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SECTION 1

Global Issues & Diaspora

01 Ecocide in Armed Conflict

‘Ecocide’: How international law falls short in addressing the environmental toll of war [The Indian Express](#)

PRELIMS POINTERS

- **Meaning:** Large-scale destruction of the natural environment and ecosystems, especially when the damage is **widespread, long-term or irreversible**; increasingly discussed in the context of climate change, biodiversity loss and corporate accountability.
- **Proposed definition (2021):** An **Independent Expert Panel** defined ecocide as unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge of a **substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term** environmental damage.
- **Legal gap:** Ecocide is **not yet a crime under the Rome Statute** of the ICC. Environmental damage in war is covered only by a war-crime clause, **Article 8(2)(b)(iv)**, which sets a very high threshold.
- **Push for recognition:** In 2024, **Vanuatu, Fiji and Samoa** proposed amending the Rome Statute to add ecocide as a crime.

02 Thucydides Trap

BT Explainer: What is the ‘Thucydides Trap’? Why Xi raised it during high-stakes Trump summit [Business Today](#)

PRELIMS POINTERS

- **Meaning:** The idea that a **rising power** and an **established dominant power** become prone to conflict as the riser challenges the balance of power.
- **Origin:** Named after the Greek historian **Thucydides**, who attributed the **Peloponnesian War** to the rise of Athens and the fear it caused in Sparta.
- **Modern use:** Popularised by **Graham Allison**, especially for the rise of **China** against the established power of the **United States**.
- **Not inevitable:** Diplomacy, institutions, economic interdependence, strategic restraint and confidence-building can shape how power transitions unfold.

03 Safety of Indian Seafarers in Conflict Zones

Can India protect its seafarers in the Gulf? [The Hindu](#)

PRELIMS POINTERS

Major conflict zones for seafarers

- **Red Sea and Gulf of Aden:** The **Bab-el-Mandeb Strait**, linking the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, is a hotspot because of **Houthi attacks** linked to the Yemen conflict; vital for the Europe-Asia route.
- **Black Sea:** The Russia-Ukraine war brings risks from naval activity, missiles, mines and attacks on ports; the **Bosporus and Dardanelles** control access.
- **Gulf of Oman and Strait of Hormuz:** Tensions involving Iran create risks of seizures and attacks; Hormuz is crucial for global **oil and LNG** flows.

- **Gulf of Guinea:** Waters off West Africa, especially Nigeria, have long been a zone of **piracy, armed robbery and kidnapping**; risks are lower than at their peak but significant.
- **Somalia and the western Indian Ocean:** The Horn of Africa coast remains vulnerable to **piracy** when regional instability rises.

MAINS POINTERS

Global measures

- 1 **IMO maritime security framework:** International standards and guidance on protecting ships and seafarers.
- 2 **Best Management Practices (BMP):** Voyage planning, enhanced lookout, ship hardening and communication drills for high-risk areas.
- 3 **International naval operations:** Missions such as **EU NAVFOR Operation Atalanta** and the **Combined Maritime Forces** patrol and deter piracy.
- 4 **Information sharing:** **MSCHOA** and **UKMTO** issue alerts and coordinate between ships, governments and navies.

Indian measures

- 1 **Indian Navy and Coast Guard:** Anti-piracy patrols and escorts in the Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden and wider Indian Ocean.
- 2 **Operation Sankalp (2019):** Naval presence in the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman to safeguard Indian-flagged vessels and seafarers.
- 3 **IFC-IOR, Gurugram:** Maritime information sharing to identify and respond to threats across the Indian Ocean.
- 4 **Maritime Anti-Piracy Act, 2022:** A legal framework to prosecute piracy on the high seas.

04 B'nei Menashe Community

B'nei Menashe: How a 'lost tribe' in Northeast India forged ties with Israel [The Indian Express](#)

PRELIMS POINTERS

- A small community from **Manipur and Mizoram**, belonging to the **Chin-Kuki-Mizo** peoples, who claim descent from the biblical Israelite tribe of **Manasseh**.
- They follow **Judaism**, observing the Shabbat, Jewish festivals and dietary laws; their claim rests largely on **oral traditions**.
- **Recognition:** From the 1990s many formally adopted Judaism; **Israel's Chief Rabbinate** recognised them as descendants of Manasseh in **2005**, subject to formal conversion.
- **Migration:** Many have moved to Israel while others remain in Mizoram and Manipur, making the community relevant to diaspora, identity and India-Israel cultural links.

