crossing the critical 1.5°C threshold.

Definitional and Measurement Challenges

- The international community lacks a unified consensus on what the implementation of climate justice truly looks like, debating whether it demands distributive equity, fair procedural inclusion, the formal recognition of past harm, or restorative penalties.
- Additionally, tracking specific weather disasters or physical losses directly back to human-induced climate change remains scientifically complex, which complicates legal and financial claims for compensation.

Why Did India Abstain from Voting on the Resolution?

Undermining the UNFCCC Process

- New Delhi's primary objection was that the UNGA resolution bypasses and undercuts the long-established systems of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.
- The Paris Agreement relies on a "bottom-up" organizational model where sovereign nations independently determine their own climate goals based on domestic capacity via NDCs.
- India argued that this UNGA initiative attempts to enforce an adversarial, "top-down" model by mandating external benchmarks and rigid emission reduction pathways.

Quasi-Binding Status

- Advisory Opinions delivered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) are, by definition, non-binding in nature.
- However, India raised serious concerns over the fact that the text of the UNGA resolution explicitly seeks to elevate the ICJ's judicial opinion into a "binding or quasi-binding status".

Omission of 'Climate Finance'

- India has consistently stated that developing countries cannot realistically move away from fossil fuels without massive financial support, seamless technology transfers, and institutional capacity-building from the developed world.
- Despite this reality, the resolution outlines strict emission-cutting mandates while completely ignoring the necessary implementation tools—namely funding and technology—required to make those cuts possible.

Violation of CBDR Principle

- The bedrock of India's environmental diplomacy is the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR).
- India chose to abstain because the resolution failed to clearly reinforce that wealthy, industrialized nations must bear the primary, heaviest burden of the global mitigation workload.

Note: India's decision to abstain should not be interpreted as a dismissal of the severe dangers facing small island nations. Indigenous Indian regional frameworks, such as the SAGAR initiative, alongside global platforms like the International Solar Alliance, demonstrate that New Delhi remains highly responsive to the existential anxieties of territories threatened by rising ocean levels.

How Can Climate Justice Be Ensured?

Operationalizing International Law & Accountability

- Because the UNGA Resolution and the accompanying ICJ Advisory Opinion have clearly framed climate inaction as a direct breach of international law, global focus must now pivot toward strict enforcement through the following mechanisms:
  - **Climate Litigation**: Exposed countries and civil society groups must aggressively use domestic and global judicial systems to take major corporate polluters and non-compliant governments to court, entrenching legal norms where environmental destruction demands mandatory financial reparations.
  - **Codifying Ecocide**: Formally designating "ecocide"—defined as the widespread, systemic destruction of ecosystems—as an international crime under the Rome Statute would establish a powerful framework to hold state leaders and corporate executives personally and criminally accountable for extreme environmental neglect.

Fulfilling and Expanding Climate Finance

- Industrialized nations must move beyond their historical $100 billion annual promise and scale up their contributions to match the trillion-dollar realities of the Global South.
- Crucially, these funds must be delivered in the form of direct grants rather than loans, ensuring that vulnerable countries are not pushed into deeper cycles of national debt.

Implementing a Globally "Just Transition"

- The shift away from fossil fuels must be managed carefully to safeguard livelihoods, protect local communities, and avoid regional economic collapse.
- Transition blueprints must be tailored to local realities; developed countries must phase out fossil fuels rapidly, while developing nations like India or various African states must be granted the necessary "policy space" and financial support to transition at a sustainable, gradual pace.

Technology Transfer

- The distribution of clean energy technology to developing countries must be fast-tracked, which requires reducing or completely waiving traditional intellectual property barriers.
- For example, drawing inspiration from the patent waivers used for life-saving medicines, patents on critical green technologies—such as advanced solar cells, high-capacity battery storage, and green hydrogen systems—should be waived or heavily subsidized for developing economies.

South-South Cooperation

- Nations should expand collaborative initiatives where emerging economies share localized technical expertise and cost-effective, scalable solutions directly with smaller, climate-vulnerable neighbors, mirroring the model used in India's Infrastructure for Resilient Island States initiative.

Conclusion

Securing true climate justice is anchored on a straightforward, foundational idea: Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR). It is realized only when wealthy, developed societies drastically cut their own domestic emissions while simultaneously financing the adaptation, physical survival, and clean energy transitions of the rest of the world.

Indian Government and Politics (IGP)

Special Intensive Revision

RELEVANCE

- **Syllabus:**
  - **PSIR**: Election commission, Election system of India



Introduction

An Electoral Roll Correction Initiative known as Special Intensive Revision (SIR) is a target-oriented, strictly scheduled operation run by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to clean up and validate voter registries.

Voter list updates are classified into three distinct categories:

- **Summary Revision**: A yearly maintenance routine of the electoral registry that avoids any house-to-house physical checking.
- **Intensive Revision**: A comprehensive reconstruction of the voter registry featuring direct door-to-door validation.
- **Special Revision**: Executed under unique situations, including overlooked territories, widespread inaccuracies, or pressing judicial and governance demands.

In contrast to ordinary annual summary modifications that only address minor corrections, a thorough intensive overhaul demands a complete, brand-new generation of voter registries through physical house visits by Booth Level Officers (BLOs) to guarantee that:

- Every qualified citizen finds a place in the voter roll.
- Non-eligible or repeated names are systematically purged.
- The final electoral register remains precise, all-inclusive, and completely transparent.

For the ongoing iteration of SIR, the ECI has implemented a combined strategy—merging the traits of an intensive overhaul with a standard summary update. Additionally, it has pioneered an unpracticed phase: mandating the presentation of official credentials right at the door-step data collection stage. The inclusion of the word 'special' highlights the adaptability of this specific operational model.

Comprehensive overhauls of this scale have been executed by the commission on 13 previous occasions, specifically during 1952-56, 1957, 1961, 1965, 1966, 1983-84, 1987-89, 1992, 1993, 1995, 2002, 2003, and 2004.

What are the Key Features of SIR?

- **Constitutional Mandate**: This administrative operation derives its legitimacy from Article 324 of the Indian Constitution, which vests absolute oversight and command of electoral processes in the ECI.
- **Statutory Power**: The process is officially launched under Section 21(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, which gives the commission the independent authority to completely rebuild and polish voter registries when standard updates prove insufficient.
- **Hybrid Approach**: The SIR blends operational elements from both intensive and summary methods. It features door-to-door physical verification (a trait of intensive revision) while simultaneously utilizing current rolls to hand out voter registration documents (a trait of summary revision).
- **Documentary Proof**: In a major policy shift, even citizens already on the roll (registered after 2003) are now required to show official proof of their birth date or place during the physical enumeration.
- **Approved Documentation**: Voters must present verified certificates establishing residency and personal identity. In accordance with a landmark Supreme Court directive, standard official credentials such as identity cards, Voter IDs, and ration documents are accepted smoothly to ensure no legitimate citizen faces administrative rejection.
- **House-to-House Enumeration**: Local Booth Level Officers (BLOs) personally visit every residence within their designated polling precinct to hand out pre-populated "Enumeration Forms" to existing voters and newly eligible residents.
- **Duplicate & Invalid Entry Removal**: The SIR framework methodically weeds out records of individuals who have passed away, shifted elsewhere, or appear multiple times—ensuring every entry on the register is cross-checked, authentic, and currently valid.
- **Special Focus on Vulnerable Groups**: Particular care is directed toward migrating populations, young citizens, and previously marginalized communities to ensure that no qualified voter is locked out.
- **Draft Publication & Grievance Redressal**: An initial provisional roll is made public, formal challenges are received, and an official dispute resolution process is carried out before locking in the final registries.
- **Final Roll & Freeze**: The definitive voter registry is established and locked down prior to polling day, meaning any subsequent inclusions or exclusions are restricted to extraordinary scenarios.

Why do we need the revision of electoral rolls?

- **Foundation of Free and Fair Elections**: Highlighting this necessity, the Supreme Court stated that unbiased elections are not just dependent on the machinery of voting day, but rely deeply on the authenticity, correctness, and trustworthiness of the voter rolls, which serve as the bedrock of democratic governance.
- **Ensuring Electoral Roll Purity and Accuracy**: The SIR stands as the most dependable strategy to track down and eliminate records of deceased citizens, repetitive sign-ups, and individuals who have relocated permanently. This

shuts down proxy voting and guarantees that only qualified residents participate. It also offers a window to rectify typographical blunders in names, physical locations, age, and other parameters, yielding a vastly superior voter list.

- **Preventing Inclusion of Ineligible/Foreign Persons**: The illegal registry of unauthorized foreign nationals has been highlighted as a primary driver demanding an intense overhaul of voter records, preserving the franchise exclusively for rightful Indian citizens.
- **Identifies Unenrolled Voters**: Operating on a house-by-house model, BLOs can pinpoint newly eligible adults who have hit 18 or individuals overlooked in prior updates, helping them secure registration. This is vital for widening democratic participation and upholding universal adult franchise.
- **Addresses Demographic Shifts**: Keeping pace with rapid urban migration and internal displacement within India, the SIR adjusts voter lists to mirror changing local populations, making sure migrant citizens are accurately registered at their current addresses.
- **Strengthening Public Trust in Elections**: A transparent and stringently evaluated voter database instills faith among citizens, political factions, and the general public regarding the equity of the polling system. A clean voter list directly bolsters the public acceptability of poll outcomes.
- **Addressing Concerns from Political Parties**: Political organizations frequently raise grievances regarding voter list manipulation, pointing to the inclusion of unqualified individuals or the leaving out of real voters. The SIR provides the ECI with its most definitive instrument to answer these worries and maintain an even playing field.
- **Legal and Constitutional Mandate**: The constitutional and statutory power of the commission to manage these overhauls is defined by the core legal frameworks of the nation. Undertaking an SIR directly satisfies the ECI's core constitutional obligation to deliver clean and unbiased democratic contests.

