

The Hindu Important News Articles For UPSC CSE

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Edition : International Table of Contents

Page 01 Syllabus: GS III :Environment / Preliminary Examination	India's rainfall deficit 35% as monsoon stalls
Page 01 Syllabus : GS II : International Relations/ Preliminary Examination	World suffers from a shortage of trust, PM Modi tells G7 leaders
Page 07 Syllabus: GS III :Environment / Preliminary Examination	Not binary: India can save its forests by winning the war on poverty
Page 07 Syllabus : GS III: Science and Tech / Preliminary Examination	GRAPES-3: A cosmic-ray tracker
Page 10 Syllabus: GS II : Indian Polity / Preliminary Examination	What does Tenth Schedule provide on party mergers?
Page 08: Editorial Analysis Syllabus : GS II: International Relations	Moving from war to deal in a deeply divided region

Page 01 : GS II : International Relations / Preliminary Examination

This news highlights the uncertainty of monsoon rainfall in India and its agro-economic impacts. Due to a sluggish start to the monsoon in the month of June, an overall 35% rainfall deficit has been recorded in the country. The stalling of the monsoon over Central India and the West Coast has heightened concerns over the sowing of Kharif crops and water security. Amid global warnings of a 'Super El Niño', the steps being taken by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) and the government are a test of our disaster management and agricultural resilience in this era of climate change.

India's rainfall deficit 35% as monsoon stalls

Central India faces a 61% rain deficit as monsoon falters; govt. directs crop-wise contingency plans | Centre places around 200 districts under priority monitoring; weekly reviews of El Niño ordered | Deficit is significant in a year forecasters globally have warned will likely be a 'Super El Niño' year

Jacob Koshy
A.M. Jigeesh
NEW DELHI

Over a week past the monsoon's normal arrival date, the rain clouds have yet to reach Mumbai, driving India's nationwide monsoon deficit to 35% as of Tuesday.

The shortfall in rainfall is concentrated in the regions the monsoon has failed to cover – Maharashtra, the Konkan coast, and the adjoining regions of central India – where its northward progress has been stalled for several days.

India Meteorological Department (IMD) statistics show that apart from northwest India, which has received 5% more rain than normal for this time of the year, all other regions are in the red, including east and northeast India (-43%), central India (-61%), and

the southern peninsula (-14%).

Meanwhile, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, chairing a review of kharif preparations on Tuesday, directed States to identify districts facing low or uneven rainfall and to draw up crop-wise contingency plans, so that affected farmers could be "immediately provided with alternatives, advice, and assistance."

The Union government has placed 150 to 200 districts under priority monitoring, ordered weekly El Niño reviews, and is encouraging a shift towards cotton and pulses.

'Better placed'

Mr. Chouhan has maintained that seed and fertilizer stocks are adequate and that reservoir storage – at 30.4% of capacity in May, against a 25.1% average in previous El Niño years – leaves the country

Hanging clouds

While a monsoon deficit in June is not unusual, it assumes additional significance in a year which has been globally forecast to witness a 'Super El Niño'

Rainfall departures for El Niño years since 2000:

Year	June	Whole southwest monsoon
2002	+2%	19% below LPA*
2004	+1%	13% below LPA
2009	-47%	22% below LPA
2014	-44%	12% below LPA
2015	+14%	14% below LPA
2023	-8%	6% below LPA



*LPA: Long Period Average
Source: IMD

better placed than in earlier seasons with rainfall deficiency.

While a rainfall deficit in June, the first of the monsoon months, is not unusual, it assumes additional significance in a year that forecasters globally have warned will likely be a 'Super El Niño' year.

An analysis of the IMD's all-India June rainfall departures for El Niño years

since 2000 shows no consistent early-season signal. In June 2015, during one of the strongest El Niño events on record, rainfall was 14% above normal. June 2002 and June 2004, both years that ended in drought, recorded near-normal June rainfall of around 2% and 1% above normal respectively, with the deficits arriving only in July and later.

Only in 2009 (47% below normal) and 2014 (44% below normal) did June rainfall fall as sharply as it has this year. In 2023, the most recent El Niño year, June closed about 8% below normal, within the IMD's normal range.

An El Niño event – the periodic warming of the central and eastern Pacific Ocean that tends to suppress the Indian monsoon – establishes itself only in the spring and exerts its influence mainly in the middle and later part of the season.

"June rainfall and the pace of onset, by contrast, are governed largely by local and regional factors," according to D.S. Pai, chief forecaster at the IMD's Regional Meteorological Centre in Chennai.

First pulse weakened

This year, the monsoon set in over Kerala on June 4, just three days behind its

normal date, but its advance up the west coast has since lost momentum. Dr. Pai explained that the monsoon moves in pulses, and the first pulse, having reached the outskirts of Mumbai, did not sustain itself. Instead, an "anticyclonic circulation" to the city's north, combined with a westerly push from mid-latitude weather systems, has prevented the monsoon from establishing itself, he told *The Hindu*.

The Madden-Julian Oscillation, a travelling band of atmospheric activity that can strengthen or weaken the monsoon, is currently in an "unfavourable phase". This implies that the onset over Mumbai is likely to be delayed by a further five to six days, until the next pulse strengthens, possibly aided by a low-pressure system forming over the Bay of Bengal, he reckoned.

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration issued an El Niño advisory on June 11, confirming the event had formed and placing the odds of it becoming "very strong" by winter at 63%. The World Meteorological Organization had earlier put the probability of El Niño emerging between June and August at 80%. The IMD's own June bulletin states that El Niño conditions are present and that the ocean and atmosphere have coupled, with no positive Indian Ocean Dipole expected to offset it this season.

The warnings have been building. IMD's first-stage forecast in April pegged seasonal rainfall at 92% of the long-period average; its May-end update lowered this to 90% and assigned a 60% probability to a deficient year – the agency's most pessimistic pre-season call since 2015.

Key Points: Current Status of Monsoon and Regional Disparities

- **Countrywide Rainfall Deficit:** By mid-June, India has recorded a 35% below-average monsoon rainfall.
- **Regional Disparities:**
 - **Central India:** Is in the most severe condition, where rainfall is 61% below normal.
 - **East and Northeast India:** A 43% deficit has been observed here.
 - **Southern Peninsula:** A 14% deficit has been recorded.
 - **Northwest India:** Is the only region where rainfall is 5% above normal.