05 India's Diplomacy in a Changing World Order

C Raja Mohan writes: In a shifting world order, five principles should guide India's diplomacy [The Indian Express](#)

MAINS POINTERS

Five guiding principles

- 1 **Reciprocity ("stand by partners"):** Support reliable partners when they face strategic challenges and expect the same in return; the UAE is cited for its support on Kashmir and cross-border terrorism.
- 2 **Diversification ("expand the strategic basket"):** Avoid over-dependence on any one country or bloc; deepen ties with Europe, the US, Russia and West Asia. Europe matters for markets, capital, technology and green energy.
- 3 **Strategic flexibility:** Engage simultaneously with competing power centres; the shifting US-China relationship shows why fixed alignments are risky.
- 4 **Strategic expansion:** Widen India's footprint in emerging regions, especially **Africa**, through trade, investment, connectivity, critical minerals and security.
- 5 **Domestic renewal:** Diplomacy cannot replace internal strength; India needs economic reform, technological capability, innovation and institutional renewal.

SECTION 2

India's Bilateral Relations

01 India-New Zealand FTA

India, New Zealand ink trade deal: \$20 billion investment pledge, duty-free access for exports [The Indian Express](#)

MAINS POINTERS

Significance

- 1 **Export boost: 100% duty-free access** for Indian exports, improving competitiveness of textiles, leather, footwear, engineering goods, pharmaceuticals and agri-products.
- 2 **Investment:** New Zealand will facilitate **USD 20 billion** of investment in India over **15 years**.
- 3 **Labour mobility:** Dedicated pathways for **5,000 Indian skilled professionals** and better post-study work options for Indian students.
- 4 **MSMEs and jobs:** Market access for MSMEs, women-led enterprises, artisans and labour-intensive sectors.
- 5 **Services:** Cooperation in pharmaceuticals, medical devices, **AYUSH**, traditional medicine and professional services.
- 6 **Indo-Pacific partnership:** Adds an economic pillar to bilateral ties and wider Indo-Pacific engagement.

Issues and challenges

- 1 **Small trade base:** Bilateral trade is modest, so gains depend on export capacity, logistics and market penetration.
- 2 **Agricultural sensitivity:** India has excluded **dairy, sugar, onions, pulses** and other sensitive products to protect farmers.
- 3 **Non-tariff barriers:** SPS standards, technical regulations and certification can still limit exports, especially of food products.
- 4 **Import competition:** India has liberalised about **70% of tariff lines**, covering about **95% of bilateral trade value**.
- 5 **Implementation:** Benefits depend on rules of origin, customs procedures, investment commitments and mobility provisions.

02 India-Nordic Relations

India-Nordic ties entering new golden era with trade agreements: PM Modi [The Hindu](#)

PRELIMS POINTERS

The Nordic countries (**Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden**) matter to India for their technology, leadership in the green transition and their position in the **Arctic**. Denmark, Finland and Sweden are EU members; Norway and Iceland are covered by the **India-EFTA TEPA**.

MAINS POINTERS

Significance

- 1 **Green transition:** Expertise in renewables, green hydrogen, offshore wind, e-mobility and the circular economy.

- 2 **Technology:** Cooperation in AI, semiconductors, telecom, biotechnology and digitalisation.
- 3 **Arctic:** Partners for India's Arctic interests in climate research, polar science and shipping.
- 4 **Trade and investment:** Advanced manufacturing, clean technology, pharma and engineering under Make in India.
- 5 **Maritime:** Shipping technology and ocean governance complement India's Indian Ocean interests.
- 6 **Multilateral convergence:** Rules-based order, sustainable development, climate action, gender equality and UN reform.

Issues and challenges

- 1 **Modest trade volumes** with individual Nordic countries.
- 2 **Regulatory barriers:** Differences in environmental, data, labour and technical standards raise compliance costs.
- 3 **Agreements still to deliver:** The **India-EU FTA** (concluded January 2026) awaits ratification, and the gains from the **India-EFTA TEPA** depend on implementation.
- 4 **Market access:** Stringent SPS, environmental and quality standards.
- 5 **Geopolitical differences** over Russia, Ukraine and European security.
- 6 **Investment constraints:** High costs, strict regulation and small markets.

Way forward

- 1 **Green partnerships** in green hydrogen, offshore wind, storage, carbon capture and circular economy.
- 2 **Technology platforms** for AI, semiconductors, biotech, quantum and clean tech.
- 3 **Arctic cooperation** in polar research, climate science and shipping, respecting environmental concerns.
- 4 **Trade facilitation** by reducing non-tariff barriers and harmonising standards.