What are the Challenges and Controversies Associated with SIR?

Risk of Disenfranchisement of Genuine Voters

- This stands out as the primary challenge and a central point of contention, as the initiative frequently mandates the presentation of specific, legacy-era paperwork to authenticate citizenship, age, and permanent residency (such as pre-1987 records or parental birth certificates).
- **Marginalized Communities**: Socio-economically disadvantaged groups like Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and various minority populations (including Muslims) are disproportionately affected because they frequently lack historical land documentation or official birth registrations.
- **Migrant Workers**: Laborers who relocate frequently for employment often lack permanent proof of address and are highly likely to be away from their home villages when physical verification drives take place.
- **Poor and Illiterate Individuals**: Citizens lacking literacy or financial resources face immense hurdles in navigating the bureaucratic framework or paying for the retrieval of intricate legal papers.
- **Women**: Married women who have relocated away from their places of birth experience unique difficulties when asked to produce ancestral or parental documentation from their original home regions.

Burden of Proof Shifted to Citizen

- The operational dynamic flips traditional expectations; instead of the state remaining primarily accountable for registering every qualified voter, the responsibility drops heavily onto individual citizens to validate their voting rights, presenting an intimidating barrier for many.

Scale of Deletions

- The massive volume of names purged from the registries has ignited fierce political disagreements, with early rollouts resulting in millions of individuals being struck off the voter rolls in states such as Bihar and West Bengal.

Timing of the Exercise

- Political opposition factions have criticized the scheduling of the SIR, arguing that launching such an extensive operation right before major elections triggers administrative chaos and potentially blocks specific voter demographics from participating.

Logistical and Administrative Burden

- **Massive Scale**: Managing house-by-house tracking across India's massive voting population is an unprecedented administrative operation, demanding an immense workforce of Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and oversight coordinators.
- **Short Timelines**: The operations are tightly scheduled within rigid, brief windows (such as a 30-day window for data collection), which often proves unrealistic in densely inhabited urban zones, remote territories, or during severe weather setbacks like the monsoon period in Bihar. This

rapid pace increases the likelihood of clerical mistakes and missing data.

Scope of ECI's Powers

- A major institutional debate focuses on whether the Election Commission, under the goal of refining voter data, is exceeding its official role by running what resembles a citizenship verification process—a domain legally reserved for the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) via the Citizenship Act.

Public Perception and Trust Deficit

- Whenever the tracking process is perceived as structurally biased or politically driven, it threatens to damage public confidence in the neutral standing of the ECI and the basic integrity of the polling system.

The "NRC through the Backdoor" Fear

- This issue has turned into a major political flashpoint, particularly within West Bengal and Assam, due to concerns that the SIR serves as a covert stepping stone toward a National Register of Citizens (NRC). Observers note that this intense bureaucratic scrutiny triggered widespread anxiety among internal migrant populations and vulnerable social groups.

Uneven Implementation Across Constituencies

- Analysts point out that the execution of the process lacks uniformity, with administrative flaws and procedural methods differing sharply from one district to another, raising questions about systemic equity and operational standardization.

What Are the Issues Raised by ADR and Other Petitioners in Their Challenge to the SIR Before the Supreme Court?

Lack of Statutory Backing

- The core legal challenge argued that the SIR unconstitutionally transformed the Election Commission into an agency that determines citizenship status without clear legislative authorization. The petitioners maintained that the ECI lacks the legal power to execute sweeping citizenship checks under the guise of sanitizing voter databases.

Violation of Constitutional Rights

- The legal challenge asserted that the implementation of the SIR directly infringed upon basic constitutional guarantees, specifically:
  - **Articles 14, 19, and 21**: The petitioners argued the initiative was inconsistent, opaque, and violated the right to life and personal liberty by ignoring the established principles of natural justice.
  - **Articles 325 and 326**: They contended that the aggressive nature of the revision posed a direct threat to the principle of universal adult suffrage.

Ultra Vires of Section 21(3) RP Act

- While the ECI justified its directives using Section 21(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950—which governs "special revisions"—the petitioners argued this clause was legally intended only for isolated, localized corrections under unique circumstances. Applying it to enforce a massive, top-to-bottom reconstruction of registries across entire states or the nation was flagged as an overreach of the law's original intent.

Reversal of the Burden of Proof

- The litigants argued that the SIR overturned a landmark legal precedent set by the Supreme Court in *Lal Babu Hussein vs. Electoral Registration Officer (1995)*, which established that an individual already registered on a voter list is presumed to be a citizen unless the state produces evidence to prove otherwise. The SIR reversed this by forcing individuals missing from the 2002/2003 "legacy records" to independently prove their citizenship through specific paperwork.

Discriminatory Documentation Barriers

- The rigid demands for specific records disproportionately burdened the poor, illiterate populations, and domestic migrant laborers, as these specific demographics are statistically far less likely to have preserved immaculate ancestral lineage documents.

What Did the Supreme Court Rule?

ECI Has the Power to Conduct SIR

- The judiciary determined that the Election Commission acted fully within its constitutional boundaries, ruling that the initiative is entirely lawful under Article 324 of the Constitution (granting the ECI ultimate authority over polls) when paired with Section 21(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950.

Scale of SIR

- The Supreme Court dismissed the argument that "special revisions" must remain restricted to separate, isolated districts, clarifying that the ECI is legally permitted to execute

these operations on a state or national scale if widespread demographic shifts or data duplications require a broad fix.

Citizenship Claim

- The Bench ruled that under Section 16 of the RP Act, the ECI is unquestionably authorized to review citizenship status for the sole, specific purpose of managing inclusions or exclusions on a voter register.
- However, the judges clarified that removing a person's name from the registry on citizenship grounds does not constitute a permanent, legal declaration of non-citizenship by the ECI. It simply indicates that the commission was "unable to be satisfied" regarding their eligibility for voting purposes, leaving final legal status decisions to the proper tribunals under the Citizenship Act.

Document Requirements & Inclusions

- The Court rejected the claims that the ECI's strict document checklist was arbitrary, deciding that any massive data verification campaign requires a clear, standardized operational framework. Nonetheless, the judiciary emphasized that the process became constitutionally sound due to legal cushions integrated during the court proceedings—most notably, accepting the Aadhaar card as an approved document to minimize the bureaucratic burden on everyday citizens.

Grievance Redressal & Safeguards

- The ruling confirmed that administrative actions taken under the SIR remain completely open to judicial review. Furthermore, it instructed the ECI to forward the cases of all individuals removed over citizenship queries to the proper legal authorities within a four-week window, mandating the swift restoration of their voting rights if their citizenship is validated.

Procedural Integrity

- The Supreme Court concluded that the methods used to clean up the electoral rolls carry a logical connection to the goals of the initiative, are not disproportionately harsh, and are backed by sufficient administrative cushions to block any unfair or groundless exclusion.

India-France Relations

RELEVANCE

- **Syllabus:**
  - **PSIR:** India and the Global Powers
  - **GS2**: India and its bilateral relations



Introduction

PM Narendra Modi is scheduled to travel to France for the G7 Summit, marking his seventh official trip there since taking office in 2014. The India-France bond has long rested on deep mutual confidence, spanning defence, space exploration, atomic energy, naval security, and environmental cooperation. This relationship plays a key role in helping India pursue strategic independence and its broader global ambitions. That said, friction points remain — an uneven trade balance, hurdles around sharing technology, restricted market entry, and the need to navigate a shifting geopolitical landscape.

What is the history of India-France Relations?

France and India have historically enjoyed a warm and cooperative bond.

Pre-Independence Era

The French East India Company (1664): Founded under the reign of Louis XIV, this company set up major trading hubs across India — chiefly in Pondicherry (Puducherry), Chandernagore, Karikal, Mahé, and Yanam.

The Anglo-French Wars: The 18th century witnessed the Carnatic Wars, where French and British forces clashed for control over the subcontinent. Talented French administrators such as Joseph François Dupleix forged partnerships with regional Indian kings to push back against British advances.

Post Independence Era

Establishing Ties (1947): Diplomatic relations between the two nations began right after India won its freedom.

The Treaty of Cession (1956/1962): France consented to hand over its Indian holdings to the Indian Republic without conflict. The actual handover took place in 1954, with the official Treaty of Cession following in 1956 and getting ratified by France's Parliament in 1962. Pondicherry and the remaining French enclaves merged into India peacefully, with no bloodshed.

French-made aircraft and helicopters — including the Ouragan, Mystere, Alize, Alouette, and Jaguar — have served in India's air force since the 1960s.

When the United States withdrew nuclear fuel supplies to the Tarapur facility in 1984 due to internal restrictions, France stepped forward to fill that gap.

India's space ambitions also benefited from French backing from the early days, with assistance in building the Sriharikota launch facility and providing Centaure and Viking rocket designs during the 1970s.

That said, the broader Cold War environment placed limits on how far this partnership could mature.

Post Cold War Era

Strategic Partnership: The two countries formalized a Strategic Partnership in 1998, anchored by three core pillars — defence and security collaboration, space cooperation, and civilian nuclear energy ties.

The 1998 Nuclear Tests: Following India's Pokhran-II tests, Western powers including the US and UK responded with stiff economic and tech-related sanctions. France, however, declined to penalize India and instead kept diplomatic channels open.

Special Global Strategic Partnership: As of February 2026, the two nations upgraded their relationship into a Special Global Strategic Partnership — a landmark shift that pushes collaboration well past traditional defence matters into artificial intelligence, space, and green energy.