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- **Interruption in Progress:** The monsoon reached Kerala on June 4 (3 days later than the normal date), but after that, its progress stalled upon reaching the Maharashtra and Konkan coast, delaying its onset in several major economic centers including Mumbai.

Technical and Geographical Reasons for the Weak Monsoon

- **Weak First Pulse:** The monsoon advances in the form of waves or pulses. This time, the first pulse weakened after reaching the outskirts of Mumbai.
- **Anticyclonic Circulation:** Due to the formation of an anticyclonic zone north of Mumbai and the pressure of westerly winds coming from mid-latitude weather systems, the advancement of monsoon winds stopped.
- **Unfavorable Phase of the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO):** The MJO, a global system of clouds and wind moving eastward near the equator, is currently in an 'unsuitable phase', slowing down the momentum received by the Indian monsoon.

Threat of El Niño and Historical Perspective

- **Super El Niño Warning:** Global agencies like NOAA (US) and WMO have predicted up to a 63% probability of a very strong or 'Super El Niño' forming this year. El Niño is a warming phenomenon of the Pacific Ocean that usually weakens the Indian monsoon.
- **Correlation Between June Rainfall and El Niño:** According to meteorologists, the impact of El Niño is mainly visible in the middle and latter half of the monsoon (July-September). June rainfall is determined by local and regional factors.

Analysis of Historical Data:

- **2015:** Despite being an extremely strong El Niño year, June saw 14% more rainfall than normal.
- **2002 and 2004:** Both these years ended in severe drought, but rainfall in June was almost normal (+2% and +1% respectively).
- **2009 and 2014:** Only in these two years was a massive deficit of 47% and 44% respectively seen at the beginning of June, similar to what is happening this year.

5. Impact on Agriculture and Economy (Agricultural Crisis)

- **Delay in Kharif Sowing:** June rainfall is crucial for the initial sowing of Kharif crops (paddy, maize, cotton, pulses). The rainfall deficit is affecting the sowing cycle.
- **Risk of Food Inflation:** Water scarcity in major pulse and oilseed producing regions (such as Central India and Maharashtra) could reduce production, which may increase inflation in the market.

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- **Impact on Rural Demand:** More than half of India's population depends on agriculture. The failure of the monsoon reduces rural income, which directly impacts the country's overall economic growth (GDP).

6. Government Response and Contingency Measures (Policy Measures)

- **Priority Monitoring:** The central government has placed about 150 to 200 districts under special monitoring, where the rainfall crisis is deepest.
- **Crop-wise Contingency Plans:** States have been instructed to immediately provide seeds, advice, and assistance to farmers for low-water or alternative crops (such as a shift towards cotton and pulses).
- **Weekly El Niño Review:** Given the seriousness of the situation, the government has ordered a weekly review of the effects of El Niño.
- **Better Reservoir Conditions:** A matter of relief is that this time in May, the water storage capacity in India's major reservoirs stood at 30.4%, which is better than the average of previous El Niño years (25.1%). This provides an initial backup for irrigation.

Conclusion

Indian agriculture remains largely a 'gamble on the monsoon' even today, and this article is living proof of that. The 35% deficit in June and the shadow of El Niño pose a major challenge to the Indian agro-economy. However, the better condition of reservoirs and proactive government policies (such as crop contingency plans and district-level monitoring) can mitigate the impact of this crisis. As a long-term solution, India must increase investment in 'Climate-Smart Agriculture', the expansion of micro-irrigation, and the development of drought-resistant seeds so that our food security remains impregnable in the face of global climate anomalies.

UPSC Prelims Exam Study Questions

Question: Consider the following statements regarding the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO):

1. It is an eastward-moving atmospheric system in the equatorial region.
2. It can influence the intensity of the Indian monsoon.
3. Its impact is limited only to the Pacific Ocean.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

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Ans: (a)

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Question:Analyze the geographical and atmospheric factors responsible for the uncertainty of the Indian monsoon. Explain the role of the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) and El Niño. (15Marks, 250Words)

Page 01 : GS II : International Relations / Preliminary Examination

The outreach sessions and side bilateral meetings held during the G7 Summit organized in the French city of Evian have been highly significant for India's global diplomacy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi raised the issue of a global "Shortage of Trust", establishing India as a vocal voice of the "Global South". Along with this, strategic discussions held with the heads of state of the US, Canada, UK, and UAE worked to strengthen India's national and economic interests.

Core Points: News Analysis

1. Global Shortage of Trust and Leadership of the 'Global South'

- **Trust as a Strategic Asset:** PM Modi clarified that the current world is not struggling with a shortage of resources, but with a "Shortage of Trust". To strengthen global partnerships, mutual trust is the most important strategic asset.
- **Partnership Based on Equality:** India strongly advocated that international relations must move out of the traditional 'Donor-Recipient' model and operate on the basis of equality.
- **Expectations of the Global South:** India placed the point on the stage that developing and poor countries (Global South) do not just want financial aid or charity, but strong and dignified 'Partnerships'.
- **Selective Alignment:** India adopted a balanced approach keeping its sovereignty and economic interests in mind:
 - It became a partner in the roadmap against cancer and coordinated efforts to tackle the Ebola epidemic.
 - It did not sign the G7 communiqué (declaration) on restructuring the Development Finance Ecosystem, reflecting India's independent foreign policy.

2. India-Canada Relations: 'Reset' and Economic Momentum After Tension

- **Diplomatic Dynamics:** This was the fourth meeting within a year with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, indicating a turnaround (Reset) in relations after the diplomatic



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with leaders of G7 members and other countries in Evian, eastern France, on Tuesday. AFP

World suffers from a shortage of trust, PM Modi tells G7 leaders

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

With a message that trust was in short supply globally, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday participated in a session with the Group of Seven (G7) countries and others on "Forging New Partnerships and Rebuilding International Solidarity".

In addition to the G7 and India, other partner countries - Brazil, Egypt, Kenya, and South Korea - participated in these discussions along with the World Bank and African Development Bank. Mr. Modi met U.S. President Donald Trump for the first time since February 2025 at the meeting.

The host country France's intention for the session was to build a fairer and more effective system of international partnerships. Some of the sessions have reportedly been branded in a way that would hold Mr. Trump's interest.

