

# India in world politics

## Content

<b>Content.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Syllabus.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Questions.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Paper 4 - India in world politics - Questions.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Foreign policy and Diplomacy.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>India's Foreign Policy Apparatus.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The IFS - Indian Foreign Service.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Determinants of foreign policy with reference to India.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>India and the Superpowers.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Definition of a Superpower.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>History of USA.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>India and the USA.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Russia.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>India Russia relations.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>China.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>What is the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)?.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>India - China relations.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>India and Its Neighbours: A Brief Survey.....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Pakistan.....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>India - Pakistan relations.....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Bangladesh.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>India-Bangladesh Relations: A Comprehensive Survey.....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>History of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation).....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>India and SAARC: A Strategic Survey.....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>ASEAN - Association of Southeast Asian Nations.....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>India-ASEAN Relations: A Comprehensive Survey.....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>United Nations.....</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>India and the United Nations: A Comprehensive Overview.....</b>	<b>98</b>

## Syllabus

# **Semester VI – Paper IV – International relations – India in World Politics**

### **Module 1 – Foreign Policy and Diplomacy**

- a. Definition and objectives
- b. Diplomacy – Role, Types and Changing nature
- c. Determinants of foreign policy with reference to India

### **Module 2 – India and the major powers**

*Beginning with the three major powers you will deal with 21 countries in this semester including [eight SAARC countries](#) and [ten ASEAN member states](#).*

- a. USA
- b. Russia
- c. China

### **Module 3 – India and her neighbours**

- a. India and SAARC
- b. Pakistan and Bangladesh

### **Module 4 – India and International organisations**

- a. India's role in United Nations
- b. India and ASEAN

## Questions

### Paper 4 - India in world politics - Questions

1. Explain the concepts of foreign policy and diplomacy and discuss their objectives
2. Discuss the various types of diplomacy
3. Discuss the changing nature of diplomacy
4. Explain the determinants of foreign policy of India
5. Discuss the relations between India and
  - a. USA
  - b. China
  - c. Russia
  - d. Pakistan
  - e. Bangladesh
  - f. SAARC
  - g. ASEAN
  - h. UN

(these are 8 separate questions of 20 marks each)
6. Trace the political developments from the inception of
  - a. USA
  - b. China
  - c. Russia
  - d. Pakistan
  - e. Bangladesh
  - f. SAARC
  - g. ASEAN
  - h. UN

(these are 8 separate questions of 20 marks each)
7. Short notes
  - a. The concept of superpowers
  - b. UN Security council
  - c. Tier II diplomacy
  - d. Diaspora
  - e. Soft power
  - f. The BECA agreement between India and USA
  - g. China - the empire, the republic and the communist country
  - h. Russia - the empire, USSR and Russia
  - i. Bengal, East Bengal, East Pakistan and Bangladesh
  - j. Look East Policy
  - k. Act East Policy
  - l. BIMSTEC
  - m. UN Peacekeeping force
  - n. India's contribution to UN peacekeeping force
  - o. QUAD
  - p. BRICS

## Foreign policy and Diplomacy

Foreign policy and diplomacy are interconnected concepts that shape how nations interact with one another on the global stage.

Foreign policy refers to a government's strategy in dealing with other countries. It encompasses the principles, goals, and actions a nation pursues to safeguard its interests, promote its values, and maintain its security in the international arena. Foreign policy is shaped by a variety of factors, including a country's geography, history, economy, political system, and culture. It's essentially a blueprint for how a nation positions itself globally, whether through cooperation, competition, or conflict.

Diplomacy, on the other hand, is the primary tool for implementing foreign policy. It's the art and practice of conducting negotiations and maintaining relations between nations, usually through diplomats like ambassadors or envoys. Diplomacy involves dialogue, negotiation, and compromise to resolve disputes, build alliances, or advance mutual interests—often without resorting to force. It's the day-to-day work of carrying out a country's foreign policy, whether through summits, treaties, or back-channel talks.

### Objectives of Foreign Policy

The objectives of foreign policy vary depending on a nation's priorities, but they generally include:

1. National Security: Protecting a country's sovereignty, territory, and citizens from external threats. This might involve military alliances (e.g., NATO) or strategic deterrence.
2. Economic Prosperity: Advancing trade, investment, and resource access. For example, securing energy supplies or negotiating trade deals like the USMCA.
3. Promoting Values: Spreading a nation's ideological or cultural principles, such as democracy, human rights, or environmental standards. The U.S., for instance, often frames its foreign policy around democratic ideals.
4. Global Influence: Expanding a country's geopolitical clout, either through soft power (cultural appeal) or hard power (military or economic might).
5. Stability and Peace: Preventing conflicts or fostering cooperation to maintain a predictable international order, often through multilateral organizations like the UN.

### Objectives of Diplomacy

Diplomacy serves as the practical arm of these goals, with its own specific aims:

1. Conflict Resolution: Mediating disputes to avoid escalation—think of the Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt.
2. Building Relationships: Establishing trust and cooperation through dialogue, like regular state visits or cultural exchanges.
3. Information Gathering: Diplomats often act as a nation's eyes and ears abroad, reporting on political developments or economic trends.
4. Negotiation: Securing agreements that benefit the home country, whether trade pacts, arms control treaties, or climate accords.
5. Crisis Management: Handling emergencies, like evacuating citizens during a foreign conflict or negotiating ceasefires.

## How They Work Together

Foreign policy sets the agenda, while diplomacy executes it. For example, if a country's foreign policy prioritizes countering climate change, its diplomats might push for international agreements like the Paris Accord. During the Cold War, U.S. foreign policy aimed to contain Soviet influence, and diplomacy—like the Cuban Missile Crisis negotiations—kept that rivalry from boiling over into nuclear war.

In practice, the two aren't always perfectly aligned. A nation might have an aggressive foreign policy but use subtle diplomacy to avoid alienating allies. Or diplomacy might fail, leading to sanctions or military action when talks break down.

Both concepts are dynamic—shaped by leaders, global events, and shifting power balances. Today, with challenges like cyber threats, pandemics, and climate change, foreign policy and diplomacy are evolving beyond traditional state-to-state relations to include non-state actors like tech giants or NGOs. Still, their core purpose remains: navigating a complex world to protect and advance a nation's interests.

## India's Foreign Policy Apparatus

India's foreign policy apparatus is a complex, multi-layered system designed to formulate, implement, and manage the country's international relations. It reflects India's democratic structure, historical legacy, and strategic priorities, blending formal institutions with informal influences. Below is a breakdown of its key components and how they function:

### Key Institutions

#### 1. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)

- The MEA is the central institution responsible for crafting and executing India's foreign policy. Headed by the External Affairs Minister (currently S. Jaishankar as of March 2025), it serves as the hub for diplomatic engagement, policy planning, and day-to-day management of relations with other nations.
- It oversees India's 120+ diplomatic missions worldwide, handles consular services (passports, visas), and coordinates with other ministries on issues like trade or defense that intersect with foreign policy.
- The Foreign Secretary, a senior diplomat, acts as the administrative head, managing the ministry's bureaucracy and advising the minister.