03 India-Vietnam Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

India, Vietnam elevate ties to enhanced comprehensive strategic partnership [The Indian Express](#)

PRELIMS POINTERS

India and Vietnam elevated ties to an **Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership** in **May 2026**, during the State Visit of Vietnam's General Secretary **Tô Lâm** (5-7 May 2026). It builds on the **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2016)** and the **Joint Vision for Peace, Prosperity and People (2020)**.

MAINS POINTERS

Significance

- 1 **Indo-Pacific:** A key ASEAN partner for a free, open, rules-based Indo-Pacific respecting **UNCLOS**.
- 2 **Maritime security:** Cooperation in the South China Sea, maritime domain awareness, exercises and capacity building.
- 3 **Act East Policy:** A strategic bridge between India and ASEAN.
- 4 **Defence:** Training, exercises and defence-industry cooperation.
- 5 **Trade:** A gateway to ASEAN supply chains in pharma, textiles, agriculture, IT and manufacturing.
- 6 **Connectivity:** Physical, digital and maritime links complementing the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway.

Issues and challenges

- 1 **Trade deficit** for India.
- 2 **Investment below potential**, especially in manufacturing and infrastructure.
- 3 **South China Sea tensions** affect India's energy and maritime interests.
- 4 **Weak direct connectivity** by air, sea and land.
- 5 **Competition** in textiles, electronics, footwear and manufacturing.
- 6 **Balancing** ties with China, ASEAN and other Indo-Pacific powers.

04 Prime Minister's Visit to the UAE

Energy to defence, India and UAE deepen ties as PM Modi calls for open Hormuz [The Indian Express](#)

MAINS POINTERS

India and the UAE share a **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2017)**, which grew from the strategic partnership of 2015 and now spans trade, investment, energy, defence, technology, connectivity and regional diplomacy. Bilateral trade reached about **US\$100 billion in FY 2024-25**, with a target of **US\$200 billion by 2032**.

Significance

- 1 **Trade:** The **India-UAE CEPA (2022)** has expanded commerce; the UAE is a major trading partner and investor.
- 2 **Energy security:** Crude oil, LNG and LPG, plus cooperation on **strategic petroleum reserves**.
- 3 **Infrastructure investment:** Sovereign funds such as **ADIA** invest in Indian infrastructure, Dholera, finance and logistics.
- 4 **Defence and maritime security:** Technology, training, exercises and cyber defence, institutionalised by the **2026 Strategic Defence Partnership Framework**.
- 5 **Connectivity:** A key node in the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**.
- 6 **Technology:** AI, semiconductors, space, fintech and critical minerals, including an **8-exaflop supercomputing cluster** agreed in 2026.
- 7 **Diaspora:** About **3.5 million Indians** live in the UAE, a major source of remittances.
- 8 **West Asian diplomacy:** A partner on regional stability and counter-terrorism and in groupings such as **BRICS and I2U2**.

Challenges

- 1 **Trade balance** concerns because of energy and precious-commodity imports.
- 2 **Geopolitical volatility** involving Iran, Israel and the Gulf threatens supplies, shipping and Indian workers.
- 3 **Hydrocarbon dependence** exposes India to price shocks.
- 4 **IMEC uncertainties** tied to regional stability and multi-country coordination.
- 5 **Regulatory barriers** to investment, taxation and dispute resolution.
- 6 **Diaspora welfare:** Labour rights, working conditions and social-security portability.

Way forward

The next phase should rest on **energy security, IMEC, defence, technology, investment and diaspora diplomacy**. India should use UAE capital and connectivity to expand cooperation in renewables, AI, critical

minerals, space, defence manufacturing and logistics, moving beyond the traditional oil, trade and diaspora framework.

05 India-Netherlands Strategic Partnership Roadmap (2026-2030)

Roadmap of India-Netherlands Strategic Partnership (2026-2030) [PIB](#)

MAINS POINTERS

Key pillars

- 1 Political and strategic:** Regular high-level visits and an **annual Foreign Ministers' meeting** to review implementation.
- 2 Trade and investment:** A stronger **Joint Trade and Investment Committee (JTIC)** for renewables, telecom, infrastructure, semiconductors, pharma, medtech and agriculture.
- 3 Critical minerals:** Cooperation across the value chain, from exploration and research to recycling and supply-chain resilience.
- 4 Defence and security:** Information sharing, training, research and defence-industrial cooperation, including co-development and co-production.
- 5 Cyber and emerging tech:** Cybersecurity, AI, quantum, space and semiconductors, linking the **Dutch semiconductor ecosystem** with the **India Semiconductor Mission**.
- 6 Science and education:** Joint R&D, talent mobility and university-industry linkages.
- 7 Green hydrogen:** The **India-Netherlands Roadmap on Green Hydrogen**, alongside solar and storage cooperation.
- 8 Water:** Building on the **Strategic Partnership on Water** (Namami Gange, delta and urban water management); a **Centre of Excellence on Water** at IIT Delhi.

