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THE HINDU

Daily News Analysis

# The Hindu Important News Articles For UPSC CSE

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Add- 21/B, Om Swati Manor Chs, J.K. Sawant Marg, Opp. Shivaji Natyamandir, Behind Cambridge Showroom, Dadar (West) Mumbai – 400028
Con.- 09820971345, 9619071345, 9223209699
G-mail-lakshyaacademymumbai@gmail.com

**Page 01: GS III : Science and Tech / Preliminary Examination**

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) achieved a critical milestone with the successful launch of the EOS-05 earth observation satellite aboard the GSLV-F17. Placing a 2,367-kg satellite into a sub-geosynchronous transfer orbit provides a major boost to India's space program following recent setbacks with the PSLV missions. Operating from a geosynchronous orbit ~36,000 km above Earth, EOS-05 acts as a continuous "eye in the sky," delivering real-time, high-resolution strategic and civilian data.

**Deep Analysis & Strategic Significance**

- **Continuous Surveillance Capabilities:** Unlike Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites that pass over specific regions intermittently, a geosynchronous earth observation satellite remains fixed over one region, ensuring round-the-clock real-time tracking of weather, disasters, and border areas.
- **GSLV Vehicle Optimization:** The payload capacity of the GSLV has increased from 1,536 kg (GSLV-D1) to 2,367 kg, reflecting significant technical refinements in structural weight reduction and cryogenic propulsion efficiency.
- **Restoration of Operational Confidence:** Successful deployment overcomes previous launch anomalies (such as the GSLV-F10 and PSLV-C62 failures), reinforcing the reliability of India's heavy launch capabilities for upcoming domestic and commercial payloads.
- **Multi-Sectoral Value:** Real-time data feeds directly into precision agriculture, marine environmental monitoring, disaster management, and early warning systems for natural hazards.



# ISRO launches advanced imaging satellite EOS-05

India's first dedicated imaging satellite will provide real-time imagery from about 36,000 km above earth; ISRO breathes easy after successful mission in the wake of back-to-back failures

Hemanth C.S.
BENGALURU

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Friday successfully launched its advanced earth observation satellite EOS-05 aboard the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F17).

The GSLV, on its 19th flight, placed the 2,367-kg EOS-05 into the intended sub-geosynchronous transfer orbit (Sub-GTO) about 18 minutes after lifting off from the second launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota at 2.55 a.m.

The EOS-05 is India's first imaging satellite designed to monitor earth from geosynchronous orbit, about 36,000 km above earth.

"I am very happy to announce that the GSLV-F17 vehicle has successfully and precisely injected the advanced earth observation satellite EOS-05 into the intended and required orbit," ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan said.

He said this was the 107th launch from the spaceport in Sriharikota and the 19th mission of the GSLV.

"The first launch of the GSLV- D1 was done with a payload of 1,536 kg. From that, we have gradually improved the performance of this vehicle by optimising the structural mass and improving the propulsion systems. Today, we have injected the heaviest satellite, a 2,367-kg satellite, using this launch vehicle," he added.

Dr. Narayanan said that once operationalised, EOS-05 would become India's first dedicated imaging satellite operating from the geosynchronous orbit, providing important strategic data for the country.

**'Operating perfectly'**

"From the satellite data, we confirm that all the valves are operating perfectly, the solar panel is deployed, and the health of the satellite is perfectly all right. In the coming days, we will raise the orbit and take it to the required orbit and place the satellite in the geo platform for national activities," Dr. Narayanan said.

The EOS-05, dubbed an "eye in the sky", will provide real-time imagery, helping sectors such as agriculture, environment and disaster management.

**A huge relief**

The successful launch comes as a huge relief for ISRO, which has not carried out a launch since the failure of the PSLV-C62 mission carrying the EOS-N1 earth observation satellite on January 12, 2026.

The space agency, following the back-to-back failures of the PSLV-C62 in January 2026 and the PSLV-C61 on May 18, 2025, had taken a cautious approach and refrained from carrying out further launches.

Though seven missions, including the GSLV-F17/EOS-05 mission, had been scheduled to take place in the first quarter of 2026, ISRO did not launch any satellites during the period.

The successful launch of the 2367-kg EOS-05 also puts behind the failure ISRO had encountered in August 2021 with the GSLV-F10/EOS-03 mission.

EOS-05 is India's first dedicated imaging satellite placed in the geosynchronous orbit, about 36,000 km above the earth

**Eye in the sky**

Wonder awaits: A child watches the EOS-05 launch through binoculars. PTI

**At 2,367 kg,** EOS-05 is the **heaviest satellite** launched by the GSLV

**Key purposes:** **Near real-time imagery** will aid agriculture, environment monitoring, and disaster management

- **Strategic data** from the geo platform will support "national activities"

**Lifespan:** The satellite has an operational life of **nine years** and is equipped with multi-band operating capabilities

- This is the **19th GSLV mission** and the 107th launch from Sriharikota
- EOS-05 replaces the EOS-03 satellite lost in the **unsuccessful GSLV-F10 mission** in August 2021
- **3-stage, 51.7 metre GSLV,** with its third stage being cryogenic, has a lift-off mass of 420.5 tonnes

**Related Static Dimensions (UPSC Syllabus Core)**

- **GS Paper III - Space Technology:**
  - **Geosynchronous vs. Polar Orbits:** EOS-05 operates at ~36,000 km (GEO) matching Earth's rotation period, whereas PSLV missions typically launch into Polar/Sun-Synchronous Orbits (600–800 km) for periodic global coverage.
  - **Cryogenic Upper Stage (CUS):** The GSLV relies on indigenous cryogenic engines using liquid hydrogen ($LH_2$) and liquid oxygen ($LOX$), which offer high specific impulse required for heavy GEO deployments.