Mr. Modi summarised his messages to the gathering on social media. "Mutual trust is the most important strategic asset today. But, sadly, today, the world does not suffer from a shortage of resources...it suffers from a shortage of trust," he wrote on X.

Mr. Modi said the future of partnerships was based on re-building trust and urged countries to move beyond the donor-recipient paradigm and work as equals in the development context. India has, in recent years, sought to play a leadership role for middle income and poorer countries.

"Emphasised that the Global South has immense expectations from the world. More than support, it seeks partnership," Mr. Modi wrote, adding that he had highlighted India's efforts in Africa during the G7 session, including its focus on training, water, agriculture, energy, and capacity building.

India, however, did not sign its name to a communiqué on restructuring the development finance ecosystem which the G7 and Kenya and South Korea supported, while putting its name to a call for coordinated response to the Bundibugyo ebola outbreak and a roadmap to fight cancer.

Videos showed Mr. Modi and Mr. Trump shaking hands before the meeting, during which they sat next to each other.

TALKS WITH CANADA, U.K.
» PAGE 4

tensions (such as the Hardeep Singh Nijjar controversy) that arose during the previous Trudeau government in Canada.

- **Free Trade Agreement (FTA/CEPA):** Both countries committed to finalizing the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) by the end of 2026 and to doubling bilateral trade by the end of this decade.
- **Energy Security:** Canada is a key partner in meeting India's energy requirements. Discussions took place to advance the 2.6 billion Canadian Dollar uranium supply agreement (2027–2035) signed in March 2026.
- **Defense and Security Cooperation:** Both countries announced the initiation of talks on the 'General Security of Information Agreement' (GSOIA) for the secure exchange of classified information and robust defense cooperation.

3. India-UK Relations: Commercial and Academic Progress

- **Status of Free Trade Agreement (FTA):** In the meeting with Labour Party Prime Minister Keir Starmer, an agreement was reached to operationalize the historic trade agreement signed in July 2025 as soon as possible.
- **Review of 'Vision 2035':** Both leaders reviewed the progress in the fields of trade, investment, defense, and technology under 'Vision 2035', the roadmap for India-UK strategic relations.
- **Academic Cooperation:** Satisfaction was expressed over the progress of establishing campuses of British universities in India (such as the University of Liverpool in Bengaluru, and York and Bristol universities in Mumbai).

4. India-UAE Relations: Stability in West Asia and Safety of Diaspora

- **Geopolitical Tensions and Security:** Amidst the ongoing conflict in West Asia (Middle East) and the recent attacks carried out by Iran, PM Modi discussed security challenges. Both countries called for ensuring safe and uninterrupted maritime trade through the Strait of Hormuz.
- **Diaspora Indian Security:** India expressed gratitude to UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan for the care and safety of the massive Indian community (Expatriates) residing in the UAE.

Conclusion

The G7 Summit held in Evian presents an excellent example of India's 'Multi-alignment Strategy'. While on one hand, India deepened its strategic relations with Western powers (G7) and the US, on the other hand, it also maintained its diplomatic autonomy (Strategic Autonomy) while protecting the interests of the 'Global South' on global platforms. The positive shift in relations with Canada, the commercial commitment with the UK, and the consensus with the UAE on West Asian security demonstrate that India is fully prepared to shape the global order as a polar power in the times to come.

UPSC Prelims Exam Study Questions

Question: Consider the following statements regarding the G7:

1. India is a permanent member of the G7.
2. The G7 is a group of the world's major developed economies.
3. Non-member countries can be invited to the G7 summit as outreach partners.

Select the correct answer:

- (a) Only 2
- (b) Only 2 and 3
- (c) Only 1 and 3
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: b)

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Question: "The current global order is grappling not with a scarcity of resources, but with a deficit of trust." In the context of this statement, analyze the concept of a 'trust-based global partnership' proposed by India. **(15Marks, 250 Words)**

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Page 07 : GS III : Environment / Preliminary Examination

A recent global study published in the journal 'Nature Sustainability' has challenged the traditional approach to environmental conservation. Generally, biodiversity conservation and human needs have been viewed as binary (opposite to each other) by policymakers. However, this study by several international universities, including the Indian School of Business (ISB), has proven that forests can be protected only by reducing poverty and providing alternative livelihoods to local communities. This analysis is particularly relevant in the context of India, where approximately 27.5 crore people depend on forests for their livelihood.

Not binary: India can save its forests by winning the war on poverty

Forests with more poor households and communities that depended more on fuelwood were also found to have less diverse tree species, a new study has found. On the other hand, forests where communities had access to alternative livelihoods such as farming, had more diverse trees species

Ipsita Herlekar

Traditionally, many conservationists and policymakers have seen choice between protecting nature and meeting human needs. Forests were often seen as places that had to be protected from people, while alleviating poverty and economic development were treated as separate concerns.

A new international study has concluded that this is a harmful view. In a paper in the journal *Nature Sustainability*, researchers from the University of Notre Dame, the University of Michigan, Yale University, the University of Colorado Boulder (U.S.), the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, the University of Manchester (U.K.), the University of Victoria (Canada), and the Indian School of Business analysed data from community-managed forests in the tropics.

The data came from the International Forestry Resources and Institutions network, and spanned 222 community-managed tropical forests in 15 countries from 1993 to 2017.

The dataset's size allowed the researchers to understand both current patterns in forest biodiversity and how they had changed over time. Principally, they found a significant link between people's livelihoods and forest biodiversity.

Forests, people, livelihoods
Forests with more poor households and communities that depended more on fuelwood were also found to have less diverse tree species. The team also found similar patterns in forests in densely populated areas with higher levels of poverty.

On the other hand, forests where communities had access to alternative livelihoods, such as farming, had more diverse trees.

Tree species diversity refers to the number of tree species in a forest; it is an important measure of biodiversity. Forests with more species tend to support more wildlife, are ecologically more stable, and are often more resilient to environmental change.

Overall, the analysis found that a greater dependence on forest resources was associated with lower tree species diversity.

However, the researchers emphasised that poverty is not responsible for biodiversity loss. They pointed out that when people have fewer livelihood options and depend heavily on forests to survive, the pressure on forest resources automatically increases. The way out is to improve economic opportunities.