06 India's Buddhist Diplomacy

India's civilisational mission: Converting rhetoric on Buddhism into economic reality [The Indian Express](#)

MAINS POINTERS

Significance

- 1 Soft power:** India's identity as the birthplace of Buddhism strengthens its cultural influence across Asia.
- 2 Asian ties:** Deepens people-to-people links with Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Japan and South Korea.
- 3 Act East Policy:** A cultural foundation for engagement with Southeast and East Asia.
- 4 Strategic engagement:** A civilisational dimension amid changing regional geopolitics.
- 5 Peace:** Ahimsa, compassion and coexistence support India's advocacy of dialogue and sustainable development.
- 6 Heritage economy:** Pilgrimage tourism, conservation and local jobs.

Components and government measures

- 1 Buddhist Circuit:** Infrastructure at **Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Kushinagar, Sanchi, Shravasti, Kapilavastu and Rajgir** under **Swadesh Darshan 2.0**.
- 2 International Buddhist Confederation (IBC):** A New Delhi-based global platform for Buddhist organisations, monks and scholars.

- 3 **Global Buddhist Summit:** The **2nd Summit (January 2026)**, organised by the Ministry of Culture with the IBC, brought nearly 200 international representatives together.
- 4 **Holy relics diplomacy:** Relics exhibited in **Thailand (2024)** and **Vietnam (2025)**, drawing an estimated 1.8 crore visitors in Vietnam; in **May 2026** the Sanchi relics of the Buddha's chief disciples travelled to **Mongolia**.
- 5 **Heritage and knowledge:** Manuscript digitisation under **Gyan Bharatam**, conservation, scholarships and academic exchanges.
- 6 **ASEAN cooperation:** Support for a feasibility study on an **ASEAN Cultural Heritage List**.

07 India-Myanmar Relations

India-Myanmar Relations [PIB](#)

MAINS POINTERS

Significance

- 1 **Gateway to Southeast Asia:** India's only ASEAN neighbour with a land border, central to **Act East, Neighbourhood First** and **MAHASAGAR**.
- 2 **Northeast connectivity:** The **India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway** and the **Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project**.
- 3 **Border security:** Cooperation against insurgency, narcotics, arms smuggling and human trafficking.
- 4 **Economic potential:** Access to ASEAN markets; trade in pharma, agriculture, energy and mining.
- 5 **Maritime importance:** Location on the **Bay of Bengal**.
- 6 **Civilisational links:** Shared Buddhist heritage.

Issues and challenges

- 1 **Political instability** and prolonged internal conflict.
- 2 **Border insurgency** exploiting difficult terrain.
- 3 **Drugs and organised crime** linked to the **Golden Triangle**.
- 4 **Connectivity delays** to Kaladan and the Trilateral Highway.
- 5 **Limited trade** due to logistics bottlenecks.
- 6 **Refugee and humanitarian pressures** on the Northeast.

Way forward

- 1 **Complete Kaladan and the Trilateral Highway** with stronger security and monitoring.
- 2 **Border management:** India is fencing the entire **1,643-km** India-Myanmar border and scrapped the **Free Movement Regime** in 2024; combine this with intelligence sharing and coordinated patrols.
- 3 **Economic integration:** Border trade, **Rupee-Kyat** settlement, agro-processing, pharma and energy.
- 4 **Support a Myanmar-led peace process** while respecting its sovereignty.

08 India-Nepal Ties

Old ties, new Kathmandu: What India now needs to negotiate with Nepal [The Indian Express](#)

MAINS POINTERS

Significance

- 1 **Civilisational ties:** Shared sites such as **Pashupatinath, Janakpur, Lumbini** and **Bodh Gaya**.
- 2 **Open border:** Free movement of people, work, trade and social ties, unique in South Asia.
- 3 **Economic interdependence:** India is Nepal's **largest trading partner** and a major investor.
- 4 **Connectivity:** Cross-border railways, roads, integrated check posts, petroleum pipelines and transmission lines.
- 5 **Energy:** Nepal's **hydropower** potential offers clean electricity to India and export revenue to Nepal.
- 6 **Strategic location** between India and China.