Horizon 2047 Agreement: This pact charts out the trajectory for India-France collaboration over the coming quarter-century. Joint work in cutting-edge fields like supercomputing, cloud infrastructure, AI, and quantum tech is seen as critical to shaping India's future trajectory.

What are the areas of cooperation between India and France?

Geo-Political: The political relationship between the two nations has only deepened with time.

- France was the very first permanent UNSC member to back India's bid for a council seat, along with broader UN reform.
- French backing proved essential for India joining the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the Wassenaar Arrangement, and the Australia Group.
- France holds the distinction of being invited more often than any other nation to serve as Republic Day chief guest.

Geo-Strategic: France has been sensitive to India's strategic concerns and has taken concrete steps to deepen this dimension of the relationship.

- France has extended one of its most valuable Indo-Pacific assets to India — for instance, Indian Air Force aircraft have operated out of Réunion Island.
- France has also given India a stake in regional bodies such as the Indian Ocean Commission, and participates alongside India and Australia in a trilateral dialogue promoting a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific.
- France has backed India's stance on Jammu and Kashmir, joined India in opposing Pakistan-backed terror activity, and helped strengthen India's hand against Chinese pressure.

Defence and Security: This dimension of the partnership has expanded considerably.

- France became India's second-largest arms supplier between 2017 and 2021, with major procurements including Rafale and Mirage 2000 jets and Scorpene-class submarines.
- The two militaries regularly hold joint drills — Varuna (navy), Garuda (air force), and Shakti (army).
- Both nations conduct joint maritime patrols across the Indian Ocean, working toward shared maritime awareness in the region.
- During a recent visit, India proposed offering France its DRDO-built Pinaka rocket launcher system.

Economic cooperation:

- Bilateral trade hit a record USD 13.4 billion in FY 2022-23, with Indian exports alone surpassing USD 7 billion.
- France ranks as India's 11th-largest source of foreign investment, having pumped in a cumulative USD 10.49 billion between April 2000 and December 2022.
- Over 1,000 French companies operate in India, collectively generating roughly US$ 20 billion in turnover and employing about 300,000 people.

Energy and Climate: Cooperation here centres heavily on renewable energy and tackling climate change.

- French support was instrumental in India securing a waiver from the Nuclear Suppliers Group in 2008, reopening the door to global civil nuclear collaboration.
- France continues to advocate for India's formal NSG membership.
- The two countries jointly spearheaded the creation of the International Solar Alliance.

Science and Technology:

- The space agencies CNES (France) and ISRO (India) deepened ties through a Joint Vision for Space Cooperation signed in 2018.
- Ongoing joint efforts include the TRISHNA earth-observation mission, a shared Mars mission, and work on clearing space debris.
- Both countries are building what will be the world's largest nuclear power complex at Jaitapur, Maharashtra.
- France became the first European nation to adopt India's UPI payment system.
- At the 2026 AI Impact Summit, both sides committed to making AI resources more widely accessible and launched a joint AI-in-Healthcare research centre.

Diaspora: Roughly 109,000 people of Indian descent — mostly tracing back to the former French territories of Puducherry, Karaikal, Yanam, Mahe, and Chandernagore — currently reside in France. Beyond mainland France, substantial Indian-origin communities also live across French overseas territories: Réunion Island (280,000), Guadeloupe (60,000), Martinique (6,000), and Saint Martin (300).

Connectivity: The two governments have reaffirmed their intent to advance the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor — an idea first floated at the 2023 G20 Summit in New Delhi. The corridor envisions an Eastern leg connecting India to the Gulf and a Northern leg linking the Gulf onward to Europe, combining rail networks, ship-to-rail transfer systems, and connecting road infrastructure.

What is the significance of India-France Relations?

Securing the Indo-Pacific: Through territories like Réunion and French Polynesia, France maintains a permanent foothold in the Indo-Pacific, while India anchors the region geographically. Both countries champion a "rules-based order" and uphold freedom of navigation under UNCLOS amid intensifying maritime rivalry. India relies on French cooperation to help preserve stability in the Indo-Pacific and push back against assertive Chinese behaviour — exemplified by the 2018 India-France Joint Strategic Vision for the Indian Ocean Region.

Technology and Defence Sovereignty: France has long offered India a viable alternative to depending solely on Russian or American defence equipment. From the Mirage 2000 jets of the 1980s to today's Rafale fighters and Scorpene submarines, France delivers advanced technology free of political conditions — a major boost to India's defence modernization drive and its Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliance) push.

Strategic Autonomy: What makes the India-France relationship genuinely autonomous is that it isn't shaped by Anglo-American leanings on France's side, nor by anti-Western sentiment on India's — as demonstrated when France stood by India following the 1998 Pokhran tests.

Entry to Key Organisations: French support remains pivotal to India's aspirations of joining bodies like the UNSC and the NSG.

Global Stability: This partnership also serves a broader purpose — restraining Russian assertiveness within Europe and Chinese assertiveness across Asia — thereby contributing to overall global equilibrium and a more balanced emerging world order.

What are the challenges in India-France Relationship?

Trade Imbalances and IPR issues: The economic relationship tilts in France's favour, with French exports to India exceeding the reverse flow — and overall trade volumes still trail well behind India's engagement with the US, China, the UAE, or

even Germany. France has also voiced concerns about weak enforcement of intellectual property protections for French firms operating in India.

The "Defense-Heavy" Basket: Much of the economic relationship remains concentrated in government-led defence and aerospace deals. Expansion into consumer goods, agriculture, or broader manufacturing sectors has been slow to materialize.

Stalled Projects: Several agreed-upon initiatives have failed to move forward. The Jaitapur nuclear reactor project, for instance, remains stuck amid delays, ballooning costs, and legal disputes tied to India's Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act of 2010 — legislation that holds suppliers financially accountable in the event of an accident, something French companies see as discouraging investment.

Differences in geopolitical approaches: Although both countries prize "strategic autonomy," this often translates into divergent threat priorities shaped by their respective geographies:

- **Ukraine:** France has firmly backed Ukraine against Russian aggression, whereas India has stayed neutral, regularly abstaining on related UNGA votes.
- **West Asia:** The two diverge on matters concerning Iran and the Israel-Palestine question.
- **China:** France's economic stakes in China could limit how closely it aligns with India's Indo-Pacific strategy.

Technology Transfer Friction: France keeps tight controls over high-end military technology exports. Negotiating the depth of technology-sharing for local manufacturing — such as the joint development of high-thrust jet engines with Safran — tends to be a slow and demanding process.

What should be the Way Forward?

Leveraging the India-EU FTA: Both governments should apply political weight toward pushing the broader India-EU Free Trade Agreement talks to a conclusion. Settling specific tariff disagreements over automobiles, spirits, textiles, and carbon levies would meaningfully lift bilateral trade beyond its current sluggish $15 billion mark.

Implementation of Agreement on Migration and Mobility: Both nations should collaborate to ease movement for students, graduates, and skilled professionals, while simultaneously tightening efforts against unauthorized migration.

Increased Trade and Investment: Both sides need to work toward expanding commercial ties — through joint ventures, broader trade pacts, and encouraging cross-border investment flows.

Broadening the International Solar Alliance (ISA): Rather than focusing purely on institution-building, the ISA should pivot toward directly funding and rolling out decentralized solar power grids across Africa and the wider Global South — turning the alliance into a practical vehicle for delivering climate-resilient infrastructure.

Expedition on stalled projects: A dedicated joint task force should be formed to push forward stalled initiatives like the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Plant — resolving liability concerns under the 2010 Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act through a bilateral add-on agreement or insurance arrangement, finally enabling construction to begin after years of holdup.

RELEVANCE

- **Syllabus:**
  - **PSIR:** India and Global Power
  - **GS2**: India and Multilateral Groupings



Introduction

France played host to the 52nd edition of the G7 Summit at Évian-les-Bains, drawing together world leaders to tackle pressing matters such as the war in Ukraine, diplomatic efforts in West Asia, imbalances in the global economy, and the regulation of artificial intelligence.

India does not hold membership in the G7, yet it has steadily become a recurring and influential guest at the bloc's outreach sessions. By 2025, India had taken part in thirteen such outreach sessions, and this year marked Prime Minister Narendra Modi's seventh straight appearance.

India is widely regarded as a leading emerging economy, a representative voice for the Global South, and an indispensable partner on matters spanning energy security, technological progress, climate action, and geopolitical balance. The hosting nation extends an invitation to India to broaden the summit's representativeness and tackle global concerns that demand cooperation extending past the G7's core membership.

What does G-7 mean, and what has the bloc accomplished?

The G-7 brings together the world's most economically advanced and developed nations.

Its membership consists of France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Japan, the United States, and Canada.

Beyond these seven, the European Union also takes part in every discussion as an unofficial member, represented through the European Council and European Commission presidents.

Unlike formal bodies such as the UN or NATO, the G7 lacks a fixed headquarters or any legal standing — it functions purely as a platform for dialogue rather than a structured international organization with a standing secretariat or legal foundation.

Hosting duties rotate yearly between member countries, with the presiding nation responsible for organizing the summit and shaping that year's agenda.

Decisions reached at the close of a summit carry no legal weight. Rather, they represent political commitments signaling collective intent among the world's most affluent democracies.

Origin

The G-7's roots trace back to the 1973 oil shock and the financial turmoil it triggered, which pushed leaders of six leading industrial powers (the G6) to hold a gathering in 1975.

The founding members were the US, UK, France, West Germany, Japan, and Italy, with Canada joining the following year in 1976 to form the G-7.

For a stretch of years, the group operated as the 'G8' once Russia became part of it in 1997 — but it reverted to being called the G-7 after Russia's removal in 2014 following its takeover of Crimea from Ukraine.