The forests model
The study also focused on human-dominated landscapes, which are common in India. Most forests in the country are owned and managed by State



Garo tribal women carrying firewood in the West Garo hills district of Meghalaya in 2014. Representative image. <https://bit.ly/3Uu0000>

Forest Departments. And for decades, this approach has followed the fortress model — where protected areas are managed by minimising human activities and restricting access to resources. While this model has allowed the Departments to recover several iconic species and strengthen protection, it has some severe limitations.

Today, many protected areas are increasingly becoming isolated islands surrounded by human-dominated landscapes.

"The forests in these landscapes are smaller in size and bear a heavy burden of extraction", Ashwin Chhetry, associate professor of Public Policy at the Indian School of Business and one of the study's authors, said.

Around 25 million people depend on these forests to varying degrees for their livelihoods and daily needs.

"But these forests are ecologically important and provide significant ecosystem services", Dr. Chhetry said.

According to him, the new findings can be used to support conservation by prioritising wildlife corridors — patches of forests that form a loose link between protected areas.

"These corridors are used by large mammals to move between protected areas. The improvement of species richness in these corridors will increase forest resilience and support conservation directly", he said.

Helping conservation
To reduce pressure on forests, State Forest Departments across India have introduced initiatives like distributing subsidised LPG connections and efficient cooking stoves and heaters around many tiger reserves and national parks. The measures reduce people's need for fuelwood and to enter forests.

Today, many protected areas are increasingly becoming isolated islands surrounded by human-dominated landscapes. They bear a heavy burden of extraction from communities who depend on them for their livelihood

Extending similar support to private landholdings and community forests along wildlife corridors could help conservation.

However, Imran Siddiqui, senior field conservationist at the Centre for Wildlife Studies, who has worked extensively in protected areas and with forest communities in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, said that while such initiatives are well-intentioned and that communities often welcome them, they face implementation challenges.

"Funding can be inconsistent, participation from local communities may vary, and long-term support is not always guaranteed", he said.

Conservation partners
Today, there is growing recognition among wildlife conservationists and forest managers that conservation can't succeed without the support of local communities.

In addition to fuel alternatives and subsidies, many State Forest Departments also give local community members jobs in tourism, forest protection, and seasonal conservation work.

The late ecologist Madhav Gadgil was a strong advocate of an inclusive approach, believing conservation efforts would be more effective if local communities had rights, incentives, and a meaningful role in managing natural resources. He also emphasised the value of traditional

ecological knowledge, and argued people who had lived alongside forests for generations possessed insights that could complement scientific approaches to conservation.

In Ladakh, the Snow Leopard Conservation has mitigated economic losses of human-wildlife conflict with community-run homestays and livestock insurance programmes. In Maharashtra's Sindhudurg district, village-based Mangrove Co-Management Committees help protect mangrove ecosystems while supporting fisheries, ecotourism, and sustainable aquaculture.

In Arunachal Pradesh, hornbill nest adoption programmes run by the Nature Conservation Foundation have encouraged local communities to protect nesting sites, with former Nishi tribe hunters now serving as nest protectors and forest parrollers.

There is also tremendous scope to expand these initiatives and to further support community welfare.

As Mr. Siddiqui said, wildlife tourism is a growing multi-million-dollar industry, yet only a small fraction of its revenue reaches the communities living alongside forests and protected areas. He added that a greater share of these benefits should be directed to local communities, creating stronger incentives for conservation.

The findings of the new study highlight the close links between alleviating poverty and conserving biodiversity, and show how socio-economic conditions and conservation goals need not be in conflict with each other by recognizing these connections, both conservationists and policymakers can design more inclusive frameworks to benefit both people and nature.

(Ipsita Herlekar is an independent science writer. ipstaherlekar@gmail.com)

THE GIST

Researchers pointed out that when people have fewer livelihood options and depend heavily on forests to survive, the pressure on forest resources automatically increases.

The new findings can be used to support conservation by prioritising wildlife corridors — patches of forests that form a loose link between protected areas.

The findings show how socio-economic conditions and conservation goals need not be in conflict with each other.



Key Points: Key Findings of the Study

- **Direct Link Between Livelihood and Biodiversity:** In areas where poverty was higher and people depended more on forests for fuelwood, the tree species diversity was found to be significantly lower.
- **Positive Impact of Alternative Livelihoods:** Communities that had access to farming or other non-forest livelihood options exhibited better tree diversity and ecological stability in their surrounding forests.

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- **Poverty Not Directly to Blame:** Researchers clarified that poor people do not intentionally harm forests. When they have no other means of survival, their pressure on forests naturally increases. The solution is not to lock up forests, but to improve economic opportunities.

Forest Management in India: Challenges and 'The Fortress Model'

- **Limitations of the Fortress Model:** For decades, the Forest Department in India has adopted the 'Fortress Model', where human activities are completely prohibited. Although this has helped save some iconic species like tigers, it has turned forests into 'isolated islands' amidst human populations.
- **Pressure on Wildlife Corridors:** Forests outside protected areas (which serve as corridors) are shrinking and face heavy pressure from resource extraction.
- **Implementation Issues:** Although the government has launched schemes like distributing LPG connections and advanced stoves, their full benefits are not being realized due to a lack of continuous funding, fluctuating local participation, and a lack of long-term support.

Way Forward: Successful Indian Examples of Inclusive Conservation

The article provides some excellent case studies that can be used as a 'Way Forward' in UPSC answers:

- **Ladakh (Snow Leopard Conservancy):** To compensate for the economic losses caused by wildlife-human conflict, 'community-run homestays' and livestock insurance programs are being run here.
- **Maharashtra (Sindhudurg District):** Village-based 'Mangrove Co-management Committees' here are conserving mangroves while simultaneously promoting ecotourism and sustainable aquaculture.
- **Arunachal Pradesh (Hornbill Adoption Program):** In this program run by the 'Nature Conservation Foundation', former hunters of the Nyishi tribe have now become guardians of hornbill nests and forest conservators.
- **Redistribution of Tourism Revenue:** Wildlife tourism is a multi-million dollar industry. A major share of its revenue should go directly to the local communities living on the fringes of forests, so that a strong economic incentive for conservation is created within them.