Issues and challenges

- 1 **Boundary disputes** over **Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura**.
- 2 **Political and constitutional differences** have strained ties at times.
- 3 **China's growing presence** through investment and connectivity.
- 4 **Nepal's large trade deficit** with India.
- 5 **Open-border misuse** for smuggling, trafficking and counterfeit currency.
- 6 **Water and hydropower** disputes slowing projects.

Way forward

- 1 **Resolve boundary issues through dialogue** using bilateral mechanisms, treaties and evidence.
- 2 **Accelerate connectivity** projects.
- 3 **Power partnership:** Expand electricity trade and transmission corridors.
- 4 **Integrated river-basin management** for floods, irrigation and hydropower.

SECTION 3

Multilateral Organisations & Groupings

01 OPEC

UAE exits oil production groups OPEC and OPEC+ amid global energy crisis [India Today](#)

PRELIMS POINTERS

- **In the news:** The UAE announced its exit from OPEC and OPEC+ in April 2026 amid the West Asia energy crisis, leaving OPEC with **11 members**.
- **Founded:** In **1960** at **Baghdad** by **Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela**.
- **Headquarters:** **Vienna, Austria** (moved from Geneva in 1965).
- **Objective:** Coordinate members' petroleum policies to keep oil markets stable, supply steady and returns fair.
- **Members:** Include **Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Venezuela, Nigeria, Algeria and Libya**. Membership changes: **Qatar left in 2019** and **Angola in 2024**.
- **OPEC+:** Formed in **2016**, it links OPEC with non-OPEC producers such as **Russia, Kazakhstan and Oman** to coordinate output; it is not the same organisation as OPEC.
- **Significance:** Production decisions move global crude prices, affecting inflation, energy security and trade balances.

02 SCO Defence Ministers' Meeting

Rajnath Singh calls for united front against terrorism at SCO Defence Ministers' meet [DD News](#)

PRELIMS POINTERS

- **Founded:** **2001 in Shanghai** by China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan; it grew out of the **Shanghai Five (1996)**.
- **Expansion:** **India and Pakistan** joined in **2017** (Astana Summit), **Iran in 2023** and **Belarus in 2024** as the 10th member.
- **Members (10):** China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Belarus.
- **Headquarters:** Secretariat in **Beijing**; the **Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)** in **Tashkent**.
- **Focus:** Political, economic, security and cultural cooperation, with emphasis on the "**three evils**": terrorism, separatism and extremism.

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Significance for India

- 1 **Eurasian engagement** with Russia, China, Central Asia and Iran.
- 2 **Counter-terrorism** through RATS intelligence sharing.
- 3 **Central Asian connectivity** via **INSTC** and **Chabahar**.
- 4 **Energy security:** Members hold large oil, gas and uranium reserves.
- 5 **Balancing China** within a multilateral platform.

6 **Afghanistan:** A forum on terrorism, radicalisation and narcotics.

Issues and challenges

- 1 **China-Russia dominance** of the agenda.
- 2 **India-China tensions** constrain cooperation.
- 3 **Pakistan factor** complicates consensus on security.
- 4 **Limited economic integration** among members.
- 5 **Connectivity constraints:** Pakistan denies overland transit to Central Asia.
- 6 **Divergent interests** on Ukraine, Afghanistan and the BRI.

Way forward

- 1 **Use RATS more effectively** against terror financing, cyber-terrorism and organised crime.
- 2 **Alternative connectivity** through Chabahar and INSTC.
- 3 **Deepen Central Asian ties** in energy, critical minerals, pharma, agriculture and digital technology.
- 4 **Maintain strategic autonomy** through multi-alignment.

03 52nd G7 Summit

G7 leaders pledge stronger action to address rising debt burdens in developing nations [News On AIR](#)

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The **Group of Seven (G7)** is an informal grouping of seven advanced economies: **Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and the USA**; the EU takes part as a non-enumerated member.
- The **52nd summit** was held at **Évian, France**, in June 2026, where leaders pledged action on the **debt burdens of developing nations**.

MAINS POINTERS

Significance

- 1 **Economic coordination** on growth, inflation, trade, taxation and financial stability.
- 2 **Geopolitical influence** on Ukraine, maritime security, sanctions and energy security.
- 3 **Technology:** AI governance, semiconductors, cybersecurity and critical technologies.
- 4 **Climate and energy transition** and climate finance.
- 5 **Global South outreach** through partner invitations.
- 6 **For India:** Engagement on technology, critical minerals, energy and supply chains; India attended the **2025 Kananaskis summit** as an outreach partner.

