

The Hindu Important News Articles For UPSC CSE

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The U.S. House of Representatives recently passed the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026, granting the U.S. President the authority to impose up to 100% secondary tariffs on major importers of Russian oil and gas. For UPSC GS Paper II (International Relations, Bilateral Groupings, and Agreements involving India) and GS Paper III (Economic Development, Energy Security, and Global Trade), this development underscores the complex interplay between geoeconomics, energy security, and foreign policy independence.

U.S. clears Russia sanctions Bill; India faces threat

U.S. House clears legislation that will authorise the U.S. President to impose 100% tariffs on countries for buying oil and gas from Russia; committed to ensuring energy security for Indians, says New Delhi; potential tariff targets are five 'largest importers' of Russian oil and gas; many legislators opposed the Bill, are concerned over powers it gives Trump

Sriram Lakshman
WASHINGTON DC

The U.S. House of Representatives on Wednesday passed legislation targeting Russia's energy sector, individuals and the "shadow fleet" of tankers, including authorising the U.S. President to impose tariffs of up to 100% on India and other countries for buying oil and gas from Russia. The House voted 262-159 in favour of the Bill.

The Bill, an amendment to the Senate's "Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026", will now head to President Trump's desk for his signature.

Mr. Trump plans to sign the Bill, a White House official told *The Hindu* on Thursday. The President will have the authority, under the legislation, to waive sanctions in the national interest.

In a statement reacting to the move, the Ministry of External Affairs said,

"India remains firmly committed to ensuring energy security for its 1.4 billion people" via diversified sourcing of energy inputs, determined according to evolving market forces. India would also "protect its trade and economic interests", the Ministry said.

This Bill comes as New Delhi and Washington have been negotiating a preliminary trade deal.

The issue had been discussed with various U.S. interlocutors at high levels, the Ministry statement said, adding that the government made it clear to the U.S. that the sanctions would have implications for the bilateral relationship and energy markets.

The Trump administration had announced an additional 25% tariff, on top of an existing 25% tariff on India in July 2025, for the purchase of Russian oil.

The share of Russian crude oil in Indian oil imports fell to its lowest level in two years in December 2025, but energy markets

Who are the targets?

The Bill aims to dissuade countries from 'aiding Russian aggression' against Ukraine by purchasing Russian oil and gas.

The Bill targets top five “largest importers, by total volume” in the 12 months preceding the date of enactment of the law, which have knowingly made new purchases on or after 30 days from the date the Bill becomes law

This issue has been discussed at high levels in recent months with various U.S. interlocutors. Its potential implications for not just the bilateral relationship but also the international energy market have been very clearly articulated by the Indian side

**EXTERNAL
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have been under additional pressure owing to the U.S.-Iran conflict and New Delhi's import of Russian oil hit an 11-month high in April this year. However, the U.S. Treasury paused sanctions for oil shipments that were in transit before March 11, as supplies were hit following the start of the conflict in West Asia on February 28.

"To China and India:
You better clean up your

act. Buy your oil and gas somewhere else," said Senator Richard Blumenthal, a Connecticut Democrat, shortly after the Bill was passed.

Countries that would be potential targets for the tariff are the top five "largest importers, by total volume" of Russian-origin crude oil or natural gas in the 12 months preceding the date of enactment of the law, and have knowin-

Over half of oil imports in July were from Russia

NEW DELHI

Russia accounted for more than 51% of India's oil imports in July, an all-time-high, up from just a little less than 50% in the previous month, the latest official data shows. An analysis of Commerce and Industry Ministry data shows India imported 110.4 lakh tonnes of Russia oil in July, the latest month for which data is available. » **PAGE 12**

of Russia's total gas export, would be exempt from the sanctions.

A House amendment proposed by Democrat Steny Hoyer that sought to name the top 10 importers – China, India, Turkiye, Azerbaijan, Hungary, Slovakia, the UAE and the Kyrgyz Republic – had not passed into the final version considered on Wednesday.

Sweeping powers

The Bill, named after Senator Lindsey Graham, a prominent voice supporter of Ukraine, who died suddenly on July 11 this year, had passed the Senate 86-11 on August 7.

Several prominent Democrats, like Elizabeth Warren and those caucusing with Democrats like Bernie Sanders, as well as some Republicans, such as Rand Paul, had opposed the Bill, concerned over the sweeping powers it would give the President or the cost it would impose, via tariffs, on Americans.

Several lawmakers have been concerned that the ability of Mr. Trump to impose tariffs on U.S. allies – such as Canada and the European Union in its entirety – would be bolstered by the Act.

The Ranking Member (i.e., from the chamber's minority or Democratic party) of the House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC), Gregory Meeks, criticised the Bill. "We cannot grant the President more tariff power that, we know, he will abuse," Mr. Meeks said, adding that it would cost at least \$3000 per American family, assuming Mr. Trump restricted tariffs on the top five importers of Russian oil.

In remarks on Tuesday, Mr. Meeks had emphasised that he supported sanctions on Russia, arguing that the President already had powers to sanction Russia but was not using them.

CHINA, RUSSIA REACT
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Key Analytical Points

- **Strategic Autonomy vs. Secondary Sanctions:**

- The legislation places heavy economic pressure on top crude buyers like India and China, challenging the strategic autonomy of emerging economies to pursue independent trade policies.
- New Delhi's official stance emphasizes that energy sourcing decisions for its 1.4 billion population are dictated by market forces and national energy security rather than external political diktats.