Conclusion

Eminent ecologist the late Madhav Gadgil always emphasized that conservation cannot be successful unless local communities are given their rights, incentives, and a meaningful role in resource management. This study confirms this very idea. Policymakers must now understand that Sustainable Development Goal 1 (No Poverty) and Sustainable Development Goal 15 (Life on Land/Biodiversity Conservation) are complementary to each other. India can secure its biodiversity only when it wins the war against the poverty of the people living with the forests. Environmental policies must be based on the principle of 'Nature with Humans' rather than 'Humans versus Nature'.

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UPSC Prelims Exam Study Questions

Question: The 'Fortress Conservation Model' refers to—

- (a) Making local communities partners in forest management
- (b) Minimizing or completely prohibiting human activities in conservation areas
- (c) Handing over forest conservation to the private sector
- (d) Promoting only wildlife tourism

Ans: b)

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Question: "Poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation are complementary to each other, not contradictory." Discuss this statement in the light of recent research studies. **(15 Marks, 250 Words)**



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Page 07 :GS III : Science and Technology / Preliminary Examination

Recently, researchers from Mumbai, Kochi, and Japan analyzed 22 years of data from the GRAPES-3 (Gamma Ray Astronomy PeV EnergieS-3) telescope located in Ooty (Tamil Nadu). Through this study, they have developed a new methodology that can analyze changes in Earth's upper atmospheric temperature and the Sun's magnetic field in real-time and with high accuracy. This research is scheduled to be published in August 2026 in the renowned scientific journal 'Astroparticle Physics', reflecting India's growing capability in space science and atmospheric studies.

Key Points

GRAPES-3 Telescope's Working Mechanism:

- **Muon Detector:** Unlike a traditional telescope, it does not look at light but detects subatomic particles called 'muons'.
- **Creation of Muons:** When high-energy cosmic rays coming from deep space collide with Earth's upper atmosphere, muon particles are born as a result of this collision.
- **Structure of the Detector:** This observatory facility located in Ooty has 16 independent modules. Each module contains 232 'proportional counters'.
- **Signal Recording Method:** These counters are long steel tubes filled with a mixture of argon and methane gas, with a thin tungsten wire at the center. When a muon passes through this tube, it strips electrons away from the gas molecules. These electrons are attracted toward the wire, generating an electrical pulse, and the telescope records this as a 'hit'.
- **Grid Layout:** These tubes are arranged in four layers, where each layer is at a right angle to the layer below it. This grid structure helps scientists track the precise path and angle of the incoming muons.
- **Concrete Layers:** To count only high-energy muons, thick layers of reinforced concrete are placed between the tubes so that unnecessary low-energy particles are filtered out.

Key Findings and Significance of the Study:

- **Real-time Atmospheric Monitoring:** Scientists can now track changes in Earth's upper atmospheric temperature in real-time based on muon activities.
- **Study of Solar Magnetic Field:** This technique will help in understanding the effects of the Sun's magnetic field and space weather, which can affect satellite communication and GPS systems on Earth.

WHAT IS IT?

GRAPES-3: A cosmic-ray tracker

Vasudevan Mukunth

Researchers from Mumbai, Kochi, and Japan used the GRAPES-3 telescope to track how the earth's upper atmosphere temperature and the sun's magnetic field affect muons — subatomic particles from space. By analysing 22 years of data, they developed a way to use these measurements to monitor changes in the upper atmosphere in real-time with high accuracy. The findings are to be published in the August issue of *Astroparticle Physics*.

The GRAPES-3 telescope in Ooty, Tamil Nadu does not look at light like a traditional telescope. Instead, it is a muon detector. Muons are created when high-energy cosmic rays from deep space collide with the earth's upper atmosphere. The facility consists of 16 independent modules spread over a large area. Each module contains 232 proportional counters, which are long steel tubes filled with a special mixture of argon and methane, with a thin tungsten wire running through the centre. When a muon passes through a tube, it knocks electrons out of the gas molecules. These electrons are pulled towards the wire, creating an electrical pulse that the telescope records as a hit.



The detector array of GRAPES-3 in Ooty. HIDEKI TANAKA (CC BY-SA)

The tubes are arranged in four layers, with each layer positioned at a right angle to the one below. This grid layout allows scientists to track the exact path and angle of the incoming muons. Thick layers of reinforced concrete are placed between the tubes to ensure the telescope only counts high-energy muons that are strong enough to penetrate the concrete. This is how GRAPES-3 is able to produce a high-resolution map of the invisible cosmic forces affecting the earth.

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to science@thehindu.co.in with the subject 'Daily page'

- **High-Resolution Mapping:** By utilizing a massive 22 years of data, it has become possible to prepare a high-resolution map of the invisible cosmic forces affecting the Earth.

UPSC Mains Relevance

This topic is directly linked to the "Science and Technology" section of General Studies Paper-3 (GS Paper 3):

- **Development of Indigenous Capability:** Global-level research conducted by an observatory located in India (Ooty) demonstrates India's self-reliance in the field of science.
- **Disaster Management and Space Weather:** Precise information about the upper atmosphere and solar magnetic field can improve satellite safety and weather forecasting systems.

Conclusion

The recent research conducted through the GRAPES-3 telescope is a major milestone in India's fundamental science research. It not only clarifies the complex relationships between cosmic rays and Earth's atmosphere but also provides practical tools for meteorology and space-based technologies in the future. This successful analysis of 22 years of accumulated data through international collaboration (India-Japan) further strengthens India's credibility in the global scientific community.

UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Question: What is the primary objective of the GRAPES-3 telescope?

- (a) Study of visible light
- (b) Study of gravitational waves
- (c) Study of muons and cosmic rays
- (d) Capturing direct images of black holes

Ans: c)

The Tenth Schedule, also known as the 'Anti-Defection Law', was included in the Indian Constitution in 1985 through the 52nd Constitutional Amendment. Its primary objective was to prevent political instability caused by legislators frequently changing parties and to check the culture of 'Aaya Ram, Gaya Ram' (frequent floor-crossing). Recent cases involving the declaration of merger into the Nationalist Citizen's Party (NCPI) by 20 Lok Sabha MPs of the Trinamool Congress (TMC), and the merger of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha MPs into the BJP, have once again brought the 'Merger' provisions of the Tenth Schedule and its growing misuse into discussion.

What does Tenth Schedule provide on party mergers?

Why has the misuse of the merger provision increased after the deletion of paragraph 3?

LETTER AND SPIRIT

Rangarajan R.