#### 2. Prime Minister's Office (PMO)

- The Prime Minister plays a pivotal role in shaping foreign policy, often setting the overarching vision. Historically, leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru (who doubled as his own foreign minister) and Narendra Modi have exerted significant personal influence.
- The PMO coordinates with the MEA and other bodies, especially on high-stakes issues like summits or crises. It's not uncommon for the PM to bypass traditional channels for direct diplomacy—Modi's surprise visits to Pakistan (2015) or Bhutan (2014) are examples.

### 3. National Security Council (NSC)

- Established in 1998 under Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the NSC advises the government on matters of national security, defense, and foreign policy. Chaired by the Prime Minister, it includes key ministers (External Affairs, Defence, Home, Finance) and the National Security Advisor (NSA).
- The NSA, currently Ajit Doval, is a critical figure, often driving strategic decisions and acting as a troubleshooter in crises (e.g., the 2019 Balakot airstrike response). The NSC's three-tier structure—Strategic Planning Group, Joint Intelligence Committee, and National Security Advisory Board—integrates intelligence and long-term planning into foreign policy.

### 4. Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)

- Comprising the PM and ministers of External Affairs, Defence, Home, and Finance, the CCS makes high-level decisions on security and foreign policy, particularly in times of conflict or when military dimensions are involved (e.g., Indo-Pak tensions).

### 5. Parliament

- While foreign policy is a Union subject under India's Constitution (handled by the central government), Parliament plays a supervisory role. The Standing Committee on External Affairs reviews policies, budgets, and treaties, though its influence is more advisory than decisive.
- Debates in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha can shape public discourse and pressure the government, especially on sensitive issues like India's stance on Ukraine or China.

## Supporting Actors

- **Indian Foreign Service (IFS):** The diplomatic corps, a small but elite cadre (around 1,000 officers), staffs embassies and implements policy on the ground. They're the face of India abroad, negotiating treaties and gathering intelligence.
- **Intelligence Agencies:** The Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) and Intelligence Bureau (IB) provide critical inputs on external threats and geopolitical developments, feeding into policy decisions.
- **Other Ministries:** The Ministries of Defence, Commerce, and Finance often collaborate with the MEA on issues like arms deals, trade agreements, or economic diplomacy (e.g., Make in India's global push).
- **Think Tanks and Academia:** Institutions like the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) or Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) offer research and policy recommendations, informally influencing the apparatus.

## How It Works

India's foreign policy process is a blend of top-down leadership and bureaucratic coordination:

- **Formulation:** The PM and NSA often set strategic priorities (e.g., Modi's "Neighbourhood First" or "Act East" policies). The MEA refines these into actionable plans, consulting experts and other ministries.

- **Execution:** Diplomats and missions carry out negotiations, while the PMO or NSA might intervene in high-profile cases. The NSC and CCS step in for security-related decisions.
- **Feedback Loop:** Public opinion, media, and parliamentary discussions can nudge adjustments, though the executive retains firm control.

## Unique Features

- **Centralized yet Flexible:** The PM's influence is outsized, but the system allows for decentralized input from various stakeholders.
- **Non-Alignment Legacy:** Even as India engages with powers like the U.S. or Russia, the apparatus retains a commitment to strategic autonomy, avoiding formal alliances.
- **Economic Diplomacy:** Since the 1991 reforms, economic goals (FDI, trade) have become integral, with the MEA increasingly focused on supporting initiatives like Digital India or Smart Cities.

## Challenges

- **Resource Constraints:** The IFS is understaffed compared to peers like China or the U.S., limiting India's diplomatic reach.
- **Coordination Gaps:** Overlaps between the MEA, PMO, and NSC can lead to turf wars or delays.
- **Domestic Politics:** Regional parties and coalition dynamics (e.g., Tamil Nadu's influence on Sri Lanka policy) sometimes complicate the national stance.

In essence, India's foreign policy apparatus is a dynamic mix of political leadership, bureaucratic machinery, and strategic pragmatism, tailored to navigate a multipolar world while safeguarding national interests. It's evolved from Nehru's idealism to a more assertive, interest-driven framework under Modi, balancing tradition with ambition.

## The IFS - Indian Foreign Service

The Indian Foreign Service (IFS) is the backbone of India's diplomatic efforts, a prestigious and highly competitive cadre tasked with representing the nation abroad and shaping its foreign policy. Established in 1946, just before independence, it has evolved into a lean but influential force. Below is a detailed look at its structure, training, postings, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) divisions it operates within, and its role in foreign policy.

### Overview of the IFS

- **Size:** The IFS is notably small, with around 1,000 officers, compared to the U.S. Foreign Service's 15,000 or China's larger diplomatic corps. This reflects India's resource constraints but also its selective approach to diplomacy.
- **Recruitment:** Entry is through the rigorous Civil Services Examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). Candidates opting for IFS must rank among the top performers, as only a handful (typically 20–30) are selected annually.

## Training

IFS officers undergo a comprehensive training program designed to equip them for diplomatic challenges:

- **Initial Phase:** After clearing the UPSC exam, recruits join the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) in Mussoorie for a foundational course alongside other civil servants (IAS, IPS, etc.). This lasts about three months and covers governance, law, and Indian polity.
- **Specialized Training:** IFS probationers then move to the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) in New Delhi for 10–12 months. The curriculum includes:
  - International relations, geopolitics, and diplomatic history.
  - Foreign languages (mandatory proficiency in at least one, often aligned with posting regions—e.g., Mandarin, Arabic, French).
  - Protocol, negotiation skills, and consular duties (visas, citizen services).
  - Economic diplomacy, trade promotion, and cultural outreach.
- **Field Exposure:** Trainees undertake “Bharat Darshan,” a tour of India to understand its diversity, and short attachments with the military or state governments to grasp security and domestic linkages.
- **On-the-Job Learning:** After FSI, officers serve a compulsory “desk attachment” at MEA headquarters in Delhi, handling specific regions or issues (e.g., West Asia, UN affairs) before their first overseas posting.

## Postings

IFS officers serve both domestically and abroad, with postings typically lasting 2–3 years:

- **Domestic Postings:** Early-career officers work at MEA headquarters in Delhi, often as desk officers managing bilateral or multilateral portfolios. Senior officers may head divisions or serve as ambassadors-in-waiting.
- **Foreign Postings:** Officers are assigned to India’s 120+ missions (embassies, high commissions, consulates) worldwide. Postings range from plum assignments (Washington, London) to hardship posts (Afghanistan, South Sudan).
  - **Hierarchy Abroad:**
    - Third/Second Secretaries: Junior roles handling consular work or specific issues (e.g., trade).
    - First Secretaries/Counsellors: Mid-level, overseeing broader portfolios.
    - Ambassadors/High Commissioners: Senior-most officers leading missions.
- **Rotation:** Officers alternate between Delhi and foreign postings, ensuring a mix of field experience and policy exposure. Language skills and expertise often influence assignments (e.g., a Russian speaker might go to Moscow).