- **Weaponisation of Trade and Tariffs:**

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Daily News Analysis

- Utilizing tariff authorities up to 100% as a foreign policy tool reflects a shift toward using domestic legislative instruments to police global supply chains.
- This trend complicates ongoing bilateral trade negotiations and creates predictability risks for manufacturing and export-oriented sectors in developing nations.
- **Related Static Dimension (Energy Security and the Resource Curse):**
 - India imports over 80% of its crude oil requirements, making price volatility and supply diversification critical macro-economic variables.
 - Geopolitically, the situation echoes Cold War-era dilemmas of navigating superpower friction while safeguarding domestic growth, inflation targets, and foreign exchange reserves.
- **Multilateral Realities and Diversification:**
 - While western frameworks seek to isolate Moscow's energy revenues, alternate groupings like BRICS emphasize multipolar trade mechanisms, creating multi-layered diplomatic challenges for countries balancing ties with both Washington and Moscow.

Conclusion

The passage of the U.S. sanctions bill marks a critical turning point in contemporary economic diplomacy. For India, maintaining a fine balance between safeguarding vital national energy corridors and managing strategic trade partnerships with Western economies will require robust diplomatic engagement, proactive market diversification, and unwavering adherence to its core principle of strategic autonomy.

UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Question: Consider the following statements regarding secondary sanctions:

1. Secondary sanctions seek to penalise third-country entities for economic transactions with a sanctioned country.
2. They necessarily require the sanctioned country to be a party to the transaction.
3. They can affect countries that are not directly subject to the primary sanctions.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 1 and 3 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Ans:B)

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UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Question: "The growing use of secondary sanctions reflects the changing nature of economic statecraft in international relations." Discuss. (10 Marks, 150 Words)

Page 04 : GS III: Indian Economy/ Preliminary Examination

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address at SEMICON India highlights India's ambition to emerge as a trusted global hub for semiconductor and electronics manufacturing. For UPSC General Studies (GS Paper III - Make in India, Technology Development, and Industrial Growth), positioning the country as a reliable alternative against the weaponisation of supply chains marks a critical shift in economic strategy.

PM pitches India as a global destination for chipmaking

The country's success in the critical industry would strengthen supply chain of entire world, says Modi; 1 lakh technicians to be trained over five years for employment in factories, adds IT Minister

Key Analytical Points

• Mitigating Global Supply Chain Vulnerabilities:

- Modern high-tech industries depend heavily on concentrated geographic nodes for microchips, making them vulnerable to geopolitical tensions and export restrictions.
- India is pitching its democratic credentials and systemic scale as a safeguard to diversify and stabilize the global electronics value chain.

• Expanding Policy Frameworks (ISM 2.0):

- Building on early project approvals, the second phase of the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM 2.0) focuses on six core pillars: chip design, fabrication, advanced packaging, equipment/materials, applied R&D, and workforce training.
- Expanding targets—such as supporting 200+ chip-design start-ups and training one lakh specialized technicians—aims to shift India from pure assembly to end-to-end "Silicon to Systems" capabilities.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi pitched India as a "new and trustworthy location" for electronics manufacturing, urging global chipmakers to consider the country's potential to relieve electronics from the "weaponisation" of supply chains.

"This is not a sector where you set up a factory and the job is done," said Mr. Modi, who inaugurated Semicon India 2026. "Wherever semiconductor ecosystems have been built in the world, the entire ecosystem has come together only after decades of hard work. But India, with your cooperation, has worked simultaneously on chip design, manufacturing, equipment manufacturing, the materials ecosystem, testing capability, and has demonstrated success."

The Prime Minister's address came days after the India Semiconductor Mission's (ISM) second phase, which has an outlay of ₹1.27 lakh crore, was notified.

Describing India as the



High potential: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw at SEMICON India in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

"mother of democracy", he said, "When such a country succeeds in a critical industry, it strengthens the supply chain of the entire world. And today, when supply chains are being weaponised, its importance becomes much greater. We should also look at this development taking place in India from this larger perspective."

Semicon India 2026 brought together semiconductor and electronics firms from India and other countries. Speaking at the event, IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the govern-

ment plans to train one lakh people who will be a "global pool of talent" and can "straightaway be employed in the factories which are coming up in India".

Mr. Vaishnaw said the government would target at least 200 start-ups and firms in ISM 2.0's chip design pillar, almost double of what was done for the first phase.

The Minister added that the government was committed to training more than one lakh technicians over the coming five years for different electronics

manufacturing duties.

Global industry body SEMI's CEO Ajit Manocha estimated that the semiconductor industry would cross \$1.3 trillion this year, and \$2 trillion by 2030.

Leaders from the semiconductor industry expressed hope in India's trajectory and its role in their global plans. Applied Materials committed to invest \$5 billion over the coming five years to expand its R&D centre and supply chain.

"Earlier this year, we began commercial production at Sanand," Micron CEO Sanjay Mehrotra said. "Our current production capacity already exceeds the memory required for India's entire laptop market ... The India Semiconductor Mission, and now ISM 2.0, gave this industry a foundation it did not have before."

Infineon CEO Jochen Hanebeck called India a "market of tremendous importance", praising the "pace of progress across the Indian ecosystem". Pointing to his firm increasing hiring in India by 28%, he said that there was great potential for India in the sector.

Daily News Analysis

- **Related Static Dimension (Demographic Dividend & Capital Integration):**

- Successfully transitioning into a high-tech manufacturing economy requires leveraging India's demographic dividend through targeted technical education and clean-room training.
- Capitalizing on global investments (such as multi-billion-dollar commitments from major firms in R&D and commercial fabrication) links domestic industrial growth with international capital flows and technology transfers.

- **Ecosystem Synergy and Infrastructure Integration:**

- A robust semiconductor ecosystem requires concurrent advancements in logistics, clean energy, and raw material access.
- Integrating high-end manufacturing with modern multimodal logistics—like dedicated freight corridors—reduces operational friction and enhances global cost-competitiveness.