The story so far:

As many as 20 rebel Trinamool Congress MPs met the Lok Sabha Speaker and announced their decision to merge with Nationalist Citizens Party of India (NCPD). This has raised issues about the interpretation of Tenth Schedule with respect to merger of political parties.

What is the origin of Tenth Schedule? The defections of legislators during 1960s and 70s from their parent parties created political instability in many States bringing down elected governments. This prompted the 52nd constitutional amendment to introduce the 'anti-defection' law through the Tenth Schedule in 1985. This Schedule provides

that a member of a House of Parliament or State legislature who voluntarily gives up the membership of their 'political party' or votes against the instructions of their party in a House are liable for disqualification from such House. The 'political party' is the entire organisation of a party, while the 'legislature party' is all the members of a political party in a House of Parliament or State legislature.

The Tenth Schedule originally had two exceptions that would not render the members liable for disqualification viz., one-third of members of the 'legislature party' splitting to form a separate group (paragraph 3), or a merger of their 'political party' with another party that is approved by two-thirds of the members of its 'legislature party' (paragraph 4). However, considering the need to strengthen the 'anti-defection' law, paragraph 3 was omitted in 2003.

With the deletion of paragraph 3, there have been instances of two-third

members of a legislature party 'practically' defecting but claiming to be the original political party in order to escape disqualification. This happened in the case of Shiv Sena and Nationalist Congress Party in June 2022 and July 2023 respectively.

There have also been instances where more than two-third members of a 'legislature party' in a house have merged themselves with another political party to escape disqualification. This happened in September 2019 (in Rajasthan) when all 6 Bahujan Samajwadi Party MLAs merged themselves with the Congress and in September 2022 (in Goa) when 8 out of the 11 Congress MLAs merged themselves with the BJP. The Bombay High Court upheld the merger of Goa's Congress Legislature Party with the BJP, though an appeal is pending in the apex court. A similar move occurred in April 2026 when 7 of 10 AAP Rajya Sabha MPs merged with the BJP.

What is the present case in Bengal?

After the recent West Bengal polls, around 60 of the 80 MLAs elected from Trinamool Congress formed a separate faction led by Ritabrata Banerjee, who was recognised as the Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly even after the party expelled him. Meanwhile, 20 of the 28 Lok Sabha MPs have submitted their decision to the Lok Sabha Speaker to merge themselves with the NCPI. Their claim is that they constitute two-thirds of the legislature party and are hence authorised to take this step under the provisions of the Tenth Schedule without attracting disqualification.

What may be way forward?

A plain reading of the Tenth Schedule allows only for merger of a political party with another party that is approved by two-thirds of its legislature party. It does not authorise two-thirds of the legislature party in a house to merge itself with another political party to claim immunity from defection. However, in the recent instance with respect to proposed merger of Trinamool Lok Sabha MPs with NCPI as well as the merger of Rajya Sabha MPs of AAP with the BJP, this is what has happened. It is also subject to interpretation whether a merger of an 'original political party' can happen only with another political party that already has members in the legislative house. Moreover, the authority to decide on the

disqualification of members is vested in the Speaker or Chairman. While they are expected to perform this constitutional role impartially, the presiding officers have often favoured the ruling dispensation. The Supreme Court in K. M. Singh case in 2020, recommended that the Parliament amend the Constitution to vest these powers in an independent tribunal headed by judges.

An authoritative Supreme Court judgement in the matters of merger and setting up of an independent tribunal to decide on disqualification may reduce the ambiguities surrounding the Tenth Schedule. However, it may not prevent the ingenious methods adopted by political parties to circumvent the Tenth Schedule. Any such manoeuvres may be viewed as a betrayal of the electorate by the elected representatives. A stricter measure, as recommended by the Law commission in 1999, could be to amend the Tenth Schedule and delete paragraph 4 that provides exemption from disqualification for merger of political parties. Any action by elected members of a legislature party against their political party should lead to disqualification that results in seeking fresh mandate from the people.

Rangarajan R. is a former IAS officer and author of 'Courseware on Polity Simplified'. He currently trains at 'Officers IAS Academy'. Views expressed are personal.



What provisions does the Tenth Schedule make regarding the merger of parties?

Paragraph 4 of the Tenth Schedule provides exceptions or exemptions regarding the merger of political parties:

- **Exemption from Disqualification:** If a member leaves their original political party to join another party, it is considered defection. However, if their entire political party 'merges' with another दल (party), the members cannot be disqualified.
- **The Two-Thirds (2/3) Rule:** Such a merger is considered valid only when at least two-thirds (2/3) of the legislators or parliamentarians of that party present in that House (the Legislature Party) give their consent in favor of this merger.
- **Political Party vs. Legislature Party:** According to the law, 'Political Party' means the entire organizational structure, whereas 'Legislature Party' means the elected members of that party within the House. It is necessary for the process to be completed at both levels for a merger.

Why has the misuse of merger provisions increased after the deletion of Paragraph 3 (Split)?

The original Tenth Schedule had two exceptions—Paragraph 3 (Split) under which 1/3rd of the members could form a separate faction, and Paragraph 4 (Merger) under which 2/3rd of the members could move to another party. However, to strengthen political stability, Paragraph 3 (Split) was deleted by the 91st Constitutional Amendment in 2003. Following this, the main reasons for the increase in misuse are as follows:

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Daily News Analysis

- **The Only Route for Wholesale Defection:** After the option of a 'Split' was eliminated, 'Merger' is now the only legal route left to escape disqualification. Therefore, rebel members now directly attempt to gather the 2/3rd figure.
- **Misinterpretation of the Law (Treating the Legislature Party itself as the Original Party):** The law clarifies that the original political party must merge, which is then approved by 2/3rd of the legislators. But now, rebel factions merely gather the 2/3rd figure within the House and declare themselves as the 'original party' or directly merge with another party, even if the organization is not with them (as happened in the case of Shiv Sena in June 2022 and NCP in July 2023).
- **Disregard for the Electoral Mandate:** In several states (such as BSP in Rajasthan and Congress in Goa), more than 2/3rd of the legislators merged themselves into another party. This makes a mockery of the public vote and mandate, as the voter had chosen the candidate based on the ideology of a specific party.
- **Partisan Role of the Speaker (Presiding Officer):** The authority to take the final decision on defection rests with the Presiding Officer (Speaker/Chairman) of the House. In practice, it has been observed that Speakers often keep the decision pending for months or years to rule in favor of the ruling party, thereby giving time and protection even to illegal mergers.