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G-mail-lakshyaacademymumbai@gmail.com

- **GS Paper III - Disaster Management:** Real-time monitoring significantly improves flood mapping, cyclone tracking, and forest fire surveillance, reducing response latency during crisis management.

**Key Operational Milestones (Point-Wise Flow)**

- **Pre-Launch Prep:** Payload optimization and structural refinements on the 19th flight of the GSLV (GSLV-F17).
- **Lift-Off & Ascent:** Liftoff from the Second Launch Pad at Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.
- **Orbital Injection:** Precise injection of the 2,367-kg EOS-05 payload into Sub-GTO 18 minutes post-launch.
- **Solar Deployment & Health Check:** Verification of valve operation, solar array deployment, and onboard telemetry health.
- **Orbit Raising:** Planned chemical propulsion maneuvers to raise the apogee/perigee into the final geostationary slot at 36,000 km.

**Conclusion**

The EOS-05 mission demonstrates ISRO's resilience and engineering adaptability. By pioneering continuous earth observation from a geosynchronous orbit, India strengthens both its national security apparatus and socio-economic capabilities in agriculture and disaster management.

**UPSC Prelims Practice Questions**

**Question: The principal advantage of a geostationary satellite for continuous weather monitoring is that:**

A. It has no orbital motion around Earth

B. It remains apparently fixed relative to a location on Earth's surface

C. It operates only over the polar regions

D. It can observe only one point on Earth

**Ans: B)**

**UPSC Mains Practice Questions**

**Question:**"India's space programme is increasingly shifting from launch capability to application-oriented space infrastructure." Discuss.**(10 Marks, 150 Words)**

**Page 04 : GS II & III : International Relations & Indian Economy / Preliminary Examination**

The high-level dialogue in Mumbai between Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever and Indian Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal marks a pivotal juncture in bilateral relations, catalyzed by the landmark India-European Union Free Trade Agreement (FTA). By positioning the Port of Antwerp-Bruges as India's primary gateway to Europe, the partnership addresses the growing global need for supply-chain diversification amidst rising trade protectionism.

**Strategic and Economic Significance**

- **Tariff Elimination and Market Access:** The India-EU FTA targets the elimination or reduction of tariffs on over 95% of goods, unlocking a $24 trillion market representing roughly a quarter of global GDP and two billion people.
- **Advanced Logistics Infrastructure:** The Port of Antwerp-Bruges provides specialized capabilities, including world-first unbroken cold-chain logistics for pharmaceuticals and efficient food processing corridors, functioning as a direct entry point into the European consumer market.
- **Diversified Sectoral Cooperation:** Bilateral engagement extends beyond traditional gems and jewellery ($3.5 billion trade volume) into high-growth areas like lab-grown diamond technology, green hydrogen value chains, maritime services, and defense industrial collaboration.
- **Sub-National Growth Synergy:** Maharashtra's ambitious roadmap toward a $1-trillion economy by 2030 creates a localized engine for European investment, capital deployment, and skill-sharing.

# Belgian port can be key to Indian exports: De Wever

Belgian Prime Minister pitches Port of Antwerp-Bruges as India's gateway to Europe; Commerce Minister Goyal says the two countries could deepen collaboration in lab-grown diamond sector

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever on Friday pitched the Port of Antwerp-Bruges as a gateway for Indian exports to Europe. He is in Mumbai for a high-level dialogue on the India-EU Free Trade Agreement.

"The FTA would strengthen trade, create opportunities for businesses, young talent and investment, and make the Indian and European economies more resilient to global disruptions. The Port of Antwerp-Bruges will be a key logistics link between India and Europe creating opportunities in diamonds, pharmaceuticals, food processing, maritime services, green hydrogen and infrastructure," Mr. De Wever said.

"The agreement is expected to eliminate or reduce tariffs on more than 95% of Indian and European goods exports," he added.

Bilateral trade between both countries stood at approximately $13.08 billion in 2025-26.

All ears: Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever in conversation with Union Minister Piyush Goyal, in Mumbai, on Friday. PTI

"More and more voices today are calling for barriers to go up, for markets to be shut off, and for tariffs to be imposed. Some do this entirely arbitrarily. In doing so, they inflict serious economic damage on their trading partners, making them dependent and turning them into vassals," said Mr. De Wever.

**'Invest in India'**

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal invited Belgian companies to invest in India, saying Belgium's technology, innovation and capital could be combined with India's scale, talent and young workforce. Mr. Goyal described Maharashtra as an attractive destination for investment and highlighted its position as India's financial, commercial and industrial hub.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said he wants Belgium to be central to the State's growth toward a $1-trillion economy. "Our ambition is clear: to build Maharashtra into a $1-trillion economy by 2030, and we want Belgium to be a part of that journey," Mr. Fadnavis said.

Mr. Goyal said the trade agreement, which had been under discussion for around 25 years, would create opportunities for farmers, fishermen, MSMEs, startups, women entrepreneurs, manufacturers and service providers across India and Europe.