Conclusion

India's strategic push into semiconductor manufacturing bridges domestic employment generation with global economic security. By fostering a collaborative ecosystem encompassing design startups, academic research, and heavy industrial incentives, India is well-positioned to cement its role as an indispensable anchor in the future of global technology supply chains.

Aim, Think & Achieve

UPSC Prelims Exam Study Questions

Question: With reference to semiconductor manufacturing, consider the following statements:

1. Semiconductor manufacturing is dependent on highly specialized equipment and materials.
2. Semiconductor supply chains can become vulnerable when critical stages of production are geographically concentrated.
3. A country possessing semiconductor assembly and testing capability necessarily possesses advanced fabrication capability.
4. Semiconductor security has implications for both economic and national security.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1, 2 and 4 only
- B. 1 and 3 only
- C. 2, 3 and 4 only
- D. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ans: A)

UPSC Mains Exam Study Questions

Question: Why are semiconductors considered a critical component of economic and strategic security? Discuss in the context of India's semiconductor ambitions. **10 Marks, 150 Words)**

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Observed annually on September 17, World Patient Safety Day (with the 2026 WHO theme 'Safe care for non-communicable diseases') highlights that clinical care security extends far beyond basic operational checklists. For UPSC General Studies (GS Paper II - Governance, Social Sector, Health Policies, and Human Development), examining systemic healthcare challenges is crucial for building robust public health infrastructure.

Why patient safety needs more than hospital checklists

Patient safety begins even before treatment: it encompasses the right diagnosis, accurate, timely care, safe hospital environments, protected data and an understanding from all stakeholders to put the patient first, say doctors; the WHO's theme for World Patient Safety Day 2026 is 'safe care for non-communicable diseases'

Siddharth Kumar Singh

A patient enters an operating theatre for a procedure on the right knee. The limb is marked, the scans are available and the surgical team has checked the records. Just before the operation begins, the team stops. A nurse reads out the patient's identity, the procedure planned, the side of the body to be operated on and the type of anaesthesia. The surgeon, anaesthetist and other members of the team confirm the details. This brief pause, known as 'timeout', may take only a few minutes. But it is one of several layers of checks designed to prevent a potentially devastating mistake.

This exercise was an example of what Syed Mohammed Ghouse, consultant robotic and transplant surgeon, Asian Institute of Nephrology and Urology, described as the 'Swiss cheese mechanism', in which several layers of checks are put in place so that if one safety barrier fails, another can detect the error before it reaches the patient.

The need for such multiple safeguards was at the heart of World Patient Safety Day, observed on September 17. The World Health Organization's theme for 2026 was 'Safe care for non-communicable diseases'.

Doctors say patient safety has to be viewed much more broadly than preventing an obvious surgical or medication error. Ranga Reddy Burri, president, Infection Control Academy of India, said the understanding of patient safety has now expanded considerably: the responsibility cannot rest only with doctors and nurses. Policymakers, accreditation agencies, patients, caregivers, families, communities and even housekeeping staff have roles to play. "A hospital just having an accreditation doesn't actually guarantee the kind of safety that is required," Dr. Burri said, stressing the need to train all stakeholders involved in a patient's journey.

Patient safety begins even before treatment starts, noted Dr. Burri. The availability of sophisticated diagnostic equipment has not necessarily solved the problem of ensuring an accurate diagnosis. "The diagnosis quality has actually gone down over a period of time," he said. He attributed part of the problem to doctors moving away from basic clinical examination, including auscultation, percussion, palpation and physical examination. He described the emerging situation as 'no touch' healthcare, where doctors can sometimes begin looking at a computer even before adequately engaging with the patient.



Safety first: Hospital staff conducted a mock drill on mass casualty management earlier this year at the Government General Hospital in Ongole. Experts say all stakeholders should have training in patient safety. KOMMURI SRINIVAS

Hospitals, Hyderabad, also pointed to the importance of ensuring quality of medical education as the number of medical colleges and seats increases. "If we don't ensure quality services, then it will worsen the patient's safety because diagnosis may be missed; treatment may not be perfect," he said.

Medication problems

Medication safety remains another major area of concern. Dr. Kumar said spurious and fake medicines continue to pose a patient-safety risk despite the existence of drug inspectors and regulatory checks.

Dr. Ghouse pointed to another problem of look-alike and sound-alike medicines. With a large number of pharmaceutical companies and medicines available, drugs with similar names can create opportunities for errors, particularly when medicines are handled by someone who is distracted or not sufficiently alert.

He said hospitals use measures such as separate labelling and storing look-alike and sound-alike medicines away from each other, along with other quality-control measures.

Technology has reduced some types of prescription errors, but doctors say it has not eliminated them. Dr. Ghouse said typed and printed prescriptions are still not universal, especially at small clinics. Dr. Kumar said prescription errors can also occur when different doctors

brand names or when medicines from the same group are inadvertently duplicated. "For example, a patient may end up taking the same medicine twice because different brand names make it difficult to recognise that the drugs are essentially the same."

Within hospitals

Some patient-safety risks are less dramatic but can still have serious consequences, particularly among older patients. Dr. Burri said falls in hospitals, including falls while patients are going to the bathroom or getting out of bed, can result in major injuries. "Hospitals need to ensure that their physical environments are designed to prevent slipping and other hazards."

Patient safety also extends beyond just their wards or rooms. Dr. Kumar pointed to hospital fires, electrical problems and other infrastructure-related hazards as areas that require greater attention. He said while the number of hospitals was increasing, some facilities are decades old, raising questions about who regularly audits their wiring and electrical connections.

For Dr. Burri, infection prevention and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) remain central to the patient-safety conversation. Unnecessary antibiotic administration, delayed diagnosis, unhygienic environments and non-adherence to infection-prevention and control

problem, he said.