Why does the G7 matter?

A Bloc of Leading Economies: Together, G7 nations account for a substantial chunk of the world's economic output and commerce, granting the group considerable sway over global markets and economic decision-making. By 2026 figures, they make up over 44% of nominal global GDP and roughly 30% when measured by purchasing power parity (alongside controlling about 60% of the world's net wealth).

A Venue for Tackling Urgent Worldwide Issues: Although the G7 began with an economic focus, its scope has broadened considerably over time to cover a wide spectrum of global concerns. Because the member states share core principles — democratic governance, free-market economics, and respect for human rights — they're able to reach alignment on major issues far more swiftly than larger, more diverse bodies. Such issues include:

- **International peace and security:** Tackling geopolitical friction, armed conflicts (such as the Russia-Ukraine war), and terrorism.
- **Climate change and energy security:** Aligning on climate efforts, the shift to clean energy, and securing dependable, affordable energy access.
- **Global health:** Deliberating on pandemic response, health emergencies, and reinforcing global health infrastructure.
- **Technology and Artificial Intelligence:** Tackling the consequences of emerging tech, including questions of ethics and oversight.
- **Trade policies and supply chains:** Encouraging open and equitable trade while managing disruptions.
- **Development and humanitarian aid:** Coordinating support for developing nations and responding to humanitarian emergencies.

An Emblem of Multilateralism and Common Values: From a geopolitical lens, the G7 represents the heart of the Western-led liberal order. Its members are bound together by shared commitments to liberal democracy, pluralism, and market-based economics. The forum reinforces these ideals while championing a rules-based global system.

Building Agreement: Despite having no standing secretariat or binding legal power, the G7 operates through consensus-driven decision-making. Its summits hold importance precisely because they reflect multilateral cooperation and collective agreement among leading global powers.

Shaping Norms and Setting Agendas: The G7 acts as a global trendsetter on norms — flagging important issues, elevating their priority, and frequently steering the broader conversation within other international platforms like the UN, IMF, World Bank, and WTO. Examples include:

- **Climate Change:** The G7 was among the first major forums to pledge phasing out fossil fuels and lay down firm decarbonization timelines.
- **Global Taxation:** Back in 2021, the G7 negotiated a landmark agreement establishing a 15% global minimum corporate tax, designed to prevent major tech firms from funneling profits into tax havens. This essentially paved the way for more than 130 nations to revise their tax frameworks and close loopholes exploited by multinationals.
- **Technology and AI:** The G7 introduced the "Hiroshima AI Process" — the first global framework aimed at overseeing generative AI.

A Platform for Crisis Response: Unlike the UN Security Council, which can be stalled by veto power, the G7 tends to act with greater agility. It's capable of organizing emergency summits within a matter of days when crises erupt. During the COVID-19 outbreak, for example, the G7 mobilized quick funding and coordinated vaccine distribution worldwide (through COVAX) well before the WHO could secure wider international agreement.

What obstacles does the G-7 currently face?

A Diminishing Economic Share: Back in the late 1980s, the G7 commanded nearly 70% of worldwide GDP. That figure has since fallen to roughly 43-44%. The emergence of the BRICS coalition (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, plus newer entrants) has significantly redistributed economic clout away from Western nations.

Leaving Out Major Powers: The fact that China — the world's second-largest economy — sits outside the group is widely seen as an anomaly that undermines the bloc's relevance and effectiveness. Numerous analysts have long contended that

the G7 ought to expand to include nations like China, India, and Brazil if it hopes to stay meaningful.

A Gap Between Promises and Action: Although the G7 regularly issues bold pledges and joint statements on issues ranging from climate change to development aid and pandemic readiness, critics frequently point out gaps in actually delivering on these commitments, along with weak accountability mechanisms. Progress on retiring fossil fuels or fulfilling climate finance pledges, for instance, has been notably sluggish.

Legacy of Pollution: The G7 bloc is responsible for 59% of cumulative historical CO2 emissions and has committed to phasing out fossil fuels — yet tangible progress remains largely absent, with the group still emitting roughly twice as much CO2 as the entire African continent.

Widening Transatlantic Divides: Ties between the US and its longstanding European allies have grown tense, marked by disputes over trade, tariffs, and differing strategies for handling global conflicts. Washington's tilt toward unilateralism and "America First" thinking has chipped away at mutual trust.

Rising Populism and Nationalism: Nationalist and populist movements gaining ground within G7 member states are testing the bloc's dedication to multilateralism and its foundational commitment to globalism and liberal democratic norms. The 2025 G7 Summit in Canada, for instance, exposed difficulties in agreeing on a joint statement regarding the Russia-Ukraine war owing to conflicting viewpoints, compounded by the premature exit of a key leader — the US President — which further disrupted meaningful dialogue.

Conflicting National Priorities: Even though member nations are united by shared democratic principles, their individual national interests frequently diverge — particularly around trade, environmental policy, and approaches to geopolitical flashpoints such as relations with China or Russia.

The Ascendance of the G20 and Other Platforms: The G20, encompassing major emerging economies, has largely overtaken the G7 as the foremost venue for steering global economic policy. Its wider representation makes it better equipped to grapple with today's deeply interconnected economic challenges. The growing number of multilateral and "minilateral" groupings means the G7 no longer serves as the exclusive — or even the leading — space for addressing every global issue.

The China Conundrum: Managing China's rise stands out as perhaps the G7's thorniest strategic dilemma:

- Member nations remain economically intertwined with China even as they regard it as a strategic competitor.
- Crafting a cohesive stance on trade, technology, Taiwan, and human rights proves exceedingly difficult.
- China actively champions rival institutions (BRICS, SCO, BRI) that challenge the G7-dominated global framework.

Geopolitical Hurdles:

- **Russia's War in Ukraine:** Though the G7 has displayed notable solidarity in confronting Russian aggression, maintaining that unity amid economic strain, energy worries, and disagreements over long-term approaches remains an ongoing test.
- **Turmoil in West Asia:** The G7 has drawn sharp criticism from global human rights bodies and developing nations over its handling of conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon, as well as the worsening Iran situation. Even when diplomatic breakthroughs occur — such as recent tentative negotiations between the U.S. and Iran over the conflict and the blockade at the Strait of Hormuz — the G7 finds it difficult to exert real influence on ground realities.

Inability to Forge Agreement: The group has consistently found it hard to release unified joint statements, a clear indicator of underlying discord. This shortfall was evident at the 2025 summit, and similarly modest expectations surrounded the 2026 gathering.

Why does India's relationship with G-7 nations matter?

India's Economic Weight: Per IMF assessments, India ranks among the fastest-expanding economies globally, with an economy now larger than three G-7 members — France, Italy, and Canada. Its vast pool of young, skilled workers, combined with strong market potential, competitive manufacturing costs, and a business-friendly climate, positions India as an appealing destination for investment. This places India at the center of conversations on global economic resilience and supply chain protection.

India's Rising Strategic Weight in the Indo-Pacific: India has positioned itself as a key strategic ally for the Western G-7 bloc, aiding efforts to limit China's expanding footprint, especially throughout the Indian Ocean region.

Navigating Global Flashpoints: Be it the Russia-Ukraine standoff, tensions in West Asia, or the broader fight against terrorism, India's calibrated diplomatic style and its standing among diverse global players make it a valuable conversational partner and a potential mediator toward resolving conflicts and restoring stability.

Reducing Dependence on Global Supply Chains (The "China+1" Approach): A top priority for the G7 involves cutting down its heavy economic dependence on China, particularly in areas like semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, and critical minerals. The G7 regards India as the sole democratic nation possessing

the scale, manpower, and tech infrastructure needed to serve as a credible alternative global manufacturing base.

Cooperation on Advanced Tech and AI: Global policymaking is racing to keep pace with developments in artificial intelligence, deep technology, and cybersecurity. Given India's enormous pool of software talent and digital infrastructure (such as its UPI payments network), the G7 cannot establish worldwide tech benchmarks or AI safety standards without India's buy-in.

Giving Voice to Developing Nations (Representing the Global South): The G7 has long faced criticism for functioning as an exclusive club of wealthy nations. India's continued presence helps narrow this gap, channeling the concerns, struggles, and priorities of the Global South into the conversation — an especially crucial role on matters like climate financing, development assistance, food security, and tech transfer.

What are the key obstacles to deepening India's ties with the G7 bloc?

Lack of Permanent Membership Status for India: The G7's membership framework remains outdated, failing to accommodate rising economies such as India. India consistently occupies the role of "invitee" or "outreach partner" rather than a full member. This means India lacks a permanent place at the core decision-making table and does not take part in every G7 ministerial gathering or year-round preparatory dialogue. Its influence stays confined to whichever specific outreach sessions it's asked to join.

Balancing Multiple Forums: India holds significant standing across the G7, BRICS, the Quad, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) simultaneously. While this versatility gives India leverage, it also makes consistent alignment with Western priorities improbable. India's involvement in BRICS, along with its substantial ties to Russia, creates points of tension with G7 objectives.

Differing Views on Climate Responsibility: While India remains dedicated to climate action, it routinely advocates for the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities — stressing that developed nations bear historical responsibility for emissions and should therefore shoulder greater obligations around financing and technology transfer. G7 nations, despite their climate commitments, often contend with domestic political resistance to fulfilling these obligations.

Energy Transition Versus Energy Security: India's energy requirements are enormous, and despite rapidly scaling up renewable capacity, it remains heavily dependent on fossil fuels. G7 nations frequently push for an accelerated transition, whereas India insists on a just transition that safeguards both energy security and affordability for its massive population.