## Divisions of the MEA

The MEA is organized into divisions, each staffed by IFS officers alongside other personnel. These divisions reflect India's foreign policy priorities and operational needs:

1. **Territorial Divisions:** Focused on specific regions, e.g.,
  - East Asia (China, Japan, Koreas).
  - Southern (Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh).
  - Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran (PAI).
  - Americas, Europe, Africa, etc.
  - These divisions analyze developments, draft policies, and support missions in their regions.
2. **Functional Divisions:** Handle thematic issues:
  - United Nations Division: Manages India's role in the UN, including its Security Council bids.
  - Economic Diplomacy Division: Promotes trade, investment, and initiatives like Make in India.
  - Disarmament and International Security Affairs (DISA): Covers nuclear policy, cybersecurity.
  - Development Partnership Administration (DPA): Oversees foreign aid and projects (e.g., in Africa, Afghanistan).
3. **Administration and Support:**
  - Protocol Division: Manages state visits, diplomatic etiquette.
  - Consular, Passport, and Visa (CPV) Division: Handles citizen services.
  - Policy Planning and Research Division: Provides long-term strategic analysis.
4. **Specialized Units:**
  - External Publicity (XP) Division: Shapes India's global narrative via media and soft power.
  - Legal and Treaties Division: Drafts agreements and advises on international law.

The Foreign Secretary oversees these divisions, with Joint Secretaries (senior IFS officers) heading individual units. The structure allows for both regional expertise and cross-cutting thematic focus.

## Contribution to Foreign Policy Making

The IFS plays a dual role as both implementers and influencers of India's foreign policy:

- **Policy Input:**
  - IFS officers stationed abroad provide real-time intelligence and recommendations via cables and reports. For instance, an ambassador in Beijing might flag shifts in China's posture toward India.
  - At headquarters, desk officers synthesize this input, draft position papers, and brief ministers. Their analyses shape decisions, like India's stance on the Quad or Indo-Pacific strategy.

- **Negotiation and Representation:**
  - IFS officers negotiate treaties (e.g., the 2020 India-U.S. BECA defense pact) and represent India at forums like the UN or G20.
  - They manage crises—e.g., evacuating citizens during the 2021 Kabul fall or mediating trade disputes.
- **Economic and Cultural Outreach:**
  - Officers promote India's economic interests (securing FDI, energy deals) and soft power (e.g., yoga diplomacy, Bollywood events).
- **Strategic Execution:**
  - They translate high-level directives—like Modi's “Act East” policy—into actionable steps, such as deepening ties with ASEAN or Japan.
- **Feedback Mechanism:**
  - Their ground-level insights ensure policies remain pragmatic, balancing idealism (non-alignment) with realism (countering China).

## Strengths and Challenges

- **Strengths:** The IFS is known for its professionalism, adaptability, and ability to punch above its weight despite its size. Officers often juggle multiple roles, from consular duties to high-stakes talks.
- **Challenges:**
  - **Understaffing:** With only 1,000 officers, the IFS struggles to cover India's growing global footprint, leading to overburdened missions.
  - **Resource Gaps:** Compared to peers, IFS officers sometimes lack the budget or support staff for robust diplomacy.
  - **Political Influence:** The PMO and NSA can overshadow the IFS, limiting its autonomy in policy formulation.

## Overall Impact

The IFS is the engine of India's foreign policy apparatus, turning abstract goals—strategic autonomy, economic growth, regional stability—into concrete outcomes. Its officers are the face of India abroad, from negotiating with superpowers to aiding citizens in distress. While the PM and political leadership set the tone, the IFS provides the expertise, continuity, and execution that have elevated India's global standing, especially in a multipolar world where agility and relationships matter.

## Determinants of foreign policy with reference to India

India's foreign policy is shaped by a complex interplay of historical, geographical, economic, political, and strategic factors. Here's a breakdown of the key elements that influence it:

1. **Geographical Location:** India's position in South Asia, with its proximity to the Indian Ocean, neighboring countries like China and Pakistan, and its long coastline, significantly impacts its foreign policy. The need to secure borders, ensure maritime security, and manage regional dynamics drives much of its strategic outlook.
2. **Historical Legacy:** India's colonial past under British rule and its leadership in the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War have instilled a preference for strategic autonomy. This historical emphasis on independence continues to shape its reluctance to fully align with any single superpower.
3. **National Interest and Security:** Protecting territorial integrity, especially in contested regions like Kashmir, and countering threats from neighbors (e.g., Pakistan's support for militancy or China's assertiveness along the Line of Actual Control) are central. India's nuclear policy and defense modernization also reflect this focus.
4. **Economic Growth:** As one of the world's fastest-growing economies, India prioritizes partnerships that enhance trade, investment, and access to technology. Initiatives like "Make in India" and its engagement with forums like BRICS and the G20 underscore this economic dimension.
5. **Global Power Dynamics:** India navigates its relationships with major powers like the United States, Russia, and China carefully. For instance, it balances its historical ties with Russia (e.g., defense purchases) with growing strategic convergence with the U.S. (e.g., Quad alliance) while managing rivalry with China.
6. **Multilateralism and Soft Power:** India seeks a greater role in global governance, evident in its push for a permanent UN Security Council seat. Its cultural heritage, diaspora, and democratic credentials enhance its soft power, influencing ties with countries across Asia, Africa, and beyond.
7. **Regional Influence:** India aims to be a leader in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region, often through initiatives like "Neighbourhood First" and SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region). However, this is complicated by China's growing presence (e.g., Belt and Road Initiative) and smaller neighbors' occasional wariness of India's dominance.
8. **Energy and Resource Security:** Dependence on imported oil and gas shapes India's outreach to West Asia, Africa, and Central Asia. Climate change commitments also push it toward renewable energy partnerships.
9. **Domestic Politics:** Public opinion, coalition governments, and ideological leanings of ruling parties (e.g., BJP's emphasis on Hindu nationalism) can influence foreign policy priorities, though continuity often prevails due to bureaucratic and strategic consensus.
10. **Emerging Challenges:** Issues like cybersecurity, terrorism, and pandemics increasingly factor in, prompting India to deepen cooperation with like-minded nations while safeguarding its sovereignty.

In practice, these factors blend pragmatism with ambition, as India seeks to transition from a regional power to a global player while addressing immediate security and economic needs.

Its foreign policy is often described as multi-alignment—engaging diverse partners without rigid ideological commitments.

Leaders and ideologies play a significant role in shaping India's foreign policy, often adding a distinct flavor to the broader structural factors

## Leaders

Individual leaders imprint their vision, personality, and priorities on India's external relations, sometimes shifting the tone or emphasis of policy:

- **Jawaharlal Nehru:** India's first Prime Minister laid the foundation with his idealism, championing non-alignment and anti-colonialism. His focus on solidarity with newly independent nations and avoiding superpower blocs defined India's early global stance.
- **Indira Gandhi:** Her assertive leadership during the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War showcased a willingness to use military power decisively, while her tilt toward the Soviet Union (e.g., 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty) reflected pragmatic alignment amid Cold War tensions.
- **Atal Bihari Vajpayee:** As a BJP leader, he balanced ideology with realism—conducting nuclear tests in 1998 to assert India's strength, yet pursuing peace with Pakistan (e.g., Lahore Summit). His outreach to the U.S. also marked a shift from Nehruvian caution.
- **Narendra Modi:** Since 2014, Modi has brought a proactive, personalized style. His "Neighbourhood First" and "Act East" policies, frequent global summits, and emphasis on diaspora engagement reflect a muscular yet economically focused approach. His leadership has also deepened ties with the U.S. and Japan (e.g., Quad) while maintaining a delicate balance with Russia and China.