These risks can become particularly important for patients with chronic diseases, who may require repeated interactions with healthcare facilities. Dr. Burri said patients with conditions such as chronic kidney disease, lung diseases and cancer may have vulnerabilities that make infection prevention an important component of safe care. "Healthcare workers and administrators therefore have a central role in ensuring that infection-control practices are followed," he added.

Data and AI

As healthcare becomes increasingly digital, patient safety is also becoming connected to data privacy. Dr. Kumar said medical information is private, but increasing digitisation has created new risks around cybersecurity and access to medical records.

Artificial intelligence is increasingly entering healthcare, but Dr. Kumar said it should remain a tool rather than become a substitute for clinical reasoning.

For all the technology, protocols and checklists being introduced in hospitals, the doctors point to one element that cannot be removed from the equation, the patient. Dr. Burri said patients, families, caregivers and communities must understand their own role in ensuring safety.

THE GIST

Doctors say patient safety has to be viewed much more broadly than preventing an obvious surgical or medication error. Policymakers, accreditation agencies, patients, caregivers, families, communities and even housekeeping staff have roles to play in patient safety

Doctors also attribute part of the problem to doctors moving away from basic clinical examination, including auscultation, percussion, palpation and physical examination. They describe the emerging situation as 'no touch' healthcare, where doctors can sometimes begin looking at a computer even before adequately engaging with the patient

For all the technology, protocols and checklists being introduced in hospitals, the doctors point to one element that cannot be removed from the equation, the patient. Dr. Burri said patients, families, caregivers and communities must understand their own role in ensuring safety

Key Analytical Points

- **Limitations of Checklists and the "Swiss Cheese Mechanism":**
 - While surgical pauses ("timeouts") provide a vital final barrier against mistakes, they represent only one layer in the **Swiss cheese mechanism**, where multiple independent safety safeguards must overlap to prevent errors.
 - Relying solely on procedural checklists ignores pre-treatment diagnostics, environmental hazards, and systemic administrative vulnerabilities.
- **Pre-Treatment and Diagnostic Vulnerabilities:**
 - Patient safety begins before treatment through accurate diagnosis. The shift toward **"no touch" healthcare**—where physicians prioritize computer screens over clinical physical examinations (palpation, auscultation)—has contributed to a decline in diagnostic precision.
 - Rapid expansions in medical education require stringent quality control to ensure that graduating professionals maintain high standards of clinical reasoning and patient care.
- **Related Static Dimension (Public Health and Regulatory Governance):**
 - Systemic threats like counterfeit drugs, look-alike/sound-alike pharmaceutical labeling, and unregulated prescription duplication highlight gaps in drug administration and regulatory oversight.
 - Environmental risks within aging healthcare facilities—such as faulty electrical wiring, slip hazards, and improper biomedical waste disposal—compromise physical safety and fuel **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)**.
- **Digital Transformation and Multi-Stakeholder Accountability:**
 - The digitization of healthcare introduces cybersecurity and data privacy concerns, while the adoption of Artificial Intelligence must remain a supportive tool rather than a substitute for human clinical judgment.
 - True safety requires a decentralized ecosystem approach, where policymakers, accreditation bodies, hospital staff, patients, and families share collaborative responsibility.

Conclusion

Ensuring holistic patient safety requires moving past reactive checklists to proactive, systemic healthcare governance. By addressing structural gaps in medical education, tightening regulatory drug frameworks, and fostering multi-stakeholder accountability, India can build a safer, more resilient public health architecture capable of supporting vulnerable chronic care patients.

UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Question: With reference to the "Swiss Cheese Model" of patient safety, consider the following statements:

1. It views accidents as the result of a single isolated error by an individual.
2. It conceptualises multiple layers of defence against hazards.
3. An adverse event may occur when weaknesses in different layers align.
4. It highlights the importance of systemic approaches to risk management.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 2, 3 and 4 only
- B. 1 and 2 only
- C. 1, 3 and 4 only
- D. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ans: A)

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Question: Patient safety is as much a governance issue as it is a clinical issue. Discuss. **(10 Marks, 150 Words)**

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The debate surrounding the 2026 BRICS Summit in New Delhi centers on whether the consensus-driven New Delhi Declaration—marked by pushbacks against unilateral Western sanctions, criticisms of Israeli military actions, and calls for financial de-dollarization frameworks—indicates a departure in Indian foreign policy. For UPSC General Studies (GS Paper II - International Relations, Bilateral and Multilateral Groupings involving India), examining this discourse is crucial for evaluating India's balancing act between the Global South and Western partnerships.

Does the BRICS summit signify a shift for Indian foreign policy?



Ajay Bisaria

served as High Commissioner to Pakistan and Canada and is the author of 'Anger Management: The Troubled Diplomatic Relationship Between India and Pakistan'

PARLEY

With a strong pushback against unilateral western sanctions; criticism of Israel over the killing of civilians, the attacks on Lebanon, and the forced occupation of Palestinian territory; and support for UN reform as well as a BRICS payment mechanism, the New Delhi Declaration of 2026 has been likened to India's foreign policy from its non-aligned past. But was it a compromise by New Delhi to build consensus, or will the statement, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's close engagement with the leaders of Iran, Russia, and China, have a bearing on India's foreign policy? Ajay Bisaria and Happpymon Jacob discuss the question in a conversation moderated by **Sahasini Haidar**.

Is the New Delhi declaration a return to non-alignment or just momentary rhetoric?



Happpymon Jacob

Author of 'India after Non-Alignment'

Ajay Bisaria: Broadly, the declaration is in keeping with India's foreign policy, whether that is strategic autonomy and multi-alignment or multi-vector engagement. In terms of optics, India is more on the front foot and less apologetic than it used to be. India is getting more and more comfortable in a non-western forum, saying that it is emphatically part of it. While it doesn't necessarily mean a shift in posture, it does suggest a greater degree of comfort with a different set of optics.