Ties with Russia: India has chosen a neutral position on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, favoring dialogue and diplomatic resolution while sustaining its economic relationship with Russia. This stance frequently diverges from the G7's unified approach of condemnation and sanctions. Although the G7 may value India's role as a bridge-builder, this also exposes India to pressure to fall more closely in line with G7 positions.

The West Asia Crisis: While the G7 tends to lean heavily on particular Western frameworks when responding to security disruptions in West Asia, India must carefully balance its enormous diaspora and trade interests spanning both Israel and the Arab world.

Persistent Trade Friction Points: Longstanding disagreements over India's steep tariffs on American agricultural and industrial products, combined with Western calls for broader access to India's digital markets and tighter intellectual property safeguards, have repeatedly delayed major trade agreements.

Sovereignty Over Data and Technology: The G7 is working to set rigid global benchmarks for artificial intelligence and cross-border data movement. India often pushes back against such efforts whenever they threaten to compromise its data sovereignty or impede the growth of its domestic tech sector.

Bilateral Friction with Individual G7 Members: Last year's summit underscored specific bilateral strains. The India-Canada relationship, for example, has soured over matters such as the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar and concerns about pro-Khalistan activity within Canada. Although the G7 summit provides a space for dialogue, such bilateral disputes risk overshadowing broader cooperative efforts.

Inconsistent Standards Among Developed Nations on Terrorism: India's PM pointed to the double standards practiced by developed nations regarding terrorism — readily imposing sanctions on certain countries based on selective preference, while simultaneously rewarding nations like Pakistan that actively sponsor cross-border terrorism.

What path should be taken going forward?

Strengthening Economic Bonds: Encouraging greater investment across renewable energy, technology, and infrastructure sectors, alongside pushing trade liberalization measures, can help reinforce the economic relationship between India and the G-7 bloc.

Building Strategic Partnerships: Reinforcing defense ties through joint military exercises, intelligence cooperation, and technology sharing can help address shared security concerns.

Engaging Through Multilateral Channels: India's continued, active role in G7 forums can help shape more inclusive frameworks of global governance. Collaborative work on

climate initiatives, with emphasis on sustainable development and green technology, can establish benchmarks for environmental policy worldwide.

Driving Technological Progress: Joint efforts in digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence can fuel the next phase of technological breakthroughs. Collaborative research in areas such as biotechnology, space exploration, and renewable energy can further spur innovation.

Advocating for Fairer Frameworks: India has already made clear its intent to resist frameworks that put developing nations at a disadvantage. For example, it has criticized the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) as a disguised trade barrier, and continues pressing for climate finance to be provided as grants rather than loans.

Maintaining Multiple Engagements Simultaneously: India's involvement in both the G7 and BRICS isn't contradictory — it's a deliberate strategy. Its capacity to engage across multiple centers of power allows it to shape G7 debates before they solidify into policies that affect the broader world.

Long-Term Push for G7 Expansion: Though unlikely to materialize soon, India should continue quietly advocating for a more representative G7 structure (or a "G7+" model) that formally brings in major emerging economies.

Key Takeaways from the 2026 G-7 Summit:

Backing the Iran-US Agreement: The summit's most notable outcome was the G7's unified endorsement of the preliminary U.S.-Iran agreement aimed at ending hostilities. The G7 leaders' joint declaration reaffirmed their rejection of a nuclear-armed Iran and their backing for implementing the deal. They threw their support behind a French and British-led maritime effort to safeguard shipping lanes and clear mines from the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz. Leaders stressed the importance of unimpeded, toll-free passage through the strait and pledged to diversify global energy routes to lessen reliance on this critical chokepoint.

Backing for Ukraine: Despite internal disagreements, the G7 reiterated its "unwavering support for Ukraine." Leaders agreed to ramp up military assistance, including providing additional air defense interceptors and long-range weaponry.

Worldwide AI Governance: Leaders reached agreement on building technical and ethical guidelines to enable the safe and swift rollout of artificial intelligence, with priority given to ensuring digital tools remain secure and globally accessible.

Economic Stability Measures: Member nations committed jointly to narrowing macroeconomic imbalances, curbing unfair competitive practices, and tackling industrial overcapacity in order to fortify and protect fragile international supply chains.

Action on Environment and Biodiversity: The summit included a five-year progress assessment of the G7 2030 Nature Compact, an expansion of the Nature and People Finance Alliance, and the formal designation of land degradation, drought, and desertification as systemic security threats.

Reform of Development Financing: The G7 endorsed new strategies aimed at mobilizing private capital, easing debt burdens, and ensuring development financing is more responsive and catalytic toward the priorities of partner nations.

Reinforced Global Partnerships: The summit underscored the importance of rebuilding international solidarity and dialogue among major powers to confront ongoing geopolitical crises and conflicts.

Global Health Priorities – Ebola and Cancer: Leaders issued a coordinated response plan addressing the Bundibugyo Ebola outbreak, alongside a declaration committing to the fight against cancer — reflecting a wider dedication to global health sovereignty and pandemic readiness.

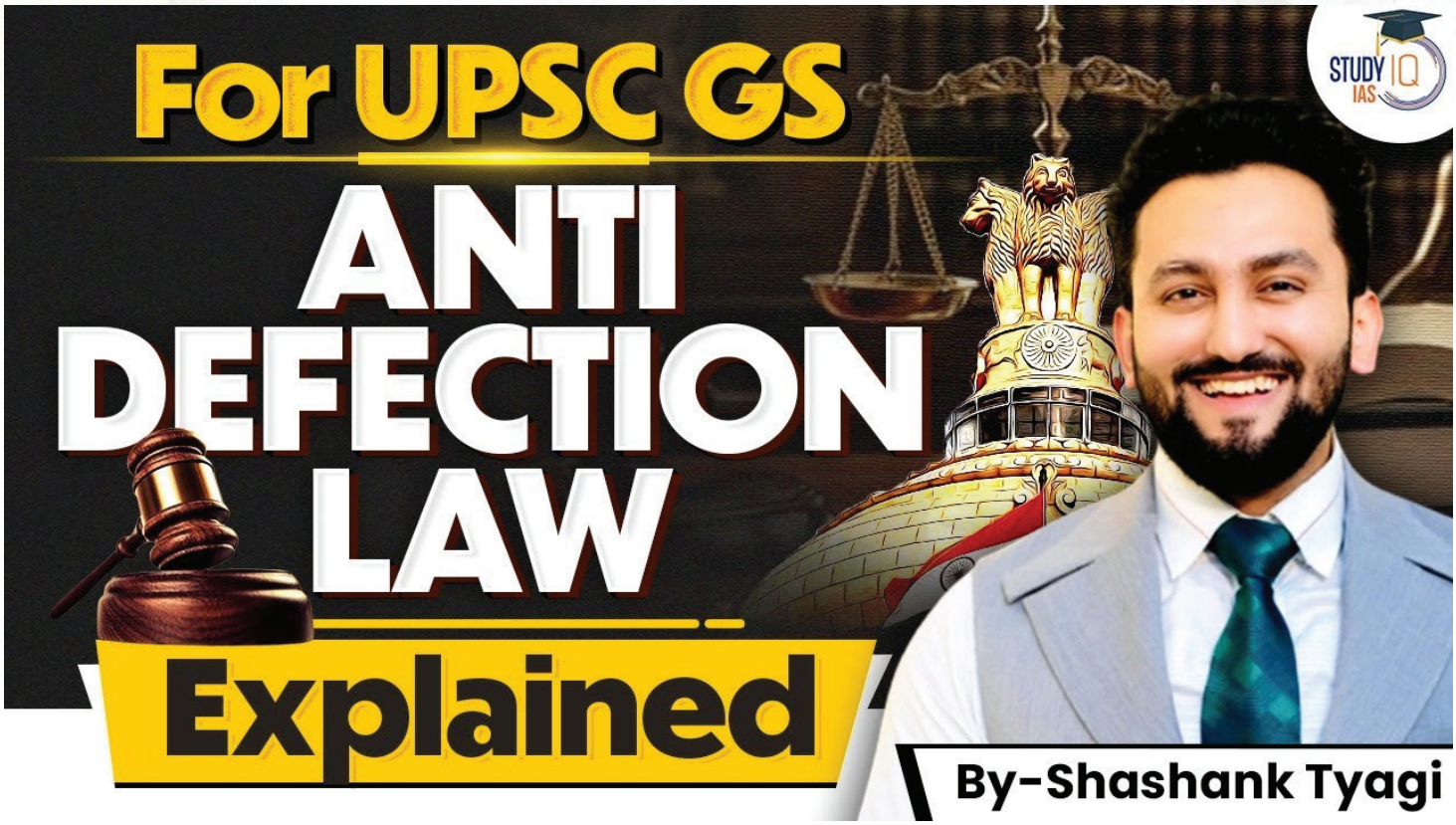
Conclusion

India's evolving rapport with the G7 reflects its expanding significance within global economic and strategic affairs. The complementary strengths shared between India and G7 nations, fueled by common values and mutual interests, open up considerable scope for collaborative progress. As India's global standing continues to rise, its partnership with the G7 will remain instrumental in shaping a more balanced and inclusive world order.

Anti Defection Law

Relevance

- **Syllabus:**
  - **PSIR**: Salient Features of Indian constitution
  - GS2: Elections



Introduction

The Tenth Schedule, which houses India's Anti-Defection Law, was designed to discourage political opportunism and uphold stability within governments. Yet whenever a leadership crisis unfolds, its real-world effectiveness comes under fresh examination. The recent splintering within Maharashtra's political factions, alongside the mass exodus of legislators from West Bengal's Trinamool Congress, illustrate how dissenting members continue to find structural gaps that let them dodge disqualification. Given this backdrop, a thorough understanding of the Anti-Defection Law becomes essential.

What is Anti-Defection Law?