Leaders often act as catalysts, either reinforcing continuity or steering policy in new directions based on their reading of India's needs and global opportunities.

## Ideologies

Ideologies, often tied to the ruling party or coalition, influence the framing and execution of foreign policy:

- **Nehruvian Secularism and Non-Alignment:** Rooted in the Congress Party's early dominance, this ideology emphasized strategic autonomy, Third World solidarity, and a moralistic stance against imperialism. It still echoes in India's reluctance to fully join Western alliances.
- **Hindutva and Nationalism (BJP):** Under Modi's BJP, a Hindu nationalist ideology has infused foreign policy with cultural pride and assertiveness. This is evident in leveraging India's civilizational heritage (e.g., International Yoga Day) and a tougher stance on Pakistan and China. Yet, economic pragmatism often tempers ideological zeal.
- **Pragmatic Realism:** Across parties, there's a growing consensus on realism—prioritizing national interest over ideology. This is seen in India's

simultaneous engagement with rival powers (e.g., buying Russian S-400 systems while joining U.S.-led Indo-Pacific initiatives).

- **Leftist Influence:** Historically, communist and socialist factions within coalitions pushed for anti-Western rhetoric and ties with the Soviet bloc. Though less prominent now, this legacy lingers in skepticism toward full alignment with the U.S.

## Interplay of Leaders and Ideologies

The impact isn't uniform—it varies with context. Nehru's idealism clashed with the 1962 China war's harsh realities, forcing a rethink. Modi's nationalist rhetoric amplifies border standoffs with China, yet his economic goals keep trade flowing. Leaders filter ideology through practical constraints like coalition pressures, public opinion, or global crises.

In essence, while geography and security set the stage, leaders and ideologies direct the performance—deciding whether India plays a cautious diplomat, a regional strongman, or a global bridge-builder. The current Modi era, for instance, blends Hindutva-driven confidence with a strategic outreach that's less ideologically rigid than it might appear, adapting to a multipolar world.

### 1. Historical Background

- **Early Years (1947–1990s):**

After independence in 1947, India maintained a non-aligned stance during the Cold War, while the USA aligned with Pakistan and viewed India with suspicion due to its closeness with the USSR. India's adoption of a socialist economic model and opposition to military alliances like NATO or SEATO further distanced the two nations.

- **Tilt Towards the USSR:**

The 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation, and the US support for Pakistan during the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, widened the rift.

- **Post-Cold War Reset (1991 onwards):**

With the collapse of the USSR and India's economic liberalisation in 1991, relations improved. The US began to see India as a growing market and a potential strategic partner in Asia.

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## India and the Superpowers

### Definition of a Superpower

A superpower is a sovereign state that possesses dominant and unmatched influence on global affairs through a combination of military strength, economic capacity, technological advancement, cultural influence, and diplomatic reach.

The term became prominent after World War II, particularly in reference to the USA and the Soviet Union, who dominated global politics during the Cold War.

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### Key Characteristics of a Superpower

A state is considered a superpower when it demonstrates most or all of the following features:

#### 1. Military Power

- Possession of nuclear weapons and advanced conventional forces.
- Global military reach — presence of military bases or fleets worldwide.
- Ability to intervene militarily across continents, often unilaterally.

#### 2. Economic Power

- Large GDP and industrial base.
- Influence over international financial institutions (IMF, World Bank, WTO).
- Control over global supply chains, resources, and investment patterns.

#### 3. Political and Diplomatic Influence

- Permanent seat at the UN Security Council.
- Ability to shape international norms, treaties, and organisations.
- Strong global alliances and leadership in multilateral forums.

#### 4. Technological and Scientific Leadership

- Leadership in innovation, space exploration, AI, defence tech, etc.
- Control over global digital infrastructure, patents, and R&D hubs.

#### 5. Cultural Influence (Soft Power)

- Global reach of language, media, education, entertainment, values.

- Ability to shape public opinion, aspirations, and elite thinking across nations.

## Historical Context

### 1. After World War II

- The USA and USSR emerged as bipolar superpowers.
  - USA: Capitalist, democratic bloc.
  - USSR: Communist, authoritarian bloc.
- The Cold War (1947–1991) was a contest between two superpowers for global influence.

### 2. Post-Cold War (1991 onwards)

- Collapse of the USSR left the USA as the sole superpower, leading to a unipolar world.
- USA dominated militarily, economically, and culturally throughout the 1990s and 2000s.

### 3. Emerging Multipolarity (21st Century)

- Rise of China, resurgence of Russia, and growing roles of India, EU, Brazil.
- Scholars debate whether the world is still unipolar, bipolar (US–China), or multipolar.

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### Superpower vs. Great Power vs. Regional Power

Term	Scope of Influence	Example
Superpower	Global dominance	USA, Soviet Union (historical), possibly China (emerging)
Great Power	Strong global influence, but limited dominance	UK, France, Russia, China (historically)
Regional Power	Dominant within a particular region	India (South Asia), Brazil (South America), Iran (West Asia)

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### India's Position

- India is often termed an “emerging power” or “aspiring great power”.
- It is a regional power in South Asia and a strategic partner to many powers.
- It is not yet a superpower, but many scholars believe it has long-term potential, given:
  - Large population and economy.
  - Strategic location in the Indo-Pacific.
  - Space and tech capabilities.
  - Global democratic influence.

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### Conclusion

A superpower is more than just a strong country — it is a state with global reach, influence, and leadership in almost all spheres: military, economic, political, technological, and cultural. The concept remains central to understanding global power structures and international relations.

## History of USA

### 1. Colonial Era and the Birth of the Nation (1607–1789)

#### a. British Colonies in North America

- First successful English colony: **Jamestown (1607)** in Virginia.
- **13 colonies** developed along the eastern coast.
- Colonists had growing tensions with Britain over taxes, trade restrictions, and lack of representation in Parliament.

#### b. American Revolution (1775–1783)

- Slogan: "**No taxation without representation.**"
- Key events:
  - **Boston Tea Party (1773)**
  - **Declaration of Independence (4 July 1776)** by **Thomas Jefferson**
  - War against Britain led by **George Washington**.
- **Treaty of Paris (1783):** Britain recognised US independence.

#### c. Founding of the Republic

- **Articles of Confederation (1781):** First weak government.
- **US Constitution adopted (1787); George Washington became 1st President in 1789.**

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### 2. Expansion and Civil War Era (1790–1865)

#### a. Westward Expansion

- **Louisiana Purchase (1803)** from France doubled US territory.

- Idea of "**Manifest Destiny**": belief that the US was destined to expand coast-to-coast.

### **b. Slavery and Sectional Tensions**

- Slavery was legal in the South, illegal in the North.
- Continuous debates over whether new states would be "free" or "slave" states.

### **c. American Civil War (1861–1865)**

- Southern states formed **Confederate States of America**.
- War fought under President **Abraham Lincoln**.
- **Union (North) won**; slavery abolished by **13th Amendment**.
- Lincoln was assassinated shortly after the war.