"The India-EU FTA brings together around two billion people, representing about a quarter of global GDP, a third of world trade and a market of around $24 trillion," Mr. Goyal said.

He said all 27 EU countries were supportive of completing the remaining formalities.

On India-Belgium cooperation in the diamond sector, Mr. Goyal said the two countries could deepen collaboration in design and co-creation in gems and jewellery, including lab-grown diamonds, while also working towards greater cooperation in technology and certification centred around Antwerp, Mumbai and Surat.

India-Belgium gems and jewellery trade stood at around $3.5 billion in 2025-26, according to Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council.

**UPSC Static Dimensions (GS Paper II & III)**

- **International Relations (GS-II):** India-EU strategic partnership, plurilateral trade frameworks, and hedging against arbitrary trade barriers and geopolitical volatility.
- **Indian Economy & Infrastructure (GS-III):** Mechanics of Free Trade Agreements, port-led industrial development (aligning with domestic initiatives like Sagarmala), and clean energy cooperation through green hydrogen corridors.
- **Industrial Manufacturing & Gems:** The transition from natural diamond processing hubs (Surat and Mumbai) to certified lab-grown diamond design and co-creation with Antwerp.

**Conclusion**

The convergence between India and Belgium exemplifies pragmatic economic statecraft at a time of global trade friction. By combining Belgium's technological innovation, capital, and premier logistics network with India's demographic dividend and industrial scale, both nations are establishing a blueprint for resilient, future-proof economic integration.

## UPSC Prelims Exam Study Questions

**Question: A cold chain is particularly important for:**

A. Only bulk commodities such as coal and iron ore

B. Temperature-sensitive products such as pharmaceuticals and certain food products

C. Only petroleum products

D. Digital services

**Ans: B)**

## UPSC Mains Exam Study Questions

**Question:** "Port-led development can transform India's trade competitiveness by reducing logistics costs and integrating domestic production with global value chains." Discuss.**(10 Marks, 150 Words)**



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**G-mail-lakshyaacademymumbai@gmail.com**

## Page 05 :GS II : Indian Polity / Preliminary Examination

Faced with over 5.18 crore pending cases in the subordinate judiciary, a three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, issued directives to elevate the retirement age of district judicial officers from 60 to 62 years. Highlighting that access to justice remains compromised without experienced judges, the apex court ordered seven consenting states to amend their service rules within two months, while granting hesitant states two weeks to reconsider.

**Core Analysis: Need & Arguments**

- **Retention of Experienced Talent:** Retaining trained and seasoned judicial officers directly mitigates the continuous attrition gap, preventing sudden loss of institutional knowledge amidst high case burdens.
- **Addressing Shortages & Recruitment Lags:** Recruitment drives across states frequently fail to fill sanctioned positions, leaving wide gaps between approved and working judge strength.
- **Refuting Financial Burden Concerns:** The court noted that extending service defers immediate post-retiral pensionary payouts. States avoid the simultaneous dual expense of paying retirement benefits to outgoing judges while funding salaries for new inductees.

# SC pushes for raising retirement age in district judiciary as backlog tops 5 cr.

Top court says it is 'crying need of the hour' to stop attrition of experienced judicial talent otherwise access to justice would remain a mere chimera; only 7 States have responded positively to SC's call, while others are hesitant or plain fence-sitting

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**
NEW DELHI

As 5.18 crore cases lie pending in district courts across the country, the Supreme Court has sent a distress call to States to enhance the retirement age of experienced judicial officers from 60 to 62 years.

The court said the "crying need of the hour" is to stop the attrition of the experienced judicial talent lest access to justice remain a mere chimera due to unfilled posts.

Only seven States have so far responded positively to the SOS from the Supreme Court. Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal have agreed to enhance the retirement age of their judicial officers.

A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, in a September 1 order published on Friday, directed these State governments to amend the service rules within two months. The State High Court concerned would enhance the age of superannuation to 62 years of judicial officers, subject to their suitability assessment, on their attainment of 60 years of age.

The other States and Union Territories have varied between a direct negative response to plain fence-sitting.

The court has directed them to take a decision on enhancement of retirement age of their judicial officers to 62 years in two weeks. These States include Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Keralam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, NCT of Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, and Puducherry.

Their hesitation, the court discovered, was fuelled by a sense of insecurity over the financial burden the move would entail. Plus, these States apprehend that employees in other State services would also demand parity.

The Bench said the apprehensions of these States were entirely misconceived. Judicial officers do a specialised service.

"Most of the recruitment drives undertaken in the various States have not resulted in optimum recruitment or in the filling up of the sanctioned cadre strength, and a yawning gap between the sanctioned and working strength persists across the board
SUPREME COURT

**Benefit to society**

"The alleged financial burden that would be thrown on the State exchequer on account of the enhancement of the superannuation age as a result of the payment of the maximum salary in the pay scale to the officers for a further period of two or five years as the case may be, and on account of the higher outlay on their retiral benefits, is negligible considering the enormous advantage that the administration of justice and the society at large would derive from the enhancement in the age of retirement," the Bench quoted a 1992 judicial precedent.

Besides, the court said simple math showed that a State, by retaining the retirement age of 60 years, would double-spend post-retiral dues of superannuated judicial officers as well as pay the salaries of the newly-appointed ones.