Found in the Constitution's 10th Schedule, the Anti-Defection Law deals with disqualifying Members of Parliament and state legislators who switch parties — a measure born out of the political chaos of the late 1960s, when legislators hopping between parties brought down one state government after another.

Under this Schedule, a member of either house of Parliament or a state legislature can lose their seat under the following circumstances:

Voluntary Resignation: They willingly relinquish membership in the party under whose banner they won election.

Defying the Whip: They cast a vote, or abstain from voting, against their party's official directive (the "whip") without first obtaining permission to do so.

Independent Members: Someone who won as an independent candidate subsequently chooses to join a political party.

Nominated Members: A nominated legislator who joins a party after six months have elapsed since taking their seat.

Exceptions:

Merger: Should two-thirds of a legislative party's members consent to merging with another party, no disqualification follows.

Presiding Officers: Anyone holding the position of Speaker or Chairman is permitted to step away from their party to

preserve impartiality, and may rejoin it once they vacate that office — without facing any penalty.

Deciding Authority: Disqualification decisions fall to the House's Presiding Officer — the Speaker for the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies, or the Chairman for the Rajya Sabha and Legislative Councils.

Judicial Review: Initially, the law treated the Presiding Officer's ruling as final and beyond legal challenge. That changed with the Supreme Court's 1992 verdict in the Kihoto Hollohan case, which held that the Speaker functions in a tribunal-like capacity — meaning their rulings can indeed be scrutinized by the High Courts and Supreme Court.

Evolution of the Anti-Defection Law:

Pre-1985

The Era of "Aaya Ram, Gaya Ram": Throughout the 1960s and 70s, India's political landscape was riddled with constant floor-crossing. The most notorious case unfolded in 1967, when Haryana legislator Gaya Lal switched his party allegiance three separate times within a single day. Such instability brought down several state governments and fostered a climate where lawmakers would readily switch sides in pursuit of cabinet berths or other rewards.

1985

52nd Amendment Act: The Tenth Schedule was introduced into the Constitution through the 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1985, aimed at containing the rising problem of defections and establishing a formal legal mechanism for disqualifying those who switched parties.

1992

Kihoto Hollohan Case: This pivotal ruling affirmed that the Tenth Schedule was constitutionally sound. Importantly, it clarified that even though Speakers hold authority over disqualification matters, this authority isn't beyond the reach of judicial scrutiny. Courts retain the power to step in where there is evidence of bad faith or procedural overreach.

2003

The 91st Amendment (2003): Eliminated the "Split" provision: Earlier, a "split" involving one-third of a party's members enjoyed protection from disqualification. This protection was withdrawn to discourage large-scale defections.

Ministerial Limit: A ceiling was placed on the total number of ministers — including the Prime Minister or Chief Minister — restricting it to 15% of the total seats in the Lok Sabha or relevant State Assembly.

Holding Office: Anyone disqualified under the Tenth Schedule is barred from occupying any paid political role or ministerial position unless they secure re-election.

2020-2025

Through rulings in Keisham Meghachandra Singh v. Speaker, Manipur (2020) and, more recently, Padi Kaushik Reddy v. Telangana (2025), the Supreme Court instructed Speakers to resolve disqualification petitions within a "reasonable period" — specifically setting a three-month limit.

What was the need for introducing the Anti-Defection Law?

Ensuring Political Stability: Between the 1967 and 1971 general elections, roughly half of the roughly 4,000 legislators across central and state assemblies switched parties. State governments were toppling one after another. When a government must constantly guard against losing its majority to a rival's enticements, its energy goes toward mere survival rather than actual governance. By making it costly for legislators to switch sides without forfeiting their seats, the law allows governments to focus on sustained administration instead of perpetual self-preservation.

To Curb the Influence of Money and Power: Defections rarely stemmed from genuine ideological conviction — they were typically the product of "horse trading," a form of political corruption. Legislators would switch allegiance in return for a seat in the new cabinet, with substantial sums often changing hands to secure the loyalty of independents or smaller-party representatives during crucial floor votes.

To Prevent the Breach of Electorate's Trust: When voters cast their ballot for a candidate, they're typically endorsing that party's vision and manifesto. A defection effectively nullifies what voters intended. This law sought to keep representatives answerable to the platform on which they were originally elected.

Party Discipline and Cohesion: This law lends legal force to political parties as institutions. The "whip" mechanism allows parties to ensure members vote together on critical legislation, preventing internal sabotage and enabling the ruling party to actually carry out its legislative agenda.

Constitutional Legitimacy to Political Parties: Before the Tenth Schedule's introduction, the Constitution made no formal reference to political parties at all. This law effectively gave parties constitutional standing, recognizing them as central pillars of Indian democracy.

Saving of Taxpayer's Money: Repeated defections and floor-crossings frequently triggered mid-term polls. By keeping governments from collapsing every few months, this law

helped avoid the heavy costs tied to frequent elections, along with the expenses associated with President's Rule, which often followed periods of legislative instability.

What have been the concerns/issues raised against the Anti-Defection Law?

Suppression of Legislative Dissent: Because every member is compelled to follow the party whip — under threat of losing their seat — the outcome of most parliamentary debates is essentially predetermined. This diminishes the weight of individual reasoning and persuasive argument within the House.

It also creates an inherent conflict. A lawmaker might genuinely believe a particular bill — say, a contentious land acquisition measure — harms their constituency, yet they remain legally obligated to support it if their party demands it.

Partisanship of the Speaker: Lack of Neutrality: Speakers typically hail from the ruling party and don't formally sever ties with it upon assuming the role. This frequently results in skewed rulings, where disqualification cases against opposition members move swiftly while similar cases involving ruling-party-aligned members get stalled.

Indefinite Delays: Originally, the law imposed no deadline on Speakers for resolving such matters. This loophole has allowed Speakers to shelve petitions for extended periods, letting defecting members complete their entire term without facing consequences.

Wholesale Defection: The law penalizes only "retail" or individual-level defection, while inadvertently encouraging "wholesale" or mass defection. Per the 91st Amendment, if two-thirds of a party's legislators defect en masse, this is classified as a "merger" and escapes punishment altogether. Consequently, defections persist through coercion and incentives, with legislators sometimes sequestered in "resorts" during politically tense periods.

Resignation over Defection: Rather than voting against their party's whip, legislators often simply resign their seat outright. This erodes the government's majority. Once the government collapses, such members frequently contest the resulting by-election under the banner of the rival party and return to the legislature, sometimes even as ministers. This technically respects the letter of the law while undermining its core purpose.

Lack of Intra-Party Democracy: Because the law hands considerable power to party leadership through the "whip" system, it stifles internal democratic debate. Ordinary members hesitate to question leadership decisions or party policy, fearing that expulsion could spell the end of their political career.

What are the reforms that should be introduced into the Anti-Defection Law?

Neutral Decision-Making Authority: Currently, the Speaker of the legislature holds the power to disqualify members. This arrangement could instead be replaced with:

Election Commission: Both the Election Commission of India and the Second Administrative Reforms Commission have proposed that disqualification decisions be made by the President (for MPs) or Governor (for MLAs), acting on the binding recommendation of the Election Commission.

Independent Tribunal: In its 2020 ruling on the Keisham Meghachandra Singh case, the Supreme Court floated the idea of Parliament establishing a standing, independent tribunal to handle such cases impartially.

Limiting the Scope of the "Whip": To stop the law from stifling genuine dissent, the Dinesh Goswami Committee put forward the following recommendations:

Use of Whip Only for Survival: The whip — and the disqualification penalty tied to defying it — should be reserved exclusively for matters that determine whether the government survives, such as no-confidence motions, budgetary or money bills, and votes of thanks.

Freedom of Conscience: For all other legislation — covering social, environmental, or developmental matters — lawmakers should have the liberty to vote in line with their own judgment or their constituents' interests, without risking their seat.

The Merger Loophole: As things stand, two-thirds of a party can merge with another party without penalty — effectively legitimizing mass horse-trading. Possible fixes include:

Raising the Bar: Pushing the required threshold up to three-quarters, or doing away with the merger exemption altogether.

Resign and Re-elect: The Law Commission has proposed that anyone who defects — whether alone or as part of a larger group — should be required to resign immediately and remain ineligible for any ministerial position until they win a subsequent by-election.

Ban on Ministerial Posts: Although the 91st Amendment already prevents defectors from becoming ministers until re-elected, politicians have found a workaround through resignation. To close this gap, any legislator who resigns mid-term should be barred from contesting by-elections or holding any paid political office for the remainder of that legislature's term — potentially up to five years.

Enforce Strict Timelines for Decisions: A statutory deadline should be set for Speakers to rule on disqualification petitions, with 90 days frequently proposed as a reasonable limit. Should

no decision emerge within this window, the member facing the petition should be automatically disqualified.

Strengthen Deterrence through Severe Penalties: Making defection both financially and politically costly calls for harsher consequences:

Six-Year Disqualification: Prevent a disqualified defector from running in any election for a full six-year electoral cycle, closing off defection as a quick career maneuver.

Loss of Pension: Drawing on recent precedent set in Himachal Pradesh, newer proposals suggest that legislators disqualified for defection should also lose their entitlement to a legislative pension.

Conclusion

This law continues to draw criticism for, in some ways, worsening the very problem it set out to solve — while it punishes individual defections, mass defections disguised as mergers continue unchecked. Recent episodes, such as the Maharashtra political crisis, underscore the pressing need to revisit and tighten these existing loopholes.

Mains Practice Questions

Q. Studying the Jambudvipa mandala from our ancient texts, one is struck by the fact that it does not ascribe centrality and superiority to Bharatvarsha, which is only one among the lotus petals that make up our universe. Discuss the above statement with reference to India's vision of new world order.