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## **3. Reconstruction and Industrialisation (1865–1914)**

### **a. Reconstruction Era (1865–1877)**

- Attempt to rebuild the South and integrate freed slaves.
- Faced resistance; **segregation laws (Jim Crow)** were introduced.

### **b. Gilded Age and Rise of Industrial America**

- Rapid industrialisation: railroads, steel, oil, banking empires.
- Rise of tycoons like **Rockefeller, Carnegie, J.P. Morgan**.
- Massive immigration, urbanisation, and labour unrest.

### **c. Rise as a World Power**

- **Spanish–American War (1898)**: USA gained control over **Philippines, Guam, Puerto Rico**.

- Panama Canal construction under **Theodore Roosevelt**.

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## 4. World Wars and Interwar Period (1914–1945)

### a. World War I (1917–1918)

- Initially neutral; joined Allies in 1917.
- President **Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points** and **League of Nations** idea.

### b. Interwar Period and Great Depression

- 1920s: Economic boom ("Roaring Twenties").
- **The Wall Street Crash (1929)** led to the **Great Depression**.
- President **Franklin D. Roosevelt** launched the **New Deal**.

### c. World War II (1941–1945)

- Entered after **Pearl Harbor attack (1941)** by Japan.
- Major role in defeating **Axis Powers** (Germany, Italy, Japan).
- Dropped **atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1945)**.
- Emerged as a **superpower** along with the USSR.

---

## 5. Cold War Era (1945–1991)

### a. USA vs. USSR – Ideological Conflict

- Capitalism vs. Communism
- Arms race, nuclear tension, and **proxy wars** in Korea, Vietnam, and elsewhere.

## b. Domestic Developments

- **Civil Rights Movement:** Led by **Martin Luther King Jr.**, achieved desegregation and voting rights for African Americans.
- **Space Race:** USA landed first man on the moon (1969).
- **The Watergate Scandal (1970s)** forced President **Nixon** to resign.

## c. End of Cold War

- 1980s: **Ronald Reagan** intensified pressure on the USSR.
- **Fall of Berlin Wall (1989)** and **collapse of USSR (1991)** marked the Cold War's end.

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# 6. Unipolar World and War on Terror (1991–2010)

## a. USA as Sole Superpower

- Played major role in the **Gulf War (1991)** against Iraq.
- Promoted **globalisation, liberal democracy, and market reforms** globally.

## b. 9/11 and Global War on Terror

- **9/11 attacks (2001)** by al-Qaeda led to:
  - **War in Afghanistan (2001)**
  - **Iraq War (2003)**—controversial decision to remove **Saddam Hussein**.
- Massive surveillance and homeland security expansion.

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## 7. Recent Era (2010–Present)

### a. Obama Era (2009–2017)

- First African-American President.
- **Affordable Care Act**, withdrawal from Iraq, killed **Osama bin Laden** (2011).
- Shifted foreign policy focus to **Asia-Pacific**.

### b. Trump Era (2017–2021)

- Populist, nationalist agenda: "America First."
- Withdrawn from **Paris Agreement**, **Iran nuclear deal**, and others.
- Trade war with China; polarised domestic politics.

### c. Biden Era (2021–present as of 2025)

- Rejoined international agreements.
- Focus on rebuilding **democratic alliances**, countering **China and Russia**.
- Massive spending on infrastructure and clean energy.
- Continued polarisation and debates over immigration, gun control, and democracy.

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## 8. Global Role and Challenges (Present Day)

- Still the world's largest economy and military power.
- Faces **internal divisions**, **climate challenges**, and **competition from China**.
- Leader in **technology**, **innovation**, and **cultural influence**.
- Democracy under strain due to **partisan polarisation**, **racial tensions**, and **economic inequality**.

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## Conclusion

The history of the United States reflects a journey from a group of colonies to a **global superpower**, marked by dramatic expansions, civil conflict, technological innovation, ideological battles, and a strong yet evolving democratic tradition. Its present role is that of a leading but challenged hegemon in a multipolar world.

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## India and the USA

### 2. Key Milestones in India–USA Relations

Year	Event
1998	India's nuclear tests led to US sanctions, but also initiated a phase of serious dialogue.
2005	<b>India–US Civil Nuclear Agreement</b> (under George W. Bush and Manmohan Singh) marked a turning point. It legitimised India's nuclear status without signing the NPT.
2008	<b>Nuclear Suppliers Group waiver</b> allowed India to engage in nuclear commerce.
2016	India designated a <b>Major Defense Partner</b> by the USA.
2023	PM Modi's state visit to the US reaffirmed tech, defence, and geopolitical cooperation, especially vis-à-vis China.

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### 3. Areas of Cooperation

#### a. Strategic and Defence

- **QUAD Partnership:** India, USA, Japan, and Australia form the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, mainly to counterbalance China in the Indo-Pacific.

- **Defence Agreements:**
  - **COMCASA** (2018): Secure communication interoperability
  - **LEMOA** (2016): Logistics exchange
  - **BECA** (2020): Geospatial cooperation
- Regular joint military exercises like **Yudh Abhyas, Malabar Naval Exercise.**

#### **b. Economic and Trade**

- Bilateral trade exceeds **\$191 billion (2023)**. USA is India's largest trading partner.
- India is a major destination for US investments in tech, pharmaceuticals, and services.
- US multinationals like Apple, Google, Amazon have significant presence in India.

#### **c. Technology and Innovation**

- Collaboration in:
  - **Semiconductors and electronics manufacturing**
  - **Artificial Intelligence (AI), quantum computing, cybersecurity**
  - Space cooperation via NASA and ISRO

#### **d. People-to-People Ties**

- Over **4.5 million Indian-Americans** contribute across medicine, technology, academia, and politics.
- Student community: Over **200,000 Indian students** study in the US.
- The diaspora plays a crucial role in building bipartisan goodwill in US politics.

#### **e. Climate Change and Energy**

- Joint commitments under the **US-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership**.
- Cooperation in **renewable energy**, including **solar** and **green hydrogen**.

## 4. Areas of Divergence

Issue	India's Stand	US's Stand
<b>Russia–Ukraine War</b>	Neutral / Pro-Russia leaning	Pro-Ukraine, Anti-Russia
<b>Human Rights &amp; Democracy</b>	USA occasionally criticises India's record	India sees this as interference in domestic affairs
<b>Trade Tariffs and Digital Taxation</b>	India has imposed digital taxes	USA has threatened retaliatory measures
<b>H-1B Visa Restrictions</b>	India wants easier visa regime	USA imposes restrictions, citing job protection

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## 5. Geopolitical Importance

- **Indo-Pacific Strategy:**  
India is central to US efforts to balance China's rise. Both nations share concerns about **freedom of navigation** in the South China Sea and the broader Indo-Pacific.
- **Counterterrorism:**  
Joint efforts to combat cross-border terrorism, especially emanating from Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- **China Factor:**  
US sees India as a strategic counterweight to China, especially after border clashes between India and China.

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## 6. Current and Future Outlook

- **Strategic Alignment without Alliance:**  
India prefers “**strategic autonomy**” and is not a formal US ally. But cooperation is deepening without treaty-based military alliances.
- **Technological Partnership:**  
Focus shifting to **semiconductors, AI, space, defence production**, and **supply chain resilience**.
- **Challenges Ahead:**
  - Managing differing views on global issues like Iran, Russia, and the Global South.
  - US pressure on India to reduce Russian arms imports.
  - Political change in either country may alter the tone of engagement.