Issues and challenges

- 1 **Limited representativeness** of the developing world.
- 2 **Global South concerns** over decisions taken without them.
- 3 **Divergent interests** on trade, China, Russia-Ukraine and climate.
- 4 **Absence of China and Russia**.
- 5 **Protectionism:** Subsidies, technology curbs and "de-risking".
- 6 **No treaty-based secretariat**, so implementation depends on members.

Way forward

- 1 **Institutionalise Global South engagement** beyond occasional invitations.
- 2 **Focus on global public goods:** Climate, pandemics, food and energy security.
- 3 **Inclusive technology partnerships** in AI, semiconductors, digital public infrastructure and cybersecurity.

04 BRICS Indore Declaration

India's Presidency delivers 'BRICS Indore Declaration', a new charter for global agricultural cooperation [PIB](#)

PRELIMS POINTERS

- **Meeting:** The **16th BRICS Agriculture Ministers' Meeting**, held in **Indore, Madhya Pradesh**, on **12-13 June 2026**, under **India's BRICS Chairship (2026)**.
- **Theme:** "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability".
- **Core focus:** Puts **farmers at the centre** of food security, sustainable agriculture and resilient food systems.
- **Four priority areas:** Food security, nutrition and livelihoods; agricultural trade and cooperation; regenerative, climate-resilient and sustainable agriculture; and innovation and investment for future-ready food systems.

SECTION 4

Strategic, Defence & Security Cooperation

01 India-US: Strategic Autonomy and Emerging Challenges

Bad fences: On Marco Rubio's India visit [The Hindu](#)

MAINS POINTERS

The visit highlighted friction over **tariffs, energy procurement, sanctions, immigration, China-Pakistan policy** and regional security. Despite extensive engagement, outcomes were limited, with **critical minerals cooperation** the main tangible result.

Key issues

- 1 **Trade tensions:** High US tariffs on Indian exports and market-access disputes.
- 2 **Energy vs alignment:** US pressure over India's oil purchases from Russia and Iran tests **strategic autonomy**.
- 3 **China:** Shared concern, but India prefers multi-alignment to an anti-China bloc.
- 4 **Pakistan:** US engagement with Pakistan raises sensitivities on cross-border terrorism.
- 5 **Technology and critical minerals:** A key area of convergence, though overlapping initiatives limit added value.
- 6 **Trust deficit** from unilateral tariffs, sanctions and policy unpredictability.

India's approach: strategic autonomy

- Freedom of decision-making without formal alliance commitments.
- Simultaneous engagement with the US (Quad), Russia (defence and energy) and BRICS/SCO.
- Not equidistance, but **issue-based alignment** according to national interest.

Way forward

- 1 **Institutionalise dialogue** to address disagreements early.
- 2 **Balanced trade agreement** protecting MSMEs, agriculture and manufacturing.
- 3 **Mutual respect** for India's independent choices alongside constructive engagement.
- 4 **Deepen technology cooperation** in AI, semiconductors, critical minerals, defence, space and clean energy.

02 Challenges before UN Peacekeeping

Global tension, funding woes threaten peacekeeping missions: SIPRI [Hindustan Times](#)

MAINS POINTERS

India is among the **largest troop contributors** to UN peacekeeping, giving it a direct stake in the system's health.

Major challenges

- 1 **Funding crisis:** A US\$2 billion shortfall, over 35% of the US\$5.6 billion budget for 2024-25, forced cuts in personnel and operations.
- 2 **Geopolitical divisions** in the Security Council and veto threats hamper mandates.
- 3 **Declining troop numbers** reduce the capacity to protect civilians.

- 4 **Changing conflicts:** Terrorist groups, organised crime, drones, IEDs and disinformation.
- 5 **Host-country resistance** to continued missions.
- 6 **Weak regional alternatives:** The AU, ECOWAS and OSCE face similar funding and political problems.

Way forward

- 1 **Predictable financing** and timely assessed contributions.
- 2 **Security Council reform** for legitimacy and decisiveness.
- 3 **Modernise missions** with drones, satellite imagery, cyber and counter-IED capabilities.
- 4 **Preventive diplomacy**, mediation and early warning.