On the contrary, if experienced members of the judicial cadre were permitted to continue in service till the age of 62, the additional burden of bearing such post-retiral dues would stand correspondingly postponed.

Besides, the recruitment of independent and competent judicial officers was an arduous task.

"Most of the recruitment drives undertaken in the various States have not resulted in optimum recruitment or in the filling up of the sanctioned cadre strength, and a yawning gap between the sanctioned and working strength persists across the board," the court pointed out.

The Bench pointed out that most State High Courts have consented to the enhancement of the retirement age as they were face-to-face with the "crisis in dispensation of justice".

Some High Courts, including Madras, the court recorded has "wisely" introduced relevant riders so that the deadwood did not take advantage of the proposal to enhance superannuation age. These High Courts have recommended a thorough assessment of judicial work as a condition precedent to ensure that only competent officers of proven integrity were permitted to continue in the cadre.

"This suggestion is most welcome as it would balance the preservation of experienced judicial officers, while removing the clog of deadwood, blocking the entrance of young blood invigorating the system," the Supreme Court observed.

The court listed the case again on October 1.

- **Distinct Constitutional Status:** Judicial officers are not standard civil servants. Their separate service classification justifies differential retirement ages compared to general state administrative cadres.
- **Performance Assessment Safeguards:** To avoid retaining underperforming personnel ("deadwood"), extensions from 60 to 62 years remain strictly subject to a rigorous suitability evaluation by the respective High Court.

**Related Static Dimensions (UPSC Syllabus)**

- **GS Paper II – Indian Judiciary & Governance:**

- **Article 233 & 235:** Governs the appointment, control, and service conditions of the district judiciary, placing administrative superintendence under the respective High Courts.
- **Judicial Pendency & Reforms:** Examines institutional bottlenecks, judge-to-population ratios, and structural delays impacting fundamental rights under Article 21 (Right to Speedy Justice).

- **GS Paper II – Constitutional Posts & Separation of Powers:**
  - **S.P. Gupta (1981) & All India Judges Association Cases:** Precedents establishing that the judicial cadre operates as an independent, distinct class deserving unified service terms distinct from the executive.

**Institutional Response Status**

- **Consenting States (2-Month Timeline to Amend Rules):**
  - Chhattisgarh
  - Karnataka
  - Madhya Pradesh
  - Maharashtra
  - Sikkim
  - Tamil Nadu
  - West Bengal
- **Hesitant / Non-Consenting States & UTs (Directed to Decide in 2 Weeks):**
  - Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Kerala, Gujarat, and 16 others.
- **Mandatory Prerequisite:**
  - Performance and integrity evaluation by the jurisdictional High Court at age 60 before extending service to 62.

**Conclusion**

Increasing the superannuation age of subordinate judges balances talent retention with systemic productivity. Coupled with stringent performance filters by High Courts, this administrative measure serves as a crucial interim reform to stabilize working strength, curtail vacancy-driven backlogs, and ensure meaningful access to justice.

## UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

**Question: Articles 233 and 235 of the Constitution are primarily associated with:**

A. Appointment and control of the subordinate judiciary

B. Appointment of Supreme Court judges

C. Emergency provisions

D. Inter-State water disputes

**Ans: A)**

## UPSC Mains Practice Questions

**Question:**"The subordinate judiciary is the foundation of India's justice delivery system, yet it remains the most capacity-constrained tier of the judiciary." Discuss.**(10 Marks, 150 Words)**

## Page 06:GS III : Environment / Preliminary Examination

The UNEP report Limiting Overshoot highlights the imminent threat of breaching the 1.5°C warming threshold, warning that relying solely on post-overshoot recovery ("peak and decline") poses irreversible ecological risks. With global policies pointing toward a 2.6°C rise and short-term risks heightened by El Niño cycles, international scrutiny is expanding beyond long-term carbon dioxide ($CO_2$) abatement to short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs), particularly methane. This shift challenges India's traditional position as a low-emitting developing nation, requiring an updated global messaging strategy.

### Warning on warming

**India must shed its victim mindset while acting on climate change**

The United Nations Environment Programme's report, Limiting Overshoot, is a reminder that breaching the 1.5°C global warming limit would bring irreversible losses that adaptation cannot undo. Were all countries to deliver on their climate pledges today, the globe is still poised to heat 1.8°C and on current policies, 2.6°C. Given that the limit has already been breached – and, with the ongoing heating in the central equatorial Pacific expected to burgeon into one of the strongest El Niños in recent history, likely again in 2027 – the report is an acceptance of the scientific reality that we are in a 1.5°C world, while resisting the conclusion that nothing more can be done. The authors describe an "overshoot, peak and decline" pathway under which average global temperatures rise above 1.5°C but countries collectively hold the peak as low as possible and then bring them back below the limit by the end of the century. Neutralising the heating effect of even a tenth of a degree, the report argues, is far harder than preventing that rise in the first place. This in itself is nothing new. What is new is the emphasis on greenhouse gases beyond carbon dioxide. Action on methane, responsible for about 0.5°C of current warming, is considered the most effective way to slow warming in the near-term. Over 155 countries – India is not among them – have joined the Global Methane Pledge to cut anthropogenic methane at least 30% below 2020 levels by 2030.