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### In Summary

India–USA relations have evolved **from mistrust during the Cold War to a strategic, multi-dimensional partnership**. While both countries have different worldviews on some issues, **shared democratic values, economic ties, and strategic interests** are steadily binding them closer together.

This partnership is expected to grow stronger in the coming decades, especially in light of global power shifts and the rise of Asia.

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# Russia

## I. The Russian Empire (1721–1917)

### 1. Rise of the Empire

- Formally declared an empire by **Peter the Great** in **1721** after defeating Sweden in the **Great Northern War**.
- **Westernisation reforms**: Military modernisation, administrative centralisation, and establishment of St. Petersburg as the new capital.
- Successive rulers like **Catherine the Great** expanded the empire into Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

### 2. 19th Century Developments

- **Napoleonic Wars (1812)**: Russia played a major role in defeating Napoleon.
- Emergence as a **major European power**, but remained autocratic and feudal.
- **Alexander II** emancipated the serfs (1861) but failed to introduce deep political reforms.

### 3. Decline and Revolutions

- Humiliating defeat in the **Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905)**.
- **1905 Revolution** led to limited constitutional reforms and establishment of the **Duma** (Parliament), but Tsar Nicholas II retained autocratic control.
- **World War I (1914–1917)**: Massive casualties and economic crisis led to widespread discontent.

## II. Russian Revolution and Soviet Era (1917–1991)

### 1. Russian Revolutions of 1917

- **February Revolution:** Overthrew Tsar Nicholas II; **Provisional Government** formed under Alexander Kerensky.
- **October Revolution:** **Bolsheviks**, led by **Vladimir Lenin**, seized power and established a communist government.

### 2. Civil War and USSR Formation

- **Russian Civil War (1918–1922)** between the **Reds (Bolsheviks)** and the **Whites** (anti-communist forces).
- Bolsheviks won and established the **Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)** in **1922**.

### 3. Stalinist Era (1924–1953)

- **Joseph Stalin** took control after Lenin's death.
- **Forced collectivisation, industrialisation, Great Purge** (millions executed or sent to Gulags).
- Played a central role in **World War II**:
  - **Nazi invasion (1941)** repelled at high cost.
  - USSR captured Berlin in 1945 and emerged as a **superpower**.

### 4. Cold War Period (1947–1991)

- **Ideological rivalry** with the USA: capitalism vs. communism.
- Created the **Eastern Bloc**: East Germany, Poland, Hungary, etc.
- Major events:
  - **Berlin Blockade (1948–49)**
  - **Cuban Missile Crisis (1962)**

- **Invasion of Afghanistan (1979–1989)** — a long, unpopular war.
- **Scientific achievements:**
  - **Sputnik (1957)**: First artificial satellite.
  - **Yuri Gagarin (1961)**: First human in space.

## 5. Decline and Collapse

- 1980s: **Economic stagnation**, political rigidity, growing dissent.
- **Mikhail Gorbachev** introduced:
  - **Perestroika** (economic restructuring)
  - **Glasnost** (openness)
- Eastern Bloc collapsed (1989).
- **USSR dissolved on 26 December 1991**; 15 republics became independent.

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## III. The Russian Federation (1991–Present)

### 1. Post-Soviet Transition (1991–1999)

- **Boris Yeltsin** became the first President of the Russian Federation.
- **Shock therapy reforms**: Rapid privatisation and economic liberalisation led to **hyperinflation, corruption, and inequality**.
- **Chechen Wars (1994–1996, 1999–2000)**: Brutal internal conflict.

### 2. Vladimir Putin's Rise (1999–Present)

- **Putin became acting President in 1999**, elected in 2000.
- Reasserted **central authority**, curbed oligarchic power, revived **Russian nationalism**.
- **Economic recovery** (early 2000s) due to oil and gas exports.

### 3. Domestic Authoritarianism

- Suppression of political opposition, control over media, clampdown on civil society.
- Constitutional changes in 2020 allow Putin to stay in power potentially until **2036**.

### 4. Foreign Policy and Conflicts

- **2008**: War with Georgia over South Ossetia.
- **2014**: Annexation of **Crimea** from Ukraine — condemned globally.
- **Syrian Civil War**: Russia supported **Bashar al-Assad**.
- **2022**: Full-scale **invasion of Ukraine** — triggered the largest war in Europe since WWII.
  - Western sanctions, economic isolation, military stalemate.

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## IV. Russia in the Global Context (Current Status)

### 1. Politics

- **De facto autocracy** under Putin with rubber-stamp institutions.
- Strong centralised control, with dissenters often imprisoned or exiled.

### 2. Economy

- Reliant on **oil, gas, arms exports**.
- Facing **Western sanctions**, tech restrictions, and declining foreign investment.

### 3. Geopolitical Outlook

- Tilt towards **China, Iran, North Korea, and Global South**.
- Seeking a **multipolar world** to counterbalance Western dominance.

## Conclusion

Russia's journey from an **imperial autocracy to a communist superpower and finally to a nationalist, centralised state** has been marked by revolutions, wars, and ideological shifts.

Today, Russia remains a **military and strategic power**, but its economy, global standing, and internal democracy face serious challenges — especially in the aftermath of the **Ukraine war**.

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## India Russia relations

### I. Origins of India–Russia (Soviet) Relations

#### 1. Pre-Independence Contacts

- During the British Raj, Soviet leaders like **Lenin** supported India's independence struggle.
- Indian revolutionaries (e.g., **MN Roy**) had links with communist ideologies emerging in Russia.

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### II. Cold War Era (1947–1991): The Golden Age of Indo–Soviet Friendship

#### 1. Early Years: Building Trust

- **1947 onwards**, India maintained a **non-aligned** foreign policy.
- Initially, the USSR was cautious, but by the mid-1950s, relations deepened.
- **1955**: First visit of **Nikita Khrushchev** and **Nikolai Bulganin** to India — they publicly supported India's position on **Kashmir** and **Goa**.

#### 2. Strategic Partnership Emerges

- **1962 Sino-Indian War**: USSR stayed neutral, but later leaned towards India.
- **1965 Indo-Pak War**: USSR mediated the **Tashkent Agreement** (1966).

### 3. Peak of the Relationship: 1971 Treaty

- **Indo–Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation (1971):**
  - Signed just before the **Bangladesh Liberation War**.
  - USSR provided **diplomatic and military cover** against Western pressure.
- **USSR vetoed UN resolutions** against India multiple times in 1971.

### 4. Economic and Defence Cooperation

- USSR became **India's largest defence supplier**:
  - MIG aircrafts, tanks, submarines, missiles, etc.
- Major projects:
  - **Bhilai Steel Plant, Bokaro, Heavy Machinery plant at Ranchi**.
  - **ISRO collaboration** (Aryabhata satellite launched from Soviet Union, 1975).

### 5. Cultural and Educational Ties

- Indian films popular in the USSR; Soviet literature widely read in India.
- Hundreds of Indian students studied medicine and engineering in Soviet universities.

