

International Relations – keywords

Neighbourhood & Strategic Outreach

1. Neighbourhood First Policy
2. Gujral Doctrine
3. SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)
4. Project Mausam
5. String of Pearls
6. Act East Policy
7. Kaladan Multi-Modal Project
8. Trilateral Highway (India–Myanmar–Thailand)
9. Chabahar Port
10. Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

Regional Groupings

11. SAARC paralysis
12. BIMSTEC as SAARC alternative
13. SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation)
14. Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)
15. AUKUS
16. Ashgabat Agreement
17. International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC)
18. Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative
19. Central Asia Outreach
20. Blue Economy Cooperation

Multilateral Institutions & Global Governance

21. IMF Conditionalities
22. World Bank Development Financing
23. New Development Bank (BRICS Bank)
24. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)
25. UNSC Reform / G4
26. Doha Development Round (WTO)
27. Global South Leadership at G20

28. International Solar Alliance (ISA)
29. Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)
30. WHO & Global Health Security

India's Global Engagements

31. Paris Agreement Commitments
32. Clean Energy Diplomacy
33. Maritime Domain Awareness (radar chains)
34. Vaccine Maitri
35. Soft Power Tools (Yoga, Ayurveda, Bollywood)
36. Diaspora Diplomacy
37. Civil Nuclear Cooperation (123 Agreement)
38. UN Peacekeeping Contributions
39. BRICS+ Expansion
40. Digital Public Infrastructure Export (Aadhaar Stack abroad)

Security & Geopolitics

41. Counter-terrorism Cooperation (FATF)
42. Afghanistan / Taliban Policy
43. Indo-Pacific Naval Exercises (MALABAR)
44. Sri Lanka Tamil Issue
45. Hydro-Diplomacy (Teesta, Indus Waters)
46. China's BRI vs India's Connectivity Corridors
47. Energy Security & Strategic Reserves
48. Critical Minerals Diplomacy
49. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)
50. Strategic Autonomy / Issue-Based Coalitions

Neighbourhood & Strategic Outreach

1. Neighbourhood First Policy – formalised in 2014; India's first invite to all SAARC leaders at Modi's swearing-in.
2. Gujral Doctrine – 5 principles of non-reciprocity with neighbours (1996).
3. SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) – articulated in 2015 at Indian Ocean Conference; drives maritime outreach.
4. Project Mausam – cultural connectivity across Indian Ocean littorals; soft-power counter to China's BRI (2014 launch).
5. String of Pearls – Chinese bases/ports encircling India (Gwadar, Hambantota); India counters with Chabahar, SAGAR.
6. Act East Policy – launched 2014 (upgrade from Look East, 1992); trade with ASEAN now ~\$131 bn (2023).
7. Kaladan Multi-Modal Project – India–Myanmar port + road + river link; expected to be completed 2024–25.
8. Trilateral Highway (India–Myanmar–Thailand) – 1,360 km; delays due to Myanmar instability; target 2025.
9. Chabahar Port – first overseas port operated by India; 2023 long-term agreement signed.
10. Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) – 23 members; India founding member; blue economy priority.
13. SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) – India became full member 2017; hosted 2023 virtual summit.
14. Quad – revived 2017; first leaders' summit 2021; focus on supply chains & vaccines (not military alliance).
15. AUKUS – 2021; US–UK–Australia nuclear subs; counter-China; India not member but strategic convergence.
16. Ashgabat Agreement – India joined 2018; transit corridor with Central Asia + Iran.
17. INSTC (International North-South Transport Corridor) – India–Iran–Russia; reduces shipment time 40%.
18. Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) – launched 2019; 7 pillars; India leads maritime ecology & security.
19. Central Asia Outreach – first India–Central Asia Summit 2022; connectivity + counterterrorism.
20. Blue Economy Cooperation – India's EEZ ~2.3 mn sq.km; part of Sagarmala & IPOI.

Regional Groupings

11. SAARC Paralysis – last summit held 2014 (Kathmandu); blocked by India–Pakistan tensions.
12. BIMSTEC as SAARC Alternative – trade bloc linking South & South-East Asia; India hosted 2022 Summit digitally.