That absence reflects the familiar tension between reports of this nature, which emphasise mitigation, and major developing economies such as India. They stress that they are already en route to moving away from fossil fuels and, being vulnerable to the impacts of historical stocks of carbon, deserve greater financial support and affordable technology from richer developed countries responsible for the crisis. The latest report unfortunately has little to say on adaptation finance, though there are previous assessments on the topic. With countries set to convene in Türkiye in November for COP31, familiar disagreements are likely to surface – but in the aftermath of the Bhotekoshi disaster in Nepal, India's position too has been complicated. Nepal's Foreign Affairs Minister, Shisir Khanal, has said that major industrial emitters such as China, the United States and India must consider the impact of rising temperatures on small countries such as Nepal. For India, this list means that a section of the world – despite India's position as a victim of climate change with below-world-average per capita emissions – sees it as part of the problem. India must take such perceptions seriously and, rather than ignore the reality of a 1.5°C world, should calibrate its messaging to adapt to it.

**Core Analysis & Geopolitical Shift**

- **Shift to Non-$CO_2$ Mitigation:** Methane accounts for approximately 0.5°C of current global warming. Initiatives like the **Global Methane Pledge** target a 30% reduction by 2030. India's hesitation to join stems from its agricultural structure, where methane emissions originate primarily from rice paddies and enteric fermentation in livestock—sectors vital to rural livelihoods.
- **Neighborhood Concerns:** Statements from smaller South Asian neighbors (such as Nepal's references to large regional economies) reflect a growing perception that major Asian emitters impact immediate regional microclimates and Himalayan ecosystems.
- **Adaptation vs. Mitigation Imbalance:** Global climate discourse continues to prioritize immediate mitigation metrics over adaptation finance mechanisms—a core requirement for developing economies managing historical climate vulnerabilities.
- **Evolving Perception Risk:** Sticking solely to "historical emission equity" risks isolating India internationally, especially as developing partners and vulnerable island nations demand accountability from all major regional economies.

**Static Dimensions (UPSC Syllabus Core)**

- **GS Paper III – Environmental Conservation & Climate Change:**
  - **UNFCCC Framework & Paris Agreement:** Operational mechanics of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), Loss and Damage Funds, and the 1.5°C threshold under global stocktakes.
  - **Methane Emission Dynamics:** High Global Warming Potential (GWP) of $CH_4$ (~28–36 times that of $CO_2$ over 100 years). India's domestic initiatives include **Harit Dhara** (anti-methanogenic feed supplement) and **System of Rice Intensification (SRI)**.
- **GS Paper II – International Relations:**
  - **South Asian Regional Climate Diplomacy:** Strategic leadership in the

Indian Ocean Rim and Himalayan regions (e.g., Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure - CDRI) to address transboundary climate risks.

**Key Actionable Strategic Steps**

- **Evolve the Diplomatic Narrative:** Proactively frame domestic climate actions—such as renewable energy expansion, green hydrogen, and ethanol blending—as leadership contributions rather than defensive responses.
- **Targeted Sectoral Methane Strategy:** Focus methane reduction efforts on municipal solid waste management and fugitive industrial leaks rather than smallholder agriculture.
- **Strengthen Regional Partnerships:** Collaborate with South Asian neighbors on transboundary disaster management, glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) monitoring, and joint Himalayan ecosystem preservation.
- **Demand Adaptation & Tech Parity:** Keep advocating for affordable technology transfers and transparent adaptation finance, while actively building resilient domestic infrastructure.

**Conclusion**

Navigating a 1.5°C warmer world requires India to balance domestic development needs with a modernized diplomatic approach. By combining internal resilience with proactive, constructive global engagement, India can protect its economic interests while upholding its role as a responsible global climate leader.

**UPSC Mains Exam Study Questions**

**Question:** Discuss the major sources of methane emissions in India and suggest a sector-specific methane mitigation strategy.**(10 Marks, 150 Words)**

**Page 06: GS II : International Relations / Preliminary Examination**

India's decision to revise its 2015 Model Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) offers an opportunity to rebalance investment protection with the state's sovereign right to regulate. While substantive legal reforms—such as streamlined international arbitration mechanisms—are critical, addressing the procedural "democratic deficit" in treaty-making is equally vital to ensure transparency, domestic legitimacy, and multi-stakeholder participation.

# A BIT of a reset, with a wider debate

It has been widely reported that India is revising its model bilateral investment treaty (BIT) and that the revised text will soon be placed before the Union cabinet. The seeds of this were sown when Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in the Union Budget speech in 2025, that India was considering revamping its 2015 Model BIT. The treaty was adopted as part of a broader appraisal process launched after several foreign investors sued India for BIT breaches. The two key outcomes of this appraisal were the unilateral termination of BITs and the adoption of a new model BIT as the basis to launch new negotiations.

**Prabhash Ranjan**

Professor and Vice Dean (Research), Jindal Global Law School, and was part of the team of experts assembled by the Law Commission of India to study the 2015 draft model bilateral investment treaty (BIT)

**A model that is out of balance**

In the last decade or so, India has managed to conclude only a handful of BITs based on its 2015 model. This reveals the many limitations of the 2015 model, which many scholars, including this writer, have repeatedly pointed out. If investment treaties aim to balance the two competing objectives of investment protection (one end of the spectrum) and the state's right to regulate (the other end), the Indian model BIT tilts heavily towards the latter. This creates doubts among countries that export capital to India about the legal protection afforded to their investments. These doubts are exacerbated by high regulatory risks, not-so-well-developed governance models, and an agonisingly tardy judicial system. As these concerns have grown louder, India has rightly decided to revisit the model, apparently with the objective of pulling the pendulum back towards the centre.