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## III. Post-Soviet Phase (1991–Present)

### 1. Transitional Phase: 1991–2000

- Collapse of the USSR created **strategic vacuum** in the relationship.
- Russia focused inward; India began liberalisation and looked Westward.
- Bilateral trade and political ties weakened temporarily.

### 2. Rebuilding the Partnership: Putin's Era

- **2000 onwards**, under **Vladimir Putin**, both sides worked to **revive ties**.
- **2000**: Declaration of **India–Russia Strategic Partnership**.
- **2010**: Elevated to "**Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership**" — a title Russia uses only for India.

### 3. Defence and Energy Cooperation

- Russia still remains **India's biggest defence partner**, despite diversification.
  - **S-400 missile systems**
  - **BrahMos missile project** (joint development)
  - Leasing of **nuclear submarines**
- **Nuclear energy**:
  - Russia helped build **Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant** in Tamil Nadu.

### 4. Economic Relations

- Trade volume still **below potential** (around \$13 billion in 2023).
- Emphasis on:
  - **Energy cooperation** (oil, gas, civil nuclear)
  - **Diamonds, fertilisers, pharmaceuticals**
  - Discussions on using **national currencies** for trade (rupee–ruble mechanism).

### 5. Multilateral Engagement

- Close cooperation in:
  - **BRICS**
  - **SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation)**
  - **Eurasian Economic Union** (India exploring FTA)

- **United Nations** — Russia supports India's **UNSC permanent membership bid**.

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## IV. Challenges and Divergence in Recent Years

### 1. India's Growing US Partnership

- India's closer ties with the USA, QUAD, and Indo-Pacific strategy create **discomfort in Moscow**.
- Russia criticises "**Indo-Pacific**" as a **US-led anti-China bloc**.

### 2. Russia–China Proximity

- Increasing **Russia–China alignment** causes concern in Delhi.
- Especially after Galwan clashes, India is cautious.

### 3. Ukraine War (2022–Present)

- India took a **neutral stand**, abstaining from anti-Russia votes at UN.
- Continued buying **Russian oil at discounted prices**, balancing strategic autonomy.
- Western pressure on India to reduce ties, but India continues engaging with Russia based on **national interest**.

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## V. Current Status (As of 2025)

### 1. Defence

- Ongoing contracts for **S-400, spares for legacy Soviet systems**.
- Push for **Make in India in defence** with Russian support.

## 2. Energy

- Russia emerged as India's **largest crude oil supplier in 2023**.
- Exploring **Arctic energy collaboration**.

## 3. Strategic Autonomy

- India maintains "**multi-alignment**" — working with USA, Russia, and others based on issue-based convergence.
- Russia values India as an **independent power**, not aligned fully with the West.

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## VI. Conclusion

India–Russia relations have stood the test of time, transitioning from **ideological solidarity during the Cold War** to **pragmatic and strategic engagement today**.

While the global geopolitical order is shifting, the India–Russia bond rests on:

- **Historical goodwill**
- **Defence trust**
- **Shared multipolar vision of the world**

Despite new pressures, both nations strive to keep this "**special and privileged strategic partnership**" alive and relevant.

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## China

### I. Imperial China (c. 221 BCE – 1911 CE)

#### 1. Qin Dynasty (221–206 BCE) — First Unified Empire

- Emperor **Qin Shi Huang** unified China after centuries of war.
- Standardised **writing, currency, weights**, and built parts of the **Great Wall**.
- Harsh rule, but laid the foundations of imperial governance.

#### 2. Han Dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE)

- Golden age of Chinese civilisation: expansion, trade via **Silk Road**, and Confucian bureaucracy.
- Strong central government and cultural flourishing.

#### 3. Periods of Fragmentation

- Followed by **Three Kingdoms, Sui, and Tang** dynasties.
- Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE): A cosmopolitan and powerful era with global trade links and cultural exchanges.

#### 4. Song and Yuan Dynasties

- **Song Dynasty (960–1279)**: Technological and economic growth (printing, gunpowder, compass).
- **Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368)**: Mongol rule under **Kublai Khan**, part of the larger Mongol Empire.

#### 5. Ming Dynasty (1368–1644)

- Native Han Chinese rule restored.
- Maritime expeditions by **Zheng He**, followed by inward-looking policies.
- Great Wall rebuilt and extended.

## 6. Qing Dynasty (1644–1911)

- Founded by the **Manchus**, last imperial dynasty.
- Initially prosperous, expanded territory significantly.
- But faced **internal rebellions** and **Western imperialism**.
  - **Opium Wars (1839–42, 1856–60)**: British forced trade concessions.
  - **Unequal treaties** and **loss of sovereignty** in several areas.
  - **Taiping and Boxer Rebellions**: Signs of deep instability.

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## II. The Republic of China (1912–1949)

### 1. Fall of the Qing Dynasty (1911)

- Revolution led by **Sun Yat-sen**, founder of the **Kuomintang (KMT)** or Nationalist Party.
- Qing dynasty collapsed, ending over **2000 years of imperial rule**.

### 2. Era of Warlords (1916–1927)

- Central authority broke down.
- Regional warlords held power; political instability prevailed.

### 3. Rise of Communists and Civil War

- **Chinese Communist Party (CCP)** founded in **1921**.
- **KMT–CCP United Front** briefly fought against Japanese aggression.
- **Civil War resumed** in 1927, paused during **WWII**, and then resumed again.

### 4. Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945)

- Japan occupied large parts of China.

- CCP gained support through guerrilla warfare and rural organisation.

## 5. Civil War Outcome

- **1949: Mao Zedong** and the CCP defeated the KMT.
- KMT fled to **Taiwan**, where the **Republic of China** continues to exist.
- CCP established the **People's Republic of China** on **1st October 1949**.

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# III. People's Republic of China under Mao (1949–1976)

## 1. One-Party Communist State

- Mao centralised power under the **CCP**, ended private ownership, and nationalised industry and land.

## 2. Key Campaigns and Disasters

- **Land Reforms**: Land taken from landlords and distributed to peasants.
- **Great Leap Forward (1958–1962)**: Attempt to industrialise rapidly.
  - Resulted in massive **famine**, with **30–45 million deaths**.
- **Cultural Revolution (1966–1976)**:
  - Campaign to purge "capitalist" and "traditional" elements.
  - Red Guards destroyed cultural artefacts; intellectuals were persecuted.

## 3. Foreign Policy

- **Korean War (1950–53)**: China supported North Korea against US-led UN forces.
- **Sino-Soviet Split** (1960s): Ideological and strategic rift with USSR.
- Opened relations with the **US (1972)** — **Nixon's visit** to China was historic.

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## IV. Post-Mao Reforms and Opening (1978–2000)

### 1. Deng Xiaoping's Economic Reforms

- Took power in 1978 after Mao's death and **end of the Gang of Four**.
- Introduced "**Socialism with Chinese Characteristics**":
  - Allowed **market forces**, private enterprises, and **foreign investment**.
  - Created **Special Economic Zones (SEZs)** — e.g., Shenzhen.

### 2. Rapid Growth and Transformation

- Agriculture was decollectivised.
- Millions lifted out of poverty.
- Urbanisation and industrialisation took off.