Happpymon Jacob: The BRICS summit is under spotlight and things under spotlight look bigger and shinier than they really are. BRICS is a political platform, not a security platform. I don't think India's policy today is that of non-alignment at all. Non-alignment was a strategy for a weak state in a bipolar world. Today, we are in a different kind of world and the desire in India is to become one of the poles in a multipolar world. There is a reference to the Bandung Spirit (Non-Aligned Movement) in the BRICS declaration in pursuit of a fairer, more inclusive, and representative multilateral system. But that is nostalgia, not real policy.

How important are optics such as the Modi-Xi-Putin handshakes or the Prime Minister reaching out to the Iranian President at a time when these leaders represent the "anti-Western lobby"?

HJ: The optics are, in some ways, the substance here. Chinese President Xi Jinping had not been to India in nearly seven years. And we had the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince (Khaled bin Zayed Al Nahyan) sitting at the same table. In some ways, the photograph is the message. At the BRICS



Russia's President Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and China's President Xi Jinping pose with other leaders during the BRICS Summit. AFP

outreach session, a lot of powers who don't otherwise get into great power conversations were present. So, there was a lot of socialisation happening inside the platform and on its margins. But I think we should understand that this is not really having an impact on how the world is being shaped. The declaration calls for exercising restraint and protecting civilians and civilian infrastructure and pointedly recalls the respective national positions of each member. It is fantastic, but the argument here is about optics, not common positions.

AB: I would agree that these multilateral fora are often performative to a degree and therefore all optics matter. But in a multilateral document, you can say the silent part aloud; what a country won't say in a national statement, it can say aloud in a high-level multilateral summit. For instance, everyone knows that the phrase "unilateral coercive measures" is about U.S. actions. So, you're not really saying we condemn U.S. action on so-and-so date, you're simply saying that we are against U.S. tariffs and [western] sanctions. There is an understanding now that what is said in a multilateral document can be different from a national position.

Every BRICS summit since 2022, including the 2024 summit in Russia, has made a reference to Ukraine. The New Delhi Declaration is the first time that references to Ukraine have been dropped. Why?

AB: My guess would be that it was a Russian veto. In the Rio BRICS declaration last year, there was even condemnation of a Ukrainian attack on Russia without an equivalent condemnation of anything Russia had done. So this time, instead of just condemning Ukraine, they might have decided to drop the whole thing entirely. It is very disappointing that a major multilateral geopolitical forum doesn't call for belligerents to end the war, but instead stays silent. That is an error of omission. I suspect the



Broadly, the Delhi declaration is in keeping with India's foreign policy, whether that is strategic autonomy and multi-alignment or multi-vector engagement

AJAY BISARIA

Russians said, no, we don't accept it, and in the interest of having a consensus, it was dropped.

HJ: I think India has no particular reason to push for that language to be present in the declaration because we have quite clearly sided with the Russian Federation in this war, indirectly if not directly. There must have been Russian push but I see no reason why there could not have been some neutral language to put in [references to Ukraine], given the precedent (of previous BRICS joint declarations).

The condemnation of Israel in the statement is very strong. Does this represent a shift for India given the PM's speech on standing "shoulder to shoulder" with Israel during his visit in February 2026?

AB: The big picture is that India is trying to establish neutral and balanced position on both conflicts, and therefore not been seen as backing only one side in either. It has taken safety in the language of the United Nations. There's a specific mention of the UN Security Council Resolution 2803 of November last year, which spoke about an International Stabilisation Force and a Board of Peace. Some of the language has been drawn from there. The overall posture is: let's try to be balanced and reasonably neutral.

HJ: There is a clear disjunction between the statement and what Prime Minister Modi told the Israeli parliament. Perhaps the declaration is in some way intended to counter the perception that India was getting too close to Israel. The two-state solution has always been India's position, so the declaration doesn't contradict Indian policy there. But with the UAE, Egypt, Iran, and Indonesia in the room, there was only so much India could do to push back against the harshness of that language. What Prime Minister Modi told the Israelis in Israel is emotional and consequential. But what is written in the BRICS Declaration is multilateral, symbolic, and not very consequential. I would still say the balance is tilted in favour of Israel as a partner.

How significant are the paragraphs on economic issues, particularly on intra-BRICS trade using payments in national currencies? These 10 or 11 countries represent 40% of the

global economy, and 25% of global trade. Could they pose a challenge to the G7?

HJ: Indian policy has two parts. One is the support for local currency payment mechanisms. I don't think India has supported a permanent payment mechanism under the ambit of BRICS. I think there is an acknowledgement that there is no one-size-fits-all approach as far as currency settlement payment mechanisms are concerned. I would think twice before signing on to a non-U.S. dollar payment mechanism, which I believe will mean the next big currency or the next powerful currency. And unfortunately, China's currency is going to be that big currency.

AB: BRICS is a counterpoint to the G7, an economic grouping that also has geopolitical responsibilities. But I think India also finds itself at an intersection with the G7, because it is a sort of permanent invitee to the G7, along with Australia and South Korea. I have made the argument elsewhere that the G7 should dissolve itself and become the Democratic 10 (D10), including these three countries. I think that is the real strategic autonomy or multi-vector engagement, where India becomes the bridge between the east and the west, but also a voice of the south.

Will any of the decisions at BRICS see their way into future Indian foreign policy? Or is this just one moment with BRICS countries?