Any process of review of BITs has two core components. The first is on what substantive and procedural changes need to be made to the law; and the second is about what processes need to be followed to ensure the robustness of the outcome. The first aspect has attracted considerable attention, with experts pointing out the necessary legal reforms, such as making it easier for foreign investors to use international arbitration for treaty claims, enhancing the substantive protections for foreign investment, and having more investment facilitation measures. However, the second issue has not been deliberated much.

Revising India's bilateral investment treaty (BIT) requires consultation and stronger democratic accountability

**Concerns about democratic deficit**

Since international economic treaties, including those on foreign investment, have a conspicuous impact on citizens, it brings into play the all-affected principle in democracy. In other words, whether those affected by, say, an investment treaty should have a right to participate in decision-making. If those affected are not able to participate effectively in decision-making, say, through their elected representatives or other civil society organisations, it raises concerns about 'democratic deficit' in the treaty-making process. Originating in debates in Europe, 'democratic deficit' refers to the insufficient oversight of technocrats and bureaucracies, or the executive in general, including the political executive, who negotiate and evolve treaty frameworks behind closed doors. The lack of oversight may take many forms, such as a lack of or inadequate parliamentary supervision of the treaty-making process, and an absence of an external consultative process with other stakeholders, including subject-matter experts and civil society organisations.

To overcome the charge of 'democratic deficit', many countries, such as the United Kingdom and Australia, mandatorily place the text of the negotiated treaty before ratification on the floor of the Parliament, enabling it to express its views. Specifically, in the context of model BITs, Norway held two rounds of public consultations – in 2008 and 2015 – on an updated draft. Likewise, Colombia released its model BIT for public consultation. India, too, in March 2015, circulated its draft 2015 model BIT for public comment. This provided an opportunity for the Law Commission of India (LCI) to assemble a team of experts to study the draft model BIT. The LCI, in its 260th report, made recommendations on how to improve the draft model BIT. India finally adopted the revised version in December 2015, though not all of the LCI's recommended changes were reflected in it.

**Have a consultative process**

Presumably, the government must have already undertaken widespread internal consultations, i.e., intra-governmental deliberations on the model BIT. As regards external consultation, the following may be considered. First, form a core team of experts, external to the government, who have demonstrated proficiency in international investment law or foreign investment, and engage with them. This would ideally include international lawyers and economists drawn from universities, research institutions and think tanks. This core team could act as the sounding board for the government. Second, invite industry bodies, arbitrators, law firms, and other civil society organisations to offer their views on the model BIT.

Following these first two steps, the third step will be to prepare a draft and place it in the public domain, inviting comments from the public at large, as done in March 2015. In the fourth step, or simultaneously, the draft model BIT should be placed on the floor of Parliament for discussion. The relevant department-related parliamentary committees can also be roped in for the same. Most notably, this consultative process should not be carried out merely as a box-ticking exercise, but as a meaningful activity that upholds the spirit of participatory democracy, which would necessarily include engagement with dissenting views.

**Core Analysis & Institutional Challenges**

- **Limitation of the 2015 Model:** The 2015 text heavily favored state regulatory power, creating hesitation among major capital-exporting nations and resulting in very few signed treaties.
- **Investment Friction:** Investor skepticism has been exacerbated by perception of high domestic regulatory risks, institutional delays, and judicial backlogs.

- **The "Democratic Deficit":** International economic treaties directly impact domestic governance and citizens. Closed-door executive negotiations risk alienating key societal stakeholders and bypassing parliamentary oversight.
- **Global Best Practices:** Capital-exporting democracies (e.g., UK, Australia, Norway, Colombia) mandatorily table negotiated texts in Parliament or hold public consultations before final ratification.

**Static Dimensions (UPSC Syllabus Core)**

- **GS Paper II – Constitutional Governance & Separation of Powers:**
  - **Executive vs. Legislative Oversight:** Article 73 and Article 253 govern executive power in negotiating and implementing international treaties. Incorporating parliamentary committees strengthens legislative scrutiny over international agreements.
  - **Participatory Democracy:** Engaging civil society and research institutions upholds the "all-affected principle" in public policy formulation.
- **GS Paper III – Indian Economy & Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):**
  - **Ease of Doing Business:** Transparent BIT frameworks reduce investor risk premiums, stabilize foreign capital inflows, and safeguard domestic policy space in public health, environment, and taxation.

**Key Actionable Steps for a Consultation Roadmap**

- **Form an External Expert Core Committee:** Engage independent international investment lawyers, academicians, and economists to serve as a technical advisory panel.
- **Broaden Multi-Stakeholder Deliberations:** Formalize consultation channels with industry associations, law firms, arbitrators, and civil society groups.
- **Public Domain Release:** Draft and publish the revised model treaty online to invite public comments, mirroring the Law Commission of India's (LCI) 2015 consultative exercise.
- **Parliamentary Scrutiny:** Present the draft model BIT before Parliament and relevant Department-Related Standing Committees for legislative discussion prior to Cabinet approval.

**Conclusion**

A balanced Bilateral Investment Treaty must protect foreign capital while safeguarding national policy autonomy. Broadening external consultation and ensuring parliamentary discussion will resolve institutional friction, reduce legal vulnerability, and reinforce India's credentials as a stable destination for long-term foreign investment.