Way Forward

- **Clear Verdict from the Court:** The Supreme Court should deliver a final and binding judgment regarding the distinction between the 'original political party' and the 'legislature party', so that the defection of merely 2/3rd of the legislators is not treated as a 'valid merger'.
- **Constitution of an Independent Tribunal:** In the 2020 K.M. Singh case, the Supreme Court suggested that the power to decide defection cases should be transferred from the Speaker to an independent tribunal headed by retired judges, so that impartiality is maintained.
- **Law Commission's Recommendation (Deletion of Paragraph 4):** In 1999, the Law Commission recommended that the provision of merger (Paragraph 4) should also be completely deleted. If any elected representative goes against their party, they should be immediately disqualified and sent back to the public to seek a fresh mandate.

Conclusion

The Tenth Schedule was introduced to maintain political purity and stability, but political parties have exploited its loopholes to turn it into a tool for "wholesale defection". The deletion of Paragraph 3 did not stop defection at the grassroots level; instead, it took on a new and larger form in the guise of a "merger". In a democracy, the sanctity of the electoral mandate is paramount. If a leader abandons the ideology and symbol of their original party, they should morally and democratically face re-election. For this, the time has come for the Parliament and the judiciary to work together to bring about strict and clear reforms in this law.

UPSC Prelims Exam Study Questions

Question: Who has the authority to decide on disqualification in cases of defection?

- (a) Election Commission of India
- (b) Supreme Court
- (c) President
- (d) Speaker/Chairman of the House

Ans: d)

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Question: "The Anti-Defection Law has curbed political instability but has also impacted democratic discourse." Critically examine this statement. **(15 Marks, 250 Words)**



Page : 08 : Editorial Analysis

Moving from war to deal in a deeply divided region

Even as the ceasefire between the United States and Iran was being repeatedly breached, the Iran war showed something that the world appears to have forgotten: military force, by itself, cannot be a solution unless it is followed by a political settlement – whether in Ukraine, Gaza, Lebanon, Sudan or Iran. The last four years of relentless bombardment, bloodshed, and the killing of innocent civilians and children with impunity have exposed the reality that none of the major powers seriously pursued the option of negotiations. In fact, many have been either directly involved in acts of aggression or have actively supported them through the supply of arms and financial assistance. However, the growing stalemate in almost all major conflicts underscores a fundamental truth: a political resolution is the only way forward if the major powers are to preserve what remains of their dignity.

An uneasy path to fragile peace

Restarting a full-scale war with Iran had become untenable for the U.S. after setbacks on both the strategic and political fronts, and equally untenable for Iran after reverses on the military, economic and leadership fronts. Both sides were ultimately compelled to negotiate. However, for Israel, which had initially encouraged the U.S. to start this war, any deal with Iran that fell short of regime change was unacceptable – and remains so – because of Iran's continued support for a much-weakened Hezbollah in Lebanon, which Israel still regards as a direct threat. With Israeli elections due in October 2026, a ceasefire on the Lebanon front is politically unpalatable for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his coalition. Iran, meanwhile, has become more assertive, by directly targeting Israeli interests and U.S. assets in the Gulf even when Hezbollah was attacked. Until recently, the pattern had been the reverse, with Iran's proxies retaliating whenever Iran was targeted.

The much-awaited digitally signed U.S.-Iran deal reflects the reality that Iran has had a strategic win. Reports indicate that it opens up Hormuz Strait unconditionally, halts the war on all fronts including Lebanon, lifts Iranian oil sanctions, unfreezes Iranian assets and commits Iran not to produce nuclear weapons.

Negotiations to commit Iran to suspend nuclear enrichment and give up enriched nuclear material without being dubbed a repackaged Obama-era 2016 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), will take place over 60 days. In some ways the deal is not yet a political settlement, but the beginning of one.

Lest anyone romanticise Iran's strategic gains, they do not alter the fundamental reality that Iran will continue to be viewed as a major disruptor in



T.S. Tirumurti

Former Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, New York, and currently Head, Steering Committee of the Deccan Centre for International Relations, Chennai

West Asia. There is little indication that its reliance on non-state actors such as Hezbollah, the Houthis and Iraqi militias will diminish. The Iranian government is now more hardline, its missile arsenal will be replenished, and it retains the capability to threaten the Strait of Hormuz and strike Gulf countries at will. The region is unlikely to be any safer after a deal than it was before.

This is precisely why U.S. President Donald Trump's 'Make America Great Again' (MAGA) base was pushing him to get a better deal. Mr. Trump's push to get the Saudis, Qataris and others to join the Abraham Accords to normalise relations with Israel made no headway since Israeli attacks were unrelenting in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon.

Even now, after the deal, Israel has sworn to keep the territories it has captured in Lebanon and expand Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank. Iran is apprehensive, for good reason, that the U.S. or Israel will derail the deal at the first sign of stalled negotiations or a Hezbollah attack. Israel, meanwhile, has accused the U.S. of selling it out because none of its key objectives have been achieved, conveniently overlooking its own role in urging the U.S. into the conflict.

Gulf fault lines exposed

The Gulf countries have also come out the worse off. They bet on a U.S. security umbrella, signed bilateral Abraham Accords with Israel sidelining historical regional conflicts, shed the conservative tag (like Saudi Arabia), invested in a hi-tech future and joined important global groupings such as BRICS, signalling their increasing ambitions as middle powers. Those ambitions have been rudely shaken and their fragilities exposed.

The Gulf states need to return to the drawing board. They overestimated their collective economic and security strength while underestimating their internal divisions and long-standing rivalries.

The post-war landscape has exposed these fault lines: Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have worked at cross-purposes in Yemen, Sudan and Somalia, the Emiratis have left the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries – a clear signal that Saudi writ on energy policy is over. Their supply chains have to be reworked to overcome a future Hormuz blockade. They will face a growth slowdown after the war impacting their ambitions. While the UAE has moved closer to Israel and the U.S., others have adopted a more cautious approach. Ironically, the Iran war has divided the Gulf rather than united it against a common adversary, making a recalibration of relations

with Washington inevitable. After the collapse of deterrence against Iran, no Gulf country is secure unless it forges a regional security architecture bringing Iran into the fold. The lessons of the Ukraine war should not be forgotten. Europe expanded the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's boundaries towards Russia without bringing Moscow into a broader regional security architecture, and is now paying the price. Yet, neither Europe nor West Asia appears to have learned that lesson.