Multilateral Institutions & Global Governance

21. IMF Conditionalities – India borrowed \$4.2 bn in 1991 crisis; now 3rd largest quota-holder in IMF among emerging economies.
22. World Bank Development Financing – India's portfolio ~\$22 bn active (2023).
23. New Development Bank (BRICS Bank) – HQ Shanghai; India 2nd largest shareholder; sanctioned \$7 bn for Indian projects.
24. AIIB – HQ Beijing; India largest non-China shareholder (8.6%); \$9.9 bn approved for Indian infra (2023).
25. UNSC Reform / G4 – India has served 8 terms as non-permanent member; seeking permanent seat with G4.

26. Doha Development Round (WTO) – stalled since 2008; India defends food security & subsidies.
27. Global South Leadership at G20 – India G20 presidency 2023; launched Global Biofuels Alliance, Global South Summit.
28. International Solar Alliance (ISA) – launched 2015 Paris COP; now 120+ signatories.
29. Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) – launched 2019; 39 countries, 7 organisations.
30. WHO & Global Health Security – India largest vaccine supplier in COVAX (Vaccine Maitri: 282 mn doses exported till 2022).

India's Global Engagements

31. Paris Agreement Commitments – 45% emissions intensity reduction by 2030; 50% electricity from non-fossil sources.
32. Clean Energy Diplomacy – US-India “Green Partnership”; JETPs with EU.
33. Maritime Domain Awareness – Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) operational since 2018.
34. Vaccine Maitri – over 98 countries; boosted India's soft power during COVID.
35. Soft Power Tools – Yoga Day at UN since 2015; Bollywood, Ayurveda global reach.
36. Diaspora Diplomacy – 18 mn Indian diaspora largest in world; remittances \$125 bn (2023).
37. Civil Nuclear Cooperation (123 Agreement) – US deal 2008 enabled NSG waiver.
38. UN Peacekeeping Contributions – India 2nd largest troop contributor historically; 160+ peacekeepers lost.
39. BRICS+ Expansion – 2023 summit invited 6 new members incl. Iran, Egypt.
40. Digital Public Infrastructure Export – India Stack replicated in countries like Mauritius, Singapore.

Security & Geopolitics

41. Counter-terrorism Cooperation (FATF) – India pushing for Pakistan grey-listing; joint working groups with US, EU.
42. Afghanistan / Taliban Policy – India sent 40,000 MT wheat + vaccines post-2021 takeover; reopened embassy in 2023.
43. Indo-Pacific Naval Exercises (MALABAR) – India, US, Japan, Australia; 27th edition in Sydney 2023.
44. Sri Lanka Tamil Issue – India gave \$4 bn assistance during 2022 crisis; balancing Tamils' concerns.
45. Hydro-Diplomacy (Teesta, Indus Waters) – pending Teesta deal with Bangladesh; IWT review with Pakistan 2023.
46. China's BRI vs India's Connectivity Corridors – BRI launched 2013; India opposes CPEC; invests in Chabahar, INSTC.
47. Energy Security & Strategic Reserves – India has 5.3 MT crude reserve capacity (2023); plans to double.
48. Critical Minerals Diplomacy – Lithium deals with Argentina, Australia; rare earth partnerships with Japan.
49. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) – India's “first responder” image (Nepal 2015, Turkey 2023).
50. Strategic Autonomy / Issue-Based Coalitions – India's balancing act: QUAD & SCO; US ties & Russia oil imports simultaneously.

Key Themes for Mains

Keywords

Neighbourhood-first, Gujral Doctrine, Project Mausam, String of Pearls, Look East–Act East, Indo-Pacific, Quad/AUKUS, SAARC vs BIMSTEC, Climate Diplomacy, WTO Doha, UNSC Reform, Bretton Woods, NDB & AIIB, Diaspora diplomacy, Soft power, Strategic autonomy, Multilateralism, Connectivity, Blue Economy, SCO, Central Asia Outreach, Vaccine Maitri, Global South leadership.

Facts & Data

- India shares land border with 7 countries + maritime neighbours.
- Gujral Doctrine (1996): unilateral concessions to neighbours without reciprocity.
- Act East Policy (2014) upgraded Look East → deeper ASEAN engagement; India–ASEAN trade > US\$110 bn (2022-23).
- Diaspora: 18 million overseas Indians (largest globally) contribute >US\$100 bn remittances.
- WTO: India blocked Trade Facilitation Agreement (2014) to protect food security; champion of Global South.
- UNSC: India has been non-permanent member 8 times, but faces P-5 resistance on permanent seat.