**UPSC Mains Exam Study Questions**

**Question:** Examine the constitutional relationship between executive treaty-making power and parliamentary oversight in India. How can institutional consultation strengthen democratic legitimacy without undermining executive flexibility? **(10 Marks, 150 Words)**

# The Gulf is calling and New Delhi must listen

**Shashi Tharoor**

Fourth-term Member of Parliament (Congress) for Thiruvananthapuram, who served nearly three decades at the United Nations, where he rose to the position of Under Secretary-General. He has also been a Minister of State for External Affairs in the Government of India and is the bestselling author, of 29 books, including 'Pax Indica: India and the World of the 21st century'. He currently chairs the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs

For decades, India's relationship with West Asia operated under a doctrine of deliberate ambiguity and even of some strategic distance. Delhi treated the "Middle East" primarily as an economic hinterland: a critical source of crude oil, a reliable destination for outbound labour, and a vital conduit for remittances. When regional crises flared, Indian foreign policy defaulted to hedging, balancing relations between competing power centres such as Riyadh, Tehran, Tel Aviv, and Abu Dhabi without tying itself to the security obligations of any single capital. Of late, we called that approach "multi-alignment".

**What worked until now**

But while India was careful to be friendly to all, it was not too friendly to any, in an effort not to offend any of the various capitals in the mix. The logic was clear: there was much to be gained from all parties in what was widely seen to be a likely West Asian economic renaissance. The region was seen through a macroeconomic vision that highlighted its convenient geographic features, its immense natural resources of oil and gas, massive capital accumulation, and its receptivity to imported labour and skills, of which India has a surplus. In this framing, the global economic centre of gravity was seen as inexorably shifting away from an aging, debt-burdened West toward a highly dynamic Asia, positioning West Asia as the ultimate maritime and terrestrial bridge between a declining West and a rising East.

This defensive and essentially transactional posture served India well in an era when the United States stood as the undisputed guarantor of West Asian security, keeping sea lines of communication open and maintaining regional stability. However, the geopolitical bedrock of West Asia is undergoing a violent structural shift. As Washington recalibrates its global commitments and retreats into an unpredictable "selective engagement" posture, a profound security vacuum has emerged, sparking a scramble among regional states for durable security guarantees. Here, has India been caught napping, continuing a business-as-usual approach that risks early obsolescence?

West Asian capitals no longer view distancing, whether called non-alignment or multi-alignment, as a virtue. They are actively seeking alternative, dependable security partners who can offer more than diplomatic platitudes and routine economic cooperation. This structural reality was highlighted by the signing of the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement, bringing together Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan into a collective defence arrangement. While framed as a defensive effort to manage shared vulnerabilities, the pact signals a broader security realignment. By linking Gulf capital with Turkish defence technology and Pakistani military manpower and skill, the agreement creates a powerful new security architecture right at India's western maritime doorstep.

A changing West Asia requires a more assertive Indian role in pursuing real, hard-power security partnerships

**A clear signal of change**

For New Delhi, the Mecca Agreement is not an isolated diplomatic transaction; it is a clear structural signal that West Asia's security framework is being fundamentally rewritten, often by actors whose strategic interests directly run counter to India's own long-term objectives. While India's strategic silence on this development is understandable, it still begs the question: what next? The growing influence of external powers and hostile regional pacts directly threatens India's trade routes, energy security, and the welfare of millions of Indian citizens living in the Gulf. Is India going to build its own partnerships, or become irrelevant to the region's security?

If India continues to rely on legacy diplomatic processes and transactional commerce, it risks being marginalised in a region essential to its national survival. The challenges are formidable. The eruption of hostilities involving Iran demonstrated that modern, highly integrated economic infrastructure remains profoundly fragile when subjected to grey-zone, asymmetric warfare. State-of-the-art port facilities, energy networks, and logistics corridors proved highly vulnerable to low-cost drones, showing that capital-intensive infrastructure cannot fully compensate for localised security vacuums. Hyper-secure economic enclaves will remain perpetually exposed to the spillover effects of surrounding instability in the region. Since the modern Gulf model relies heavily on foreign corporations and expatriate labour, regional stability is intimately tied to global perception. If security risks cross a certain psychological threshold, the talent and capital that flowed in seamlessly can exit just as rapidly. And when narrow naval chokepoints or overland trade routes face active disruption, global supply chains inevitably stall, revealing that these ambitious trade corridors are only as strong as their most unstable geographic link.

Against this critical background, the assumption that trade ties and diaspora diplomacy alone can preserve Indian influence is rapidly unravelling. A region grappling with maritime threats in the Red Sea, drone strikes on critical infrastructure, involvement in conflicts in Iran, Yemen, Sudan, the Strait of Hormuz and now the Bab el-Mandab, requires partners capable of providing tangible security assets. West Asian powers are hungry for hard-power options such as naval patrols, intelligence sharing, defence-industrial collaboration, and credible counter-terrorism capabilities. If India Delhi-dallies over stepping into such a role, others will fill the void, as Türkiye has already demonstrated in Mecca.