AB: I think this is a moment of success in Indian diplomacy in terms of conducting a major international event. In November, there will be another opportunity to meet global leaders at the ASEAN-East Asia Summit in the Philippines, followed by Prime Minister Modi's visits to the U.S., Canada, and Brussels, where he could potentially secure three trade agreements. I think that's what diplomacy will be about: multi-vector engagement; keeping all stakeholders engaged, in multiple directions.

HJ: India has only so much diplomatic capital. Therefore, it is important to pick our battles, forums, and partners. I think we should be present in those rooms where global rules on AI are being framed, and where the future of space governance is discussed. I don't think the next world order is going to be made in forums such as the BRICS but in those silent small rooms.



To listen to the full interview
Scan the code or go to the link
www.thehindu.com

Key Analytical Points

- **Continuity of Strategic Autonomy and Multi-Alignment:**

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Daily News Analysis

- Analysts like Ajay Bisaria argue that the declaration reflects continuity rather than a shift, aligning with India's established posture of **multi-vector engagement**.
- Multilateral platforms allow nations to voice collective discontent over issues like unilateral tariffs or secondary sanctions without disrupting their core bilateral diplomatic ties.
- **Multipolarity Over Cold War Non-Alignment:**
 - Experts like Happyman Jacob emphasize that comparing current policy to historical Non-Alignment is a misnomer, as non-alignment was designed for weak states in a bipolar era.
 - India's contemporary objective is to function as an independent pole in a **multipolar world**, making use of plurilateral platforms like BRICS to project strategic independence.
- **Related Static Dimension (The Evolution of India's Multilateralism):**
 - Historically, India's foreign policy transitioned from idealistic non-alignment (Bandung era) to pragmatic alignment, and now to **issue-based multi-alignment** (engaging simultaneously with the G7, Quad, and BRICS).
 - This reflects the realist strategy of maximizing national interest through diverse economic and security corridors.
- **Compromise, Consensus, and Optic Realities:**
 - Achieving unanimous consensus in an expanded 10-member bloc inherently requires diplomatic trade-offs, such as omitting specific references to the Ukraine conflict or accommodating strong regional positions on West Asia.
 - While high-profile optics (such as leadership handshakes) capture global attention, tangible policy is shaped through quiet, institutional frameworks rather than broad political declarations.

Conclusion

The 2026 New Delhi Declaration is less a dramatic ideological pivot and more a manifestation of pragmatic multi-alignment. By successfully managing diverse global stakeholders under one roof, India demonstrates its capability to act as a vital bridge between the Global South and developed economies, anchoring its foreign policy firmly in the pursuit of national interest and strategic autonomy.

UPSC Mains Exam Study Questions

Question: What is strategic autonomy? How does India's contemporary foreign policy differ from the traditional concept of Non-Alignment? **(10 Marks, 150 Words)**

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The renewed political momentum surrounding the Uniform Civil Code (UCC)—with targets set to implement it across NDA-ruled states—brings India's long-standing debate over legal uniformity, personal laws, and secularism to the forefront. For UPSC General Studies (GS Paper II - Indian Constitution, Governance, and Social Justice), analyzing the structural, legal, and sociological facets of the UCC is essential for understanding the balance between fundamental rights and directive principles.

What is the Uniform Civil Code debate?

How are personal laws governed today? What does the Constitution say about a UCC? What are the arguments in favour of a UCC? What are the arguments against? How could a UCC guarantee equal women's rights? What alternative has been proposed?

EXPLAINER

Rangarajan R.

The story so far:

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has indicated that the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) would be implemented in all 21 NDA-ruled States by 2029. Uttarakhand has had a UCC in force since January 2025, while UCC bills passed by the legislatures of Assam, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh are awaiting Presidential assent.

How are personal matters governed today?

Article 44 of the Constitution provides that the State shall endeavour to secure a UCC for citizens throughout India. A UCC would apply the same set of secular personal laws to all people, irrespective of religion, caste, or tribe. India already has uniform criminal laws and common civil laws covering matters such as taxation, contracts, and negotiable instruments.

However, in matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance of property, various religious communities in India follow personal laws that are based on their religious doctrines. Hindus are governed by laws such as the Hindu Marriage Act (1955) and the Hindu Succession Act (1956), while many tribals within the Hindu religion may follow customary family laws under constitutional exceptions. Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs are covered by Hindu laws. Sikh marriages can also be registered under the Anand Marriage Act (2012). Christians and Parsis have their own personal laws, while Muslims are governed by the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act (1937).

What are the pros and cons?

The Constitution makers were divided over including a UCC in the Constitution.



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Some wanted it to be made a Fundamental Right to ensure uniformity in civil laws and secure equal rights for women. However, many members of the Muslim community were not in favour of including it in the Constitution as they felt that a uniform civil code would violate the fundamental right to religion that is guaranteed in Part III. Finally, the provision relating to UCC was placed in the non-justiciable Part IV - Directive Principles of State Policy.

There are several arguments over aspects of the UCC. The key arguments in its favour are, first, that it would make India secular in the true sense by subjecting all citizens to the same personal laws. The second and most vital argument is gender justice: a UCC would ensure equal rights for women across religions in matters governed by personal laws.

The key arguments against UCC are as follows. First, there can be potential conflict between the provisions of the UCC and guaranteed fundamental rights. Article 25 of the Constitution guarantees every person a fundamental right to practise a religion of one's choice. Article 29 provides a fundamental right to any section of citizens to conserve their distinct culture. The provisions of a UCC on personal matters may run contrary to scriptures and cultural doctrines in a religion. Second, the four States that have enacted UCC have exempted tribal population from its ambit. The reasons for such exemption are constitutional safeguards to protect tribal culture as well as the belief that many tribal customs in these matters provide adequate rights to women. However, exempting one section of society while making it compulsory for all other groups, including religious

minorities, is discriminatory.

What can be the way forward?