Major Sub-Themes

1. Neighbourhood Policy & Strategic Projects

- Gujral Doctrine: non-reciprocity → goodwill (Nepal, Bangladesh).

- Project Mausam: revive Indian Ocean cultural linkages; soft-power + strategic presence.

- String of Pearls: China's port network (Gwadar, Hambantota) → India's counter: SAGAR, port development (Chabahar), naval exercises.

- Domestic politics shaping ties (e.g. Tamil issue in Sri Lanka).

2. Regional & Global Groupings

- SAARC stagnation due to Pakistan; BIMSTEC as alternative for Bay of Bengal cooperation.

- SCO: security + connectivity in Eurasia; India balances Pakistan & China.

- Quad/AUKUS: Indo-Pacific maritime security; India careful to keep strategic autonomy.

- Ashgabat Agreement & Central Asia outreach for energy & connectivity.

3. Multilateral Institutions & Trade

- IMF vs World Bank vs NDB/AIIB (new, less conditional).

- WTO Doha deadlock: agriculture subsidies, food security.

- UNSC & global governance reform – India pushes equity.

4. Climate & Clean Energy Diplomacy

- Shift from “common but differentiated responsibility” to proactive commitments (Paris 2015, COP26 net-zero 2070).

- ISA (International Solar Alliance) + Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure as India-led initiatives.

5. Diaspora & Soft Power

- Role in SE Asia economies (Malaysia, Singapore), US & EU politics.
- Cultural outreach: Yoga Day at UN, Bollywood, cricket diplomacy with Pakistan.

Analysis / Mains Lens

- Strategic Autonomy + multi-alignment is India's core approach – balancing US, Russia, China.
- Neighbourhood challenges: terrorism, illegal migration, Chinese influence; need for sustained economic & cultural engagement.
- Regional groupings show India's hedging (BIMSTEC vs SAARC, SCO vs Quad).
- Soft power & diaspora act as force multipliers but must be backed by delivery (connectivity, trade, aid).
- Climate diplomacy & global commons: India moving from "veto" to "agenda setter."
- Limitations: capacity constraints, inconsistent project execution (e.g., delays in connectivity corridors).

Examples / Legacy

- Vaccine Maitri & humanitarian aid to Sri Lanka → goodwill.
- Chabahar Port in Iran as counter to Gwadar.
- Act East + North East connectivity (Kaladan, Trilateral Highway).
- ISA hailed as "Paris moment" for solar energy.
- Diaspora lobbying → US civil nuclear deal (2008).

Conclusion

India's foreign policy themes revolve around neighbourhood stabilisation, strategic autonomy, multi-alignment, and global norm-shaping. The main questions typically probe your ability to link specific initiatives (Project Mausam, SCO, Quad, WTO, diaspora) to broader goals of security, development and soft power.

1. Neighbourhood Policy & Strategic Projects

Keywords

Neighbourhood-First, Gujral Doctrine, SAGAR, Project Mausam, Act East, String of Pearls, Chabahar, Kaladan, Connectivity Corridors, Sri Lanka Tamil issue, Soft Power, Vaccine Maitri.

Facts & Data

- 7 land + 2 maritime neighbours.
- Gujral Doctrine (1996): unilateral goodwill gestures.
- India's development assistance to neighbours ~US\$14 bn (LoCs 2023).
- Act East → ASEAN trade > US\$110 bn (2022-23).

Core Points

- Gujral Doctrine & non-reciprocity improved ties with Nepal, Bangladesh.
- Project Mausam: revive Indian Ocean cultural links → soft power + maritime outreach.
- Counter to China's String of Pearls: SAGAR, coastal radar chains, port development (Chabahar, Sittwe).
- Domestic factors (Tamil issue, water sharing) often spill into foreign policy.

Analysis / Mains Lens

- India's approach = development partnership + security cooperation.
- Balancing Chinese influence is central but without overt bloc politics.
- Delivery delays in connectivity undermine credibility.
- Need for deeper people-to-people ties, not only state-to-state.