03 Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)

Lieutenant General NS Raja Subramani (Retd) appointed as Chief of Defence Staff [PIB](#)

PRELIMS POINTERS

- **In the news:** General N.S. Raja Subramani was appointed CDS in **May 2026**, succeeding General Anil Chauhan; he also serves as Secretary, Department of Military Affairs.
- **Creation:** Created in **December 2019**; the first CDS, General Bipin Rawat, took office on **1 January 2020**.
- **Rank:** A **four-star General**, with pay and perquisites equal to the Service Chiefs.
- **Roles:** **Secretary, Department of Military Affairs (DMA)**; **Permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee**; **Principal Military Adviser** to the Defence Minister on tri-Service matters; and **Military Adviser to the Nuclear Command Authority**.
- **No command over the Services:** The CDS does not command the Army, Navy or Air Force or their Chiefs; Service Chiefs still advise on Service-specific matters.
- **Mandate:** Promote **jointness** in operations, logistics, training and communications; facilitate **integrated theatre commands**; help prioritise acquisitions as a member of the **Defence Acquisition Council**; administer tri-Service bodies, including cyber and space agencies.
- **Origin:** Recommended after the **Kargil Review Committee** by the **Group of Ministers (2001)**; the **Naresh Chandra Task Force (2012)** proposed a permanent COSC chairman.

04 Captagon

Operation RAGEPILL: NCB busts international drug network, makes India's first-ever seizure of Captagon [PIB](#)

PRELIMS POINTERS

- **Captagon** is an illicit synthetic **psychostimulant**, historically associated with **fenetylline**, and widely trafficked and abused in **West Asia**.
- **Operation RAGEPILL (2026):** The **Narcotics Control Bureau** made India's **first-ever seizure** of Captagon, about **227.7 kg**.
- The consignments were linked to an international network; one originated in **Syria** and was bound for the Gulf.

05 Project Deepak

BRO's Project Deepak celebrates its 66th Raising Day [PIB](#)

PRELIMS POINTERS

- One of the oldest projects of the **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)**, raised in **May 1961** with headquarters at **Shimla**; it works in the Western Himalayas (Shimla, Kinnaur, Kullu, Lahaul-Spiti).
- Created for the **Hindustan-Tibet Road**, it has built key stretches of the **Manali-Leh axis**.
- It maintains **over 1,100 km** of roads, including high-altitude border roads, serving both the Armed Forces and remote communities.
- It also carries out rescues; in 2023 its teams rescued about 300 motorists at **Baralacha La** and over 250 civilians from **Chandratal**.

06 Triacetone Triperoxide (TATP)

NIA says TATP explosive used in 2025 Red Fort blast case [The Economic Times](#)

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- **In the news:** The NIA chargesheet states that **TATP** was used in the **2025 Red Fort blast**; forensic tests also found ammonium nitrate.
- **Properties:** A white crystalline solid, largely insoluble in water, and **extremely sensitive to shock, friction and heat**, especially when dry.
- **Use:** Associated with **improvised explosive devices (IEDs)**; nicknamed the "**Mother of Satan**" for its instability.
- **Regulation:** Listed under explosives in India's **SCOMET** list (CAS No. 17088-37-8).

07 Changing Nature of Terrorism

Terrorism's data retreat hides emerging global threats [The Hindu](#)

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Key trends

- **Falling numbers, persistent threat:** The **Global Terrorism Index 2026** recorded **5,582 deaths** in **2,944 incidents** in 2025, both lower, but terrorism is concentrating in conflict zones.
- **Shifting geography:** The **Sahel** remains an epicentre; **Pakistan** ranked first in GTI 2026, with 1,139 deaths and 1,045 incidents.
- **Decentralised networks:** From hierarchical groups to autonomous cells, affiliates and **lone actors**.
- **Digital radicalisation** through social media, encrypted apps and gaming platforms.
- **Emerging technologies:** AI, drones, virtual assets and crowdfunding for financing.
- **Conflict-terrorism nexus:** Fragile states provide recruits, weapons and safe havens.
- **Borderland hotspots:** Afghanistan-Pakistan, the Central Sahel tri-border, the Lake Chad Basin and the Colombia-Venezuela frontier.
- **Crime-terror nexus** with trafficking and organised crime.