India's strategic culture and diplomatic behavior are deeply influenced by its rich tradition of statecraft, as evident in ancient texts like the Jambudvipa mandala. Unlike the Chinese worldview, which considers the Han core as superior and central, India's perspective is more inclusive and multipolar. The Jambudvipa mandala portrays Bharatvarsha (India) as just one among the interconnected lotus petals that make up the universe, signifying India's acceptance of other dvipas (islands) with their own characteristics and values.

This mindset aligns with India's advocacy for a multipolar world in the contemporary context, where it recognizes and respects the diversity of nations and their unique contributions. India does not harbor a 'middle kingdom complex,' which denotes a sense of centrality and superiority. Instead, it embraces a worldview that values the coexistence of various geopolitical and geo-economic units with their distinct histories.

The Indian Subcontinent and the regions surrounding the Indian Ocean are viewed as a cohesive geopolitical and geo-economic unit with shared history. Despite facing partition during Independence in 1947, India's challenge lies in transcending political divisions in the subcontinent and restoring its cohesiveness. It aims to minimize the significance of borders by drawing upon enduring sources of affinity and commonality among the nations in the region.

Looking forward, as India's economic and security capabilities expand, it is likely to extend its influence along historical pathways. This includes reaching out to the eastern and western reaches of the Indian Ocean and engaging with the Central Asian neighborhood to the north and west. By doing so, India can tap into its historical connections and foster stronger economic and strategic ties with its neighbors, contributing to regional stability and cooperation.

Q. What are the fundamental principles underlying World Systems Theory in the field of International Relations?

World systems theory, which falls under the umbrella of structuralism in International Relations, is closely associated with the work of Immanuel Wallerstein. Drawing inspiration from Marx's analysis of capitalism and Fernand Braudel's examination of extensive economic networks, Wallerstein aimed to provide an explanation for the persistent poverty in Third World countries.

According to Wallerstein, global history can be understood as a series of world systems that originated in 16th century Europe and eventually became global in nature. He defines a world system as a social system characterized by boundaries, structures, members, groups, rules of legitimacy, and coherence.

Wallerstein classifies the world system into three main categories:

1. Core: This refers to the countries or regions that have benefited the most from the system. These entities possess politically strong governments, bureaucracies, and armies. The core allows local bourgeoisie to gain control over international trade and accumulate surplus wealth.
2. Periphery: The periphery comprises countries or regions that lack a strong state apparatus. The core exploits the surplus generated by the periphery, leading to their economic and political subordination.
3. Semi-periphery: The semi-periphery consists of countries within the periphery that have managed to improve their relative positions to some extent. While they are still exploited by the core, they play a role in stabilizing the overall world system.

Wallerstein argues that the modern world system is essentially a capitalist system driven by the continuous accumulation of capital. He contends that the system's inherent capitalist nature is responsible for its unequal structure. This inequality manifests as a hierarchical relationship among the three types of states mentioned earlier, with wealth being systematically drained from the periphery towards the core through exploitative mechanisms.

Q. Is it evident that contemporary democracy is confronting a crisis, particularly considering the growing public discontent and the limitations of the global democratic framework in effectively addressing the Russian-Ukrainian Crisis?

The global decline in democracy has become a concerning trend, challenging the principles of government by the people. According to Larry Diamond, we are currently experiencing a phase of democratic recession, with setbacks and popular protests occurring worldwide.

The rise of authoritarian trends and identity politics has led to democratic setbacks across the world. Notable events include China's imposition of new security laws in Hong Kong, XInjiang, and continued mass demonstrations in Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan due to alleged election rigging.

The military coup in Myanmar, which was emerging from decades of military control, and the fall of the people's government in Afghanistan, following a war fought in defense of democratic principles, are significant blows to democracy. Even the United States, often considered a stronghold of democracy, has witnessed the erosion of democratic practices.

One of the reasons behind the global decline in democracy is attributed to the double standards of Western countries, as highlighted by Dani Rodrik. For instance, Western nations have been seen supporting autocratic regimes while undermining democratic movements, whether it be in Egypt or Bahrain. These double standards have allowed leaders like Putin and Xi to question the West's commitment to democracy. Furthermore, the failure of the West to prevent the Russian invasion of Ukraine has significantly eroded public trust in the global democratic order.

There are several other reasons for the decline in global democracy. The failure to reform global governance institutions, which could have promoted inclusive growth, has undermined democracy. In European countries, the refugee crisis and job losses to immigrants have fueled populism and anti- democratic sentiments.

However, amidst this despair, there are glimpses of hope. Countries worldwide had united to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating unprecedented global collaboration. Protests for better governance in nations like Sudan and Chile have resulted in significant improvements. Landmark rulings, such as the overturning of rigged election results in Malawi, signify the triumph of independent institutions over government pressure. Election victories in Montenegro and Bolivia, as well as protests against government corruption in Bulgaria, have highlighted the resilience of democracy.

Moving forward, it is crucial to prioritize democratic reforms in global governance processes and institutions, as well as to strengthen the democratic credentials of nations. Only through these efforts can we reverse the decline in global democracy and restore faith in democratic principles within the world order.

Scholar Digest: Know Your Scholars

Derrida



Introduction

Jacques Derrida, (born July 15, 1930, El Biar, Algeria—died October 8, 2004, *Paris*, France), French philosopher whose *critique* of *Western philosophy* and analyses of the nature of *language*, writing, and *meaning* were highly controversial yet immensely influential in much of the *intellectual* world in the late 20th century.

Early Life&Education

Derrida was born to Sephardic Jewish parents in French-governed *Algeria*. Educated in the French tradition, he went to *France* in 1949, studied at the elite École Normale Supérieure (ENS), and taught *philosophy* at the Sorbonne (1960-64), the ENS (1964-84), and the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (1984-99), all in Paris. From the 1960s he published numerous books and essays on an immense range of topics and taught and lectured throughout the world, including at *Yale University* and the *University of California*, Irvine, attaining an international celebrity comparable only to that of *Jean-Paul Sartre* a generation earlier.

Major Works

Derrida is most celebrated as the principal exponent of *deconstruction*, a term he coined for the critical examination of the fundamental *conceptual* distinctions, or "oppositions," *inherent* in Western philosophy since the time of the ancient Greeks. These oppositions are characteristically "binary" and "hierarchical," involving a pair of terms in which one member of the pair is assumed to be primary or fundamental, the other secondary or derivative. Examples include nature and *culture*, speech and writing, mind and body, presence and absence, inside and outside, literal and metaphorical, intelligible and sensible, and form and meaning, among many others. To "deconstruct" an opposition is to explore the tensions and contradictions between the hierarchical ordering assumed or asserted in the text and other aspects of the text's meaning, especially those that are indirect or *implicit*. Such an analysis shows that the opposition is not natural or necessary but a product, or "construction," of the text itself.

In the 1960s Derrida's work was welcomed in France and elsewhere by thinkers interested in the broad interdisciplinary movement known as *structuralism*. The structuralists analyzed various cultural phenomena—such as *myths*, religious rituals,

literary narratives, and fashions in dress and adornment—as general systems of signs *analogous* to natural languages, with their own vocabularies and their own underlying rules and structures, and attempted to develop a metalanguage of terms and concepts in which the various sign systems could be described. Some of Derrida's early work was a critique of major structuralist thinkers such as Saussure, the anthropologist *Claude Lévi-Strauss*, and the intellectual historian and philosopher *Michel Foucault*. Derrida was thus seen, especially in the *United States*, as leading a movement beyond structuralism to "*poststructuralism*," which was skeptical about the possibility of a general *science* of meaning.

Relevance Today

One might distinguish in Derrida's work a period of philosophical deconstruction from a later period focusing on *literature* and emphasizing the singularity of the literary work and the play of meaning in avant-garde writers such as Genet, *Stéphane Mallarmé*, *Francis Ponge*, and *James Joyce*. His later work also took up a host of other issues, notably the *legacy* of Marxism (*Spectres de Marx: l'état de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle Internationale* [1993; *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*]) and *psychoanalysis* (*La Carte postale: de Socrate à Freud et au-delà* [1980; *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*]). Other essays considered political, legal, and *ethical* issues, as well as topics in *aesthetics* and literature. He also addressed the question of Jewishness and the Jewish tradition in *Shibboleth* and the autobiographical "Circumfession" (1991).

Henry Kissinger



Henry Kissinger, born on May 27, 1923, in Fürth, Germany, is a towering figure in U.S. foreign policy and international relations. A Jewish refugee who fled Nazi persecution in 1938, Kissinger's early experiences deeply shaped his worldview and approach to diplomacy. He is best known for serving as the U.S. Secretary of State and National Security Advisor under Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford during the 1970s.

Kissinger's academic career began at Harvard University, where he earned a Ph.D. in 1954 with a dissertation on the Congress of Vienna and its impact on international diplomacy. His academic work established him as a leading thinker on realpolitik, a pragmatic approach to foreign policy focused on power and practical interests rather than ideological or moral considerations. This approach would later define his political career.

In 1969, Kissinger was appointed National Security Advisor by President Nixon, and in 1973, he became Secretary of State. His tenure was marked by significant achievements that reshaped global geopolitics. One of his most notable accomplishments was the policy of détente with the Soviet Union, which sought to reduce Cold War tensions through diplomacy and arms control agreements, including the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT).

Kissinger is perhaps most famously associated with the opening of diplomatic relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China. In 1971, he secretly visited Beijing, paving the way for Nixon's historic visit in 1972. This realignment dramatically altered the global balance of power, isolating the Soviet Union and shifting the dynamics of the Cold War.