**The hard moves India must make**

To protect its strategic space, New Delhi must contemplate a decisive doctrine change, evolving from a passive beneficiary of regional stability into an active guarantor of it. This requires moving beyond high-level bilateral visits and economic summits to actively project hard power into the western Indian Ocean and the broader West Asian region. India's immediate focus must be the rapid expansion of naval and maritime security partnerships across key choke points, including the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf of Oman and the Gulf of Aden, the waters off the Somali coast and the Bab-el-Mandeb. By embedding its naval footprint more deeply through joint maritime patrols, permanent logistics access arrangements, and interoperable surveillance networks with friendly Gulf states, India can establish itself as a, if not the, premier net security provider in its immediate neighbourhood.

Furthermore, India must leverage its growing defence manufacturing ecosystem to offer West Asian states a reliable alternative for hardware and technology. Collaborative defence ventures, joint military exercises with real operational teeth, and deep intelligence-sharing mechanisms must replace mere procurement discussions. Developing robust bilateral and "minilateral" security frameworks with partners such as the United Arab Emirates or Israel, and separately even with Saudi Arabia, will allow Delhi to build a counterweight against hostile axes without succumbing to rigid Cold-War style alliances. The goal is not to entangle India in foreign quagmires, but to build a strategic deterrence web that safeguards Indian interests and reassures regional allies.

The era of passive presence in West Asia has reached its natural end. The Mecca Agreement serves as a stark reminder that regional security arrangements will coalesce with or without Indian participation. If Delhi wishes to secure its economic destiny, safeguard its energy arteries, and claim its rightful place as a leading global power, it must act with urgency and ambition. Moving decisively beyond routine diplomatic engagement to construct real, hard-power security partnerships in West Asia is no longer just a strategic choice for India. It is an imperative for its national security.

**GS Paper II:** **Internatioal Relations**

**UPSC Mains Exam Practice Questions:** "India's traditional Gulf policy was driven by energy, remittances and diaspora, but contemporary West Asia increasingly demands strategic and security engagement." Discuss.(**15Marks, 250 Words)**

**Context :**

In The Hindu editorial, Dr. Shashi Tharoor critically examines the fundamental structural shift occurring in West Asia. For decades, India operated in the region under "deliberate ambiguity" or "multi-alignment," viewing the Gulf primarily through an economic and transactional lens—focusing on crude oil, labor export, and remittances. However, the emergence of a severe security vacuum (driven by US selective engagement) and new security groupings—most notably the **Mecca Joint Defence Agreement** between Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan—signals that West Asia's security architecture is being rewritten. Tharoor argues that passive economic presence is no longer sufficient; India must transition into an active hard-power net security provider to protect its national security interests.

**Analytical Core: Strategic Shift in West Asia**

- **The Fall of Legacy Diplomacy:** Multi-alignment and transactional commerce worked when the US served as the sole regional security guarantor. With Washington's pullback, regional powers no longer value strategic ambiguity; they actively seek hard security guarantees.

- **Emergence of Counter-Axes (The Mecca Pact):** The trilateral agreement links Gulf capital (Saudi Arabia), defense technology (Türkiye), and military manpower/skills (Pakistan). This forms a collective defense architecture right at India's western maritime doorstep.

- **Fragility of Hyper-Economic Networks:** Recent regional conflicts demonstrate that state-of-the-art infrastructure, ports, and trade corridors are extremely vulnerable to low-cost asymmetric grey-zone warfare (e.g., drone/missile strikes in the Red Sea, Bab el-Mandeb, and Strait of Hormuz).

- **Threat to Indian Interests:** Strategic silence risks marginalizing New Delhi. Disruption of maritime choke points threatens India's energy security, trade supply chains, and the welfare of the Indian diaspora in the Gulf.

**Strategic Imperatives & Hard-Power Moves for India**

- **Naval Footprint Expansion:** India must project hard power across key choke points (Strait of Hormuz, Gulf of Oman, Bab-el-Mandeb, and Gulf of Aden) through joint maritime patrols, surveillance networks, and logistics access arrangements.
- **Defense Industrial Collaboration:** Leverage India's defense manufacturing ecosystem to offer Gulf nations hardware, joint technology ventures, and counter-terrorism capabilities as alternatives to traditional or hostile suppliers.
- **Minilateralism over Passive Presence:** Build proactive bilateral and minilateral security frameworks with key regional players (such as UAE, Israel, and Saudi Arabia) to create deterrence against hostile security axes.

**Related Static Dimensions (UPSC Integration)**

- **Choke Points & Maritime Geography:**
  - Strait of Hormuz: Connects Persian Gulf to Gulf of Oman; primary global oil transit chokepoint.
  - Bab-el-Mandeb: Connects Red Sea to Gulf of Aden; key gateway to the Suez Canal.
- **India’s Policy Evolution:** Shift from Look West Policy (2005) focused on energy/diaspora to proactive hard-power engagement under SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region).
- **Net Security Provider Concept:** India's capacity to ensure maritime domain awareness, Search and Rescue (SAR), and Anti-Piracy Operations in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

**Way Forward & Conclusion**

India’s foreign policy in West Asia must shift from defensive transactionality to strategic deterrence. Relying solely on diaspora diplomacy and bilateral trade will leave India vulnerable to the geopolitical choices made by regional and hostile axes. By actively integrating naval power, defense exports, and intelligence-sharing mechanisms into its diplomatic framework, New Delhi can safeguard its maritime trade routes, secure its energy needs, and solidify its position as an indispensable regional power. Strategic distance must give way to strategic presence.