08 Vision Document on Drug Control (2026-2029)

Government to amend NDPS Act to plug loopholes exploited by narco syndicates: Shah [The Hindu](#)

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- **Released on 26 June 2026** at the **10th Apex-level NCORD meeting** chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah; a three-year roadmap towards a **Drug-Free India by 2029**.
- **Approach:** Whole-of-government and whole-of-society; States and districts are to prepare aligned three-year roadmaps.
- **Four pillars:** Enforcement (intelligence and operations); precursor and synthetic-drug control; demand and harm reduction; and capacity building and coordination.
- **Enforcement:** Intelligence-led operations from source to kingpin, stronger **Anti-Narcotics Task Forces** and financial investigation in major NDPS cases.
- **Demand reduction:** **Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan**, treatment and rehabilitation, especially for youth.
- **NCORD:** A four-tier mechanism (Apex, Executive, State and District) for coordination and intelligence sharing.
- **NDPS Act, 1985:** To be amended to plug loopholes on precursors, financial investigation and new synthetic drugs.

SECTION 5

Trade, Economic Diplomacy & Global Governance

01 EU Carbon Border Tax and India's Trade

Tariffs to carbon: The new rules shaping India's trade [The Hindu](#)

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The EU's **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)** places a carbon cost on certain carbon-intensive imports. Its **definitive regime began in 2026**, covering **iron and steel, aluminium, cement, fertilisers, hydrogen and electricity**.

Positive impacts

- 1 **Push to green production** through renewables and efficiency.
- 2 **Technology upgradation** in green hydrogen and carbon capture.
- 3 **Better carbon accounting (MRV)** systems.
- 4 **Green export niches** in low-carbon steel and aluminium.
- 5 **Complements India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS)**.
- 6 **Long-term resilience** as other markets adopt similar measures.

Negative impacts

- 1 **Higher export costs** for steel and aluminium.
- 2 **MSME burden** of measurement, certification and reporting.
- 3 **Risk to export earnings** and jobs.
- 4 **Developing-country concerns**: Seen as protectionist and at odds with **CBDR**.
- 5 **Carbon-data disputes** over differing calculation methods.
- 6 **Trade diversion** to lower-carbon suppliers.

02 India's Free Trade Agreements

India's expanding FTA network

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Agreement	Status	Note
India-UAE CEPA	In force, 2022	First of the new generation of FTAs
India-Australia ECTA	In force, 2022	Interim agreement
India-EFTA TEPA	In force, October 2025	Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein
India-UK CETA	Signed, July 2025	Comprehensive economic and trade agreement
India-New Zealand FTA	Signed, 2026	USD 20 bn investment pledge
India-EU FTA	Concluded, January 2026	Awaiting ratification

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Significance

- 1 **Exports and market access:** Lower tariffs improve competitiveness, as with gems, jewellery, textiles and pharma under the UAE CEPA.
- 2 **Global value chains:** Easier flow of inputs and technology in electronics, automobiles and machinery.
- 3 **FDI:** Preferential access encourages investors to use India as an export base.
- 4 **Market diversification** beyond traditional destinations.
- 5 **Services:** Better access and mobility for IT and professional services.
- 6 **Competitiveness:** Cheaper inputs and competition raise productivity.

Issues and challenges

- 1 **Trade deficits** where imports outpace exports, as with some Asian agreements.
- 2 **Rules of origin:** Third-country goods may be routed through FTA partners.
- 3 **Vulnerable sectors:** Dairy, agriculture and MSMEs face cheap imports.
- 4 **Low utilisation** because of documentation, standards and low awareness.
- 5 **Non-tariff barriers** such as technical and SPS standards.
- 6 **Unequal bargaining:** Developed partners seek commitments on IPR, digital trade, labour and environment.

Way forward

- 1 **Sector-specific strategy** that protects genuinely vulnerable sectors.
- 2 **Stronger rules of origin** through customs digitisation and verification.
- 3 **Domestic competitiveness:** Lower logistics costs, reliable power, PLI, skilling and technology adoption.

03 Fugitive Economic Offenders

Nirav Modi, Vijay Mallya among 21 declared fugitive economic offenders as ED seizes Rs 2,178 crore assets [The Indian Express](#)

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- The **Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018** deals with persons who evade Indian law by staying abroad.
- **Definition:** A person facing an **arrest warrant** for a scheduled offence who has left India to avoid prosecution or refuses to return.
- **Threshold:** Applies where the value involved is **₹100 crore or more**.
- **Scheduled offences:** Economic offences such as cheating, forgery, fraud, money laundering and certain Companies Act offences.
- **Special Court:** The Special Court under the **PMLA, 2002** declares a person an FEO, after the Director or authorised officer establishes the grounds; the person can contest.
- **Attachment and confiscation:** Property in India or abroad can be provisionally attached, and on declaration the proceeds of crime and other property can be **confiscated by the Central Government**.



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