The other power shifts

Russia and China are happy to watch the U.S. get bogged down. For China, a weakened Trump is easier to manage, while the Iran war has given China a preview of what to expect if it closes the Taiwan Strait or if a well-armed smaller power is attacked by a bigger one. Although China seeks a larger role in West Asia, the Gulf remains too deeply tied to the U.S. economically and strategically for any dramatic shift. China is therefore likely to work through its "iron brother" Pakistan, which found itself in a geographical sweet spot. For Russia, meanwhile, the war only reinforces the strategic logic it has long applied to Ukraine.

India initially appeared to align with Israel and the U.S., and ignored the assassination of the Iranian Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, but quickly realised the need for a more balanced approach when Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz and threatened critical interests such as energy

security and maritime trade. Close ties with Israel or the UAE are important, but taking sides in regional conflicts is not.

With growing divergences among regional powers, Pakistan's rising role, and the possibility of greater Chinese influence in West Asia, bilateral relationships alone are insufficient. India needs a balanced regional strategy rooted in strategic autonomy and multi-alignment. Any slowdown in the Gulf will affect trade, investments, employment opportunities for Indian workers and diaspora remittances. The Chinese getting a permanent maritime foothold in that region will make it worse. More broadly, the inability of the U.S. to accommodate India within its larger strategic vision in West Asia, East Asia and the wider neighbourhood is hurting India.

The question now is whether Israel will seek to undermine the Iran deal. Will the protagonists draw lessons from this conflict, or will they embark on yet another cycle of wars in Lebanon, Cuba, Gaza and the West Bank? And, on a related note, will Pakistan's growing proximity to the U.S. increase pressure on India to resume unconditional talks with Islamabad?



A fragile Iran deal masks deeper regional rivalries and uncertainties

GS Paper II: International Relations

UPSC Mains Exam Practice Questions: "Military force may end battles, but sustainable peace requires political settlements." Discuss with reference to recent developments in West Asia. (15 Marks, 250 Words)

Context :

The presented article is written by T.S. Tirumurti, former Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations (UN). This article analyzes the recent post-conflict agreement between the US and Iran in West Asia and the changing geopolitical scenarios. The author's main argument is that military force alone cannot be a permanent solution to any conflict; until an inclusive political settlement is reached, peace in the region will remain fragile. This analysis highlights the failure of global superpowers, internal differences among Gulf countries, and its implications for India's 'Strategic Autonomy'.

Key Points of Analysis

Military Force vs Political Settlement

- **Permanent Stalemate:** Like Ukraine, Gaza, Lebanon, and Sudan, the conflict with Iran also proves that wars are not won merely through bombings and civilian casualties.
- **Failure of Superpowers:** Over the past four years, global powers prioritized arms supplies and military aggression over diplomacy, which ultimately led them to a stalemate.

U.S.-Iran Deal & Strategic Shifts

- **Strategic Win for Iran:** This agreement shows that both sides were weary of war. Under the agreement, the unconditional opening of the Strait of Hormuz, the removal of oil sanctions, and the unfreezing of Iranian assets are being considered a major diplomatic victory for Iran.
- **Uncertainty Over Nuclear Program:** The negotiations to commit Iran to suspending nuclear enrichment without a new avatar of the 2016 JCPOA (Nuclear Deal) will last for the next 60 days, making this not a complete final political settlement, but rather the beginning of it.
- **Rising Risk:** Iran's 'hardline' government, missile arsenal, and its dependence on non-state actors like Hezbollah, the Houthis, and Iraqi militias will remain intact, meaning the region has not become entirely secure.

Israel's Discontent and Internal Politics

- **Demand for Regime Change:** For Israel, nothing less than regime change in Iran was acceptable.

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Daily News Analysis

- **Internal Electoral Pressures:** Due to the Israeli elections scheduled for October 2026, a ceasefire on the Lebanon front does not align politically for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition. Israel has accused the US of 'betraying' it.

Gulf Fault Lines Exposed

- **Failure of the Security Umbrella:** The trust that the Gulf nations (Saudi Arabia, UAE) had placed in the US and Israel under the Abraham Accords has proved to be a failure.
- **Internal Differences:** Saudi Arabia and the UAE are working at cross-purposes in Yemen, Sudan, and Somalia. The UAE's exit from OPEC shows that Saudi Arabia's dominance over energy policy is now ending.
- **Lack of a Regional Security Architecture:** Europe expanded NATO without including Russia and suffered the consequences. Similarly, West Asia cannot be secure until a regional security architecture is created that includes Iran as well.

Stand of Other Global Powers

- **China and Russia:** Both countries are pleased to see the US entangled in this crisis. For China, this is a preview of a potential crisis in the Taiwan Strait. China could increase its footprint in this region through Pakistan (its 'iron brother').

Implications and Challenges for India

- **Test of Strategic Autonomy:** Initially, India appeared leaning closer to Israel and the US (such as remaining silent on the assassination of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei), but as soon as the closure of the Strait of Hormuz threatened energy security and maritime trade, India had to strike a balance.
- **Multi-alignment:** For India, merely having bilateral relations with Israel or the UAE is not enough. It requires a balanced strategy for the entire region.
- **Economic Impact:** Any form of slowdown in the Gulf region will have a direct negative impact on the employment of Indian expatriates, trade, investment, and remittances.
- **Growing Role of China-Pakistan:** Pakistan's proximity to the US in the region and the permanent presence of the Chinese Navy could harm India's strategic interests.

Conclusion

T.S. Tirumurti's analysis makes it clear that while a ceasefire and agreement in West Asia may provide temporary relief, the formulation of an inclusive Regional Security Architecture is mandatory for long-term stability. For India, these developments serve as a stark lesson that it must strengthen its 'Strategic Autonomy' instead of becoming a part of any one bloc in its West Asia policy. Since the Gulf region is tied to India's energy security and the livelihoods of millions of non-resident Indians, India needs to make its 'Look West' policy more dynamic, multi-dimensional, and balanced to counter the rising influence of China and Pakistan.

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