Examples

- Vaccine Maitri in COVID-19.
- Kaladan Multi-Modal & Trilateral Highway to Myanmar/Thailand.
- Humanitarian support to Sri Lanka's 2022 crisis.

Conclusion

Neighbourhood policy is India's first security ring; success here strengthens global ambitions.

2. Regional & Global Groupings

Keywords

SAARC, BIMSTEC, SCO, Quad, AUKUS, Indo-Pacific, Ashgabat Agreement, Central Asia Outreach, Connectivity, Blue Economy.

Facts & Data

- SAARC summit stalled since 2016 (Uri attack).
- BIMSTEC covers 22% of world population.
- SCO: India full member since 2017.
- Quad → Leaders' Summit 2021; AUKUS launched 2021.

Core Points

- SAARC blocked by Pakistan → India pivots to BIMSTEC.
- SCO = Eurasian security/energy forum balancing China & Russia.
- Quad = maritime security + supply chains; India keeps strategic autonomy.
- Ashgabat Agreement & INSTC open Central Asian access.

Analysis / Mains Lens

- India uses "issue-based coalitions" to hedge between groupings.
- BIMSTEC as alternative to SAARC but needs stronger secretariat.
- Quad still non-military; AUKUS signals tech transfer but India cautious.
- Connectivity + energy security drive Central Asia focus.

Examples

- 2018 BIMSTEC disaster-management drill hosted by India.
- 2023 SCO summit chaired by India virtually.
- India's accession to Ashgabat Agreement & Chabahar as regional hub.

Conclusion

Regional groupings = platforms for India to shape rules and secure markets without losing autonomy.

3. Multilateral Institutions & Global Governance

Keywords

IMF, World Bank, Bretton Woods, NDB, AIIB, WTO Doha, UNSC Reform, Global South, WHO, IMO, Paris Agreement, ISA.

Facts & Data

- NDB founded 2015 (BRICS); AIIB 2016.
- India 8 times non-permanent member UNSC.
- Remittances from diaspora >US\$100 bn bolster external accounts.
- ISA launched 2015; CDRI 2019.

Core Points

- IMF (balance-of-payments support) vs World Bank (development finance).
- NDB/AIIB offer less conditional lending.
- WTO Doha deadlock on food security & subsidies.
- India champions Global South at G20, BRICS.
- WHO & COVID-19 show limits of global health governance.

Analysis / Mains Lens

- India shifting from rule-taker to rule-shaper (ISA, CDRI).
- UNSC seat blocked by P-5 politics; still incremental reforms.
- Need to align trade stances with domestic reforms.
- Capacity to lead vs deliver remains a challenge.

Examples

- India's stand at WTO Bali/Trade Facilitation Agreement.
- Vaccine Maitri & WHO COVAX.
- IMO conventions on marine pollution & safety ratified by India.

Conclusion

Multilateral engagement is critical for India's development, but credibility depends on constructive leadership plus domestic readiness.

4. Diaspora & Soft Power

Keywords

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, Diaspora Diplomacy, Remittances, Cultural Diplomacy, Yoga Day, Bollywood, Cricket Diplomacy, US Civil Nuclear Deal lobbying.

Facts & Data

- 18 million overseas Indians (largest globally).
- Remittances ~US\$111 bn (2022-23).
- Indians form major workforce in Gulf & SE Asia; high-skill in US/EU.

Core Points

- Diaspora = economic (remittances, investment), political (lobbying), cultural (soft power).
- SE Asia: Indian communities central to Malaysia, Singapore economies.
- West: tech entrepreneurs & political leaders of Indian origin shaping policy.
- Soft power tools: yoga, Ayurveda, Bollywood, ICC cricket.

Analysis / Mains Lens

- Diaspora as force multiplier but needs consular protection, skill upgradation.
- Remittances cushion CAD but brain drain persists.
- Soft power should complement hard infrastructure to sustain goodwill.

Examples

- Role of diaspora in US civil nuclear deal (2008).
- Indian origin leaders in UK (PM Rishi Sunak), Ireland, Mauritius.
- International Yoga Day at UN.

Conclusion

Diaspora and cultural outreach give India global reach beyond state power, but policy must protect workers and harness talent for national development.