Another key aspect of Kissinger's legacy is his role in the Vietnam War. He was instrumental in negotiating the Paris Peace Accords, which led to a ceasefire and the eventual withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam. For his efforts, Kissinger was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973, a decision that was highly controversial due to the continued fighting in Vietnam after the accords were signed.

Kissinger's foreign policy approach was not without criticism. His support for authoritarian regimes in countries like Chile, Argentina, and Indonesia, often in the name of anti-communism, has been condemned by human rights advocates. His involvement in the 1973 Chilean coup, which led to the overthrow of democratically elected President Salvador Allende and the rise of General Augusto Pinochet, remains particularly contentious.

Despite the controversies, Kissinger's influence on U.S. foreign policy is undeniable. After leaving government, he continued to be an influential voice in international affairs through his consulting firm, Kissinger Associates, and as an author and commentator. His numerous books on diplomacy and international relations, including *"Diplomacy"* and *"World Order,"* have been widely read and studied.

At over 100 years old, Kissinger remains active in public life, contributing to debates on global issues. His legacy is a complex one, characterized by both groundbreaking diplomatic achievements and contentious moral questions, but his impact on the world stage is enduring.

Morgenthau



Introduction

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

Early Life & Education

Morgenthau's academic journey commenced in Germany, where he pursued his education at the esteemed Universities of Berlin, Frankfurt, and Munich. Following his studies in Germany, he furthered his knowledge through postgraduate work at the

Graduate Institute for International Studies in Geneva. After being admitted to the bar in 1927, he gained valuable experience by serving as acting president of the Labour Law Court in Frankfurt.

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

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

Major Works

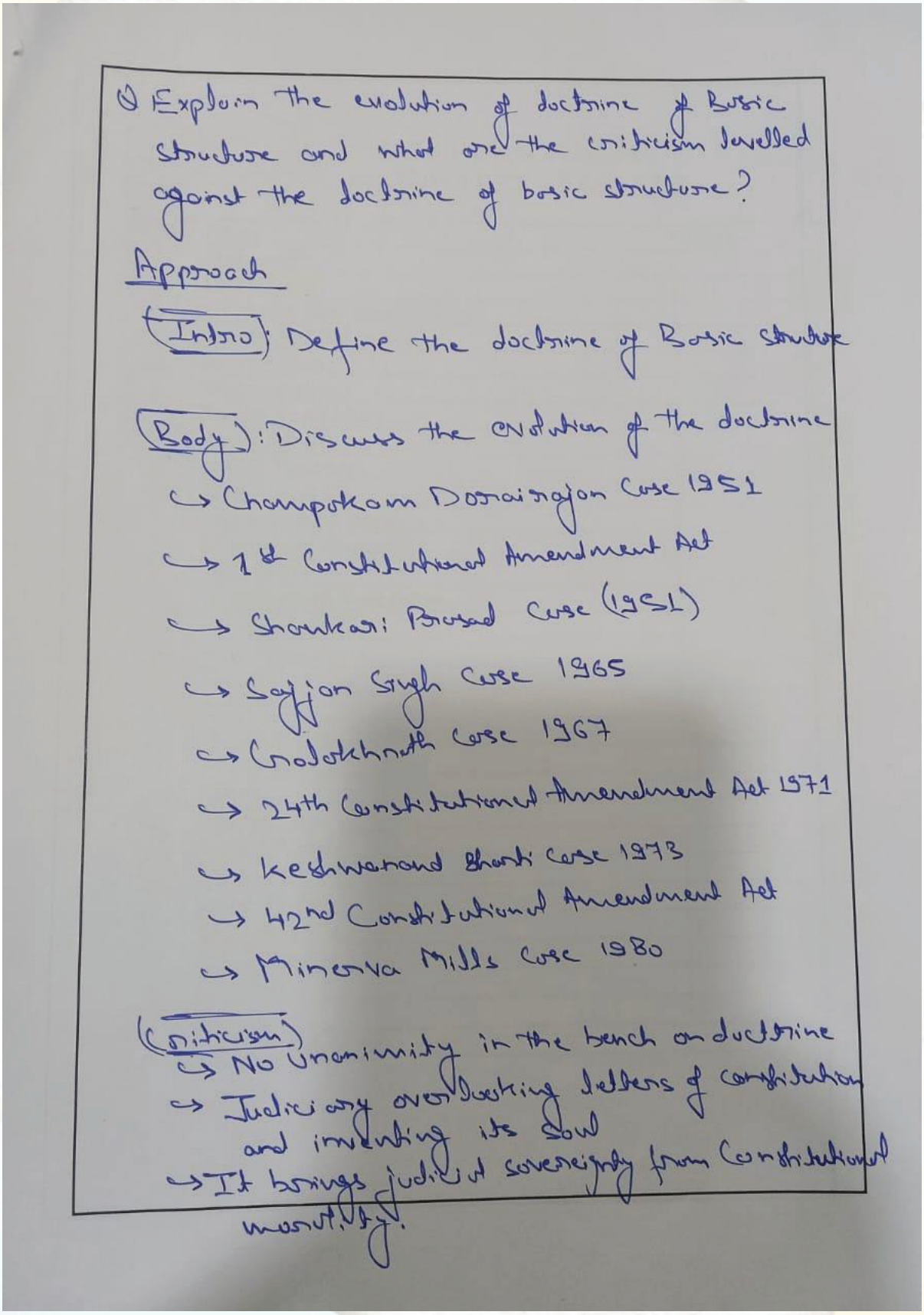
In 1948, Morgenthau published "Politics Among Nations," a highly esteemed study that introduced the classical realist approach to international politics. In this seminal work, Morgenthau argued that politics operates under distinct and unchangeable laws of nature, enabling states to deduce rational and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

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

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

Enrich Your Answer

Q. Explain the evolution of the doctrine of basic structure and what are the criticisms levelled against it.



Q Explain the evolution of doctrine of Basic structure and what are the criticism levelled against the doctrine of basic structure?

Approach

(Intro) Define the doctrine of Basic Structure

(Body): Discuss the evolution of the doctrine

↳ Champakam Dorairajan Case 1951

↳ 1st Constitutional Amendment Act

↳ Shankari Prasad Case (1951)

↳ Sajjan Singh Case 1965

↳ Golaknath Case 1967

↳ 24th Constitutional Amendment Act 1971

↳ Keshavanand Bharti Case 1973

↳ 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act

↳ Minerva Mills Case 1980

(Criticism)

↳ No Unanimity in the bench on doctrine

↳ Judiciary overlooking letters of constitution and inventing its soul

↳ It brings judicial sovereignty from Constitutional supremacy.

Q. Circulation of elites. Comment

Approach to Answer

Intro: Start by explaining the concept of Power

Body

- Explain the elitist theory of Power including Pareto's Circulation of Elites theory.
- Elitist theory accepts broad division of society into dominant and dependent group.
- Pareto's theory of Power divides society into 'governing elite' and 'non governing elite'.
- Explain the 'governing elites' and 'non governing elites'.
- Can give criticism of his theory

Conclusion

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

Q. Discuss the features of asymmetrical federalism.

Q: Discuss the features of Asymmetrical federalism

Approach

(Intro): Define federalism and Asymmetrical federalism.

(Body) Give features of Asymmetrical federalism
- ↳ Article 371 to 371 J in Part XXI of Constitution contain special provisions for eleven states.
- ↳ Special responsibility of Governor for the development of certain areas of particular states.
- ↳ Presence of Union Territories in India.
- ↳ Unequal representation of States in Rajya Sabha (eg UP 31 seats, Goa-1seat)
- ↳ Presence of 5th and 6th schedule to accomodate scheduled and ~~st~~ tribal areas.

(Conclusion): Give justification of Asymmetrical federalism.

eg: to protect diversity without sacrificing unity or imposing uniformity.

Prelims Practice Questions

1. **Under the Constitution of India, which one of the following is not a fundamental duty ?**
   (a) To vote in public elections
   (b) To develop the scientific temper
   (c) To safeguard public property
   (d) To abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals

2. **Consider the following provisions under the Directive Principles of State Policy as enshrined in the Constitution of India:**
   1. Securing for citizens of India a uniform civil code
   2. Organizing village Panchayats
   3. Promoting cottage industries in rural areas
   4. Securing for all the workers reasonable leisure and cultural opportunities
   Which of the above are the Gandhian Principles that are reflected in the Directive Principles of State Policy?
   (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
   (b) 2 and 3 only
   (c) 1, 3 and 4 only
   (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

3. **Which of the following special powers have been conferred on the Rajya Sabha by the Constitution of India?**
   (a) To change the existing territory of a State and to change the name of a State
   (b) To pass a resolution empowering the Parliament to make laws in the State List and to create one or more All India Services
   (c) To amend the election procedure of the President and to determine the pension of the President after his/her retirement
   (d) To determine the functions of the Election Commission and to determine the number of Election Commissioners.

4. **Which of the following provisions of the Constitution of India have a bearing on Education?**
   1. Directive Principles of State Policy
   2. Rural and Urban Local Bodies
   3. Fifth Schedule
   4. Sixth Schedule
   5. Seventh Schedule
   Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
   (a) 1 and 2 only
   (b) 3, 4 and 5 only
   (c) 1, 2 and 5 only
   (d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Answers

1. **(a)** To vote in public elections is not a fundamental duty.
2. **(b)** Organizing village Panchayats and promoting cottage industries in rural areas are the Gandhian principles that are reflected in the Directive Principles of State Policy.
3. **(b)** Rajya Sabha can pass a resolution empowering the parliament to make laws in the state list and to create one or more All India Services. This is a special power that has been conferred on the Rajya Sabha by the constitution.
4. **(d)** The items DPSP, Rural and Urban Local Bodies, 6th Schedule, 7th Schedule provide provision for education.

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