The most important reason to reform civil laws is to ensure equal rights for women in matters of marriage, divorce, maintenance, and inheritance. The right to religion under Article 25 is subject to constitutional morality and other fundamental rights, including equality. In Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955 (2024) case, the Supreme Court held that practices such as casteism and gender discrimination, which run against the spirit of the Constitution, would not receive protection under Article 29. Thus, reforms in personal laws should not be viewed as violating Articles 25 and 29, as they uphold women's equality, an essential facet of constitutional morality.

However, there is resistance to the UCC among minorities, particularly Muslims. In the Constituent Assembly, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar advocated a UCC but suggested that it could remain voluntary. He said Parliament could provide for the UCC to apply to citizens who declare they are willing to be bound by it.

On the other hand, the Law Commission in its Consultation Paper on Reform of Family Law (2018) opined that a UCC was neither necessary nor desirable at this stage. It argued instead for reforming discriminatory provisions across personal laws. The emphasis should be on achieving 'equality within communities' between men and women rather than 'equality between communities.' The report recommends legislative reforms required in various personal laws with respect to marriage, divorce, custody, adoption, maintenance, succession and inheritance, that would ensure gender justice. The suggestions of the Law Commission should be considered while legislating and implementing reforms in personal laws. (Rangarajan R is a former IAS officer and author of 'Courseware on Polity Simplified'. Views expressed are personal)

THE GIST

The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) would replace religion-based personal laws governing matters such as marriage, divorce and inheritance with a common set of secular laws

Supporters argue that it would promote secularism, national integration and gender justice, while critics point to possible conflicts with religious and cultural rights

The Law Commission has instead favoured reforming discriminatory provisions in existing personal laws to ensure equality between men and women

Key Analytical Points

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- **Current Status and Legal Landscape:**

- While India possesses uniform criminal and civil codes (such as contracts and taxation), personal matters like marriage, divorce, and inheritance remain governed by religion-specific laws.
- Uttarakhand implemented a state-level UCC in January 2025, while legislative bills passed in states like Assam, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh await presidential assent, signaling a decentralized, state-led push toward Article 44.

- **The Case for UCC (Secularism and Gender Justice):**

- Proponents argue that a UCC is vital to actualizing true secularism by establishing a common set of secular personal laws irrespective of religion or caste.
- The primary justification centers on **gender justice**, aiming to eliminate discriminatory loopholes in inheritance, maintenance, and marriage rights across different communities.

- **Constitutional Tensions and Counter-Arguments:**

- Critics argue that a mandatory UCC can conflict with Fundamental Rights, specifically **Article 25** (freedom of religion) and **Article 29** (protection of cultural distinctiveness).
- Exempting tribal populations from state-level UCC frameworks—to protect indigenous customs—creates systemic paradoxes, raising questions about selective application versus universal equality.

- **Related Static Dimension (DPSP vs. Fundamental Rights):**

- The framers of the Constitution deliberately placed the UCC under **Article 44 in Part IV (Directive Principles of State Policy)** rather than Part III (Fundamental Rights), recognizing the deep societal sensitivities involved in reforming personal laws.
- Judicial interpretations, including recent observations on constitutional morality, emphasize that practices running counter to gender equality and non-discrimination cannot find absolute shelter under religious freedoms.

Conclusion

Implementing a Uniform Civil Code requires harmonizing the progressive goal of gender justice with the preservation of India's cultural and religious pluralism. Rather than a forced homogenization, a sustainable path forward—as recommended by previous Law Commission insights—prioritizes comprehensive internal reforms within communities to achieve equality without undermining constitutional trust and minority rights.

UPSC Mains Exam Study Questions

Question: "Article 44 reflects the Constitution's attempt to reconcile social reform with India's pluralistic social structure." Discuss. (10 Marks, 150 Words)

A war room for India in an age of sanctions

The next sanctions crisis may begin with a name on a Washington list and end in an Indian kitchen. Between them lie a New York bank, a London insurer, a tanker in the Strait of Hormuz and several Ministries in Delhi. Foreign pressure moves through one system. No single Ministry follows the whole journey. Diplomacy, law, banking, trade, shipping and fuel supplies sit in different parts of government. Who owns the combined response?

Washington sanctioned four companies based in India and three Indian nationals over alleged trade in Iranian oil and petrochemicals. Tehran listed an LNG carrier serving India and an Indian-flagged bulk carrier for possible fines, detention or confiscation in the Strait of Hormuz. One order travels through bank wires; the other waits at sea.

'Weaponised interdependence'

India makes its own laws and foreign policy. Yet, an Indian company may need an American bank for payment, a foreign insurer for its ship, and safe passage to deliver cargo through a strait that another state can disrupt. Whoever controls a critical network can exert pressure on those who depend on it. Scholars call this weaponised interdependence.

Secondary sanctions tell a foreign business to abandon a targeted transaction or risk losing access to American finance. On August 24, the United States widened that threat under Operation Economic Outcast across five Iranian sectors: digital assets, technology, gold, aviation and shipping. On September 14, Washington imposed Iran-related sanctions on Russia's VTB Bank, which has a Delhi branch. Banks dealing with it face sanctions risk, even where a transaction is permitted under Indian law.

American laws in the 1990s threatened foreign companies with penalties for conduct abroad. Europe responded with a Blocking Statute. When secondary sanctions against Iran returned in 2018, several European companies withdrew despite having legal protection at home. The possible loss of access to American banking and dollar payments was enough to choke off trade



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A coordinated response is essential as sanctions increasingly target entire transactions

that remained legal in Europe. Sanctions against Russia widened after 2022. Export controls pursued foreign suppliers of chips and machine tools. Oil restrictions reached tankers, insurers, ship managers and traders. Sanctions increasingly followed the transaction rather than stopping with the seller. On September 16, the U.S. Congress passed a sanctions bill that would authorise the U.S. President to impose tariffs as a form of economic coercion. Indian exports to the U.S. could face tariffs of up to 100% over India's purchases of Russian oil. The Indian government is monitoring developments and has said that it will work with industry to protect India's trade and economic interests.

Iran is using a different chokepoint at sea. On August 23, its Persian Gulf Strait Authority published a list of 45 vessels it called non-compliant. They included *Disha*, chartered by Petronet LNG and managed by the Shipping Corporation of India, and *Maha Roos*, an Indian-flagged bulk carrier. The authority did not explain the alleged breaches. By September 14, the list had grown to 77. The authority also warned insurers against covering listed ships. Washington has already sanctioned the authority and warned that seeking passage guarantees from it could carry sanctions risks, even without payment.

The domestic consequences

Economic coercion ties foreign policy directly to the domestic economy. Its consequences reach households, farmers and seafarers. No Ministry can see the whole chain on its own.

During the current West Asia crisis, the government coordinated Ministries, monitored vessels and supplies, raised LPG production and found alternative cargoes. It has kept pumps open and kitchens supplied.

That coordination should survive the crisis. An Economic Security and Sanctions Office under the Cabinet Secretariat should become India's permanent war room for economic coercion. It should bring together officials responsible for foreign policy, finance, commerce, energy, shipping, law and defence, alongside the Reserve

Bank of India and market regulators. Its staff should track where transactions could fail, from payment and insurance to shipping and delivery.

It would seek evidence behind foreign listings, support legitimate requests for removal, negotiate written exemptions and transition periods, and issue clear Indian guidance. Banks should distinguish legal prohibitions from their own commercial caution. Companies should be warned early when a payment route, insurer or port is at risk.

India also needs more LPG storage, an expanded Indian-controlled tanker fleet and a stronger Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool, while securing long-term LNG contracts outside Hormuz. Rupee settlement can preserve lawful trade when sellers accept it, but cannot shield a bank that still needs New York.

Why India cannot follow China's stand

China has said that the American measures had no basis in international law or authorisation from the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Earlier in May, Beijing told Chinese businesses not to recognise, enforce or comply with American sanctions against five Chinese refining companies. India also says that it upholds sanctions mandated by the UNSC and does not accept unilateral sanctions. That does not mean Delhi can simply copy Beijing. China's market power, state-directed economy and leverage over critical supply chains give it more room to resist.

India's financial and commercial ties with the U.S. make adopting Beijing's approach costly. A legal objection alone offers little comfort if Indian firms still bear the cost. India must protect household energy, seafarers, fertilizer supplies and lawful trade while preserving ties with the U.S., Russia, Iran and the Gulf. Delhi needs the full picture in one room before it acts.

The first test of sovereignty happens when Delhi decides. The second comes when that decision meets a New York bank or the Strait of Hormuz. In the age of sanctions, India cannot move those chokepoints. It can, however, make sure that every decision is taken with the whole journey in view.

GS Paper II: International Relations

UPSC Mains Exam Practice Questions: What is weaponised interdependence? Explain its significance for India's strategic autonomy. **15Marks, 250 Words)**

Context

The intersection of foreign sanctions, global financial networks, and domestic supply chains has transformed international economic coercion into a day-to-day domestic governance challenge. As highlighted by recent geopolitical friction involving U.S. secondary sanctions and Iranian maritime restrictions, external pressures on trade directly impact household energy security and retail markets in India. For UPSC General Studies (GS Paper II - International Relations and Government Policies; GS Paper III - Economic Development and Security), analyzing this vulnerability exposes the friction between global network hubs and national sovereignty.

Key Analytical Points

- **The Mechanics of Weaponised Interdependence:**

- Coined by scholars Henry Farrell and Abraham Newman, **weaponised interdependence** occurs when dominant states leverage centralized hubs in global networks (such as SWIFT, New York clearing banks, or maritime insurance markets) to project power, conduct surveillance (panopticon effect), or choke off trade (chokepoint effect).
- Secondary sanctions force foreign entities to choose between maintaining banned transactions or retaining access to Western financial architecture.

- **Dual-Pronged External Pressures on India:**

- **From the West:** U.S. legislative moves (such as Operation Economic Outcast and proposed tariffs up to 100% on major buyers of Russian energy) target Indian companies, banks with branches in New Delhi, and trade pipelines.
- **From West Asia:** Iranian maritime authorities listing Indian-chartered vessels and bulk carriers in the Strait of Hormuz demonstrate how regional players can weaponize vital physical chokepoints.

- **Related Static Dimension (Institutional Fragmentation in Governance):**

- Foreign policy, trade, banking regulations, and maritime shipping are managed by distinct ministries and regulatory bodies in New Delhi.
- No single department tracks the entire transaction lifecycle—from a New York bank wire and London insurance policy to a tanker in the Persian Gulf and an LPG cylinder in an Indian kitchen—exposing gaps in cross-sectoral crisis management.

- **Why India Cannot Simply Copy China's Approach:**

- While Beijing instructs its domestic firms to ignore unilateral U.S. sanctions, China's massive market size, state-directed economic control, and dominance over critical supply chains afford it unique leverage.

- India's deeper financial integration with Western economies and critical import dependencies mean that blanket non-compliance would impose unsustainable costs on domestic industries, consumers, and financial institutions.

Conclusion

Navigating the age of economic coercion requires India to institutionalize a unified, whole-of-government approach. Establishing a centralized coordinating mechanism—such as an Economic Security and Sanctions Office—alongside bolstering domestic shipping insurance pools, expanding strategic reserves, and managing multi-vector diplomatic ties will be essential to safeguarding national sovereignty and household welfare.