### 3. Political Control Remained Firm

- **1989 Tiananmen Square Protests**: Demands for democracy were brutally suppressed.
- CCP remained in full control; no political liberalisation.

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## V. Rise of China as a Global Power (2000–Present)

### 1. Economic Superpower

- Joined **WTO in 2001**, boosting global trade links.
- Became **world's second-largest economy** (after the US).
- Leads in **manufacturing, infrastructure, e-commerce, and AI**.

### 2. Leadership of Xi Jinping (2012–Present)

- Consolidated personal power — declared "**core leader**".

- Launched:
  - **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**: Global infrastructure and investment strategy.
  - **Made in China 2025**: Technological dominance strategy.

### 3. Authoritarian Turn

- **Abolished presidential term limits (2018)**.
- Suppressed dissent in **Hong Kong**, Xinjiang (Uighurs), and Tibet.
- **Social credit system, surveillance state**, and **internet censorship**.

### 4. Assertive Foreign Policy

- Territorial claims in **South China Sea, Taiwan Strait** tensions.
- **Border conflicts with India** (e.g., **Galwan Valley clash, 2020**).
- Trade and tech rivalry with the USA.

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## VI. Present-Day China (as of 2025)

### Political System:

- One-party rule by CCP.
- Xi Jinping holds **three core roles**: President, General Secretary of the CCP, Chairman of the Central Military Commission.

### Economy:

- Slower growth due to **debt, demography, and global tensions**.
- Moving from export-led to **innovation-driven economy**.

## Military:

- Rapid modernisation of the **PLA (People's Liberation Army)**.
- Focus on space, cyber, and maritime power.

## International Influence:

- Rival to US in global geopolitics.
- Key member of **BRICS, SCO**, and UN bodies.
- Gaining influence in **Africa, Latin America, and Global South**.

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## Conclusion

China's journey from a **dynastic empire** to a **communist state**, and now to an **authoritarian capitalist global power**, has been one of the most transformative in modern history.

It now poses a **civilisational and strategic challenge** to Western hegemony, while navigating **domestic control, nationalism, and economic ambition**.

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## What is the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)?

The **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** is China's ambitious global infrastructure and connectivity project, launched in **2013** by President **Xi Jinping**. It aims to **recreate the old Silk Road trade routes** through modern infrastructure, linking China with Asia, Africa, Europe, and beyond.

It is often described as the **world's largest infrastructure development project**, involving **more than 140 countries** and **trillions of dollars** in investment.

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## Two Main Components

### 1. Silk Road Economic Belt (Land Route)

- Overland route through **Central Asia and Europe**.
- Connects China to Europe via:
  - Kazakhstan
  - Russia
  - Iran
  - Turkey
  - Eastern and Central Europe

### 2. 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (Sea Route)

- Sea-based trade route through the **South China Sea, Indian Ocean, and the Mediterranean**.
- Links Chinese ports with:
  - Southeast Asia (e.g., Malaysia, Indonesia)
  - South Asia (e.g., Sri Lanka, Pakistan)
  - East Africa (e.g., Kenya, Djibouti)

- Middle East and Europe (via Suez Canal)

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## Key Objectives of BRI

### 1. Trade and Connectivity

- Enhance physical and digital connectivity (roads, railways, ports, energy pipelines).
- Create new trade corridors between China and partner countries.

### 2. Geopolitical Influence

- Establish **China as a global leader** in infrastructure diplomacy.
- Counter Western-led institutions like the **World Bank, IMF**, and the **US-led order**.

### 3. Export Industrial Overcapacity

- Utilise excess Chinese production in steel, cement, and construction abroad.

### 4. Energy Security

- Create **alternative energy routes**, reducing reliance on vulnerable chokepoints like the Strait of Malacca.

### 5. Domestic Economic Development

- Boost development in underdeveloped Chinese provinces like **Xinjiang** and **Yunnan** by connecting them to global markets.

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## Major BRI Projects

Region	Notable Projects
Pakistan	<b>China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)</b> — roads, power plants, and Gwadar Port.
Sri Lanka	<b>Hambantota Port</b> — now leased to China for 99 years due to debt.
Kenya	Nairobi–Mombasa Standard Gauge Railway.
Central Asia	Rail and road links connecting Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan to China.
Europe	High-speed rail and logistics hubs in Hungary, Serbia, and Greece (e.g., Piraeus Port).

## India's Position on BRI

- **India has not joined the BRI**, primarily due to:
  - **Sovereignty concerns**: The CPEC passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).
  - Fears of **Chinese strategic encirclement** through maritime ports ("**String of Pearls**").
  - Preference for **rules-based, transparent infrastructure financing**.

India promotes alternative initiatives like:

- **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** with Iran and Russia.
- **India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** announced in 2023.

## Global Criticisms and Controversies

### 1. Debt-Trap Diplomacy

- Many BRI countries have taken **large Chinese loans**.
- Examples:
  - Sri Lanka (Hambantota Port)
  - Zambia (debt default)
- Critics argue China gains **strategic assets** when countries fail to repay.

### 2. Lack of Transparency

- Many projects lack open bidding, leading to corruption and inefficiency.

### 3. Environmental and Social Concerns

- Large-scale infrastructure affects **local ecosystems** and **displaces communities**.

### 4. Strategic and Military Use

- Dual-use infrastructure (ports, logistics hubs) can support **PLA Navy operations**, raising alarm in the Indo-Pacific region.

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## China's Response to Criticism

- Rebranding BRI as:
  - **“Green BRI”**
  - **“Digital BRI”**

- “**Health Silk Road**” during COVID-19
- Claims it promotes **inclusive development, South–South cooperation, and shared prosperity**.

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## Present Status (as of 2025)

- BRI is in its second decade, but facing **slowdown**:
  - Chinese economic pressures (property crisis, slowing growth)
  - Debt concerns in partner countries
  - Western pushback through alternatives like:
    - **G7's Build Back Better World (B3W)**
    - **EU's Global Gateway**
- Yet, China continues expanding influence via **Africa, Latin America, and Central Asia**.

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## Conclusion

The **Belt and Road Initiative** represents China's vision for a **China-centric global order**, combining infrastructure, diplomacy, trade, and strategic interests.

While it offers **development opportunities** to many countries, it also raises questions about **sovereignty, transparency, debt sustainability, and geopolitical balance**.

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## India - China relations

### I. Historical Background

#### 1. Ancient and Medieval Contacts

- India and China have a **long history of civilisational contact**, especially through:
  - **Buddhism**: Indian monks like **Xuanzang** and **Faxian** travelled to India.
  - Trade routes like the **Silk Road**.
- However, there was no direct political engagement or conflict until modern times.

#### 2. Modern Era: Pre-1947

- Both countries were under **foreign domination** (India – British; China – Qing Empire, then semi-colonial control).
- Shared anti-colonial sentiments and Pan-Asian ideals (e.g., **Asian solidarity** in the early 20th century).

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### II. Post-Independence Relations (1947–Present)

#### 1. Early Phase of Friendship (1950s)

- India was among the first countries to recognise the People's Republic of China (1950).
- “**Hindi–Chini Bhai Bhai**” slogan symbolised a warm relationship.
- Both countries promoted **Afro–Asian solidarity** (e.g., Bandung Conference, 1955).
- India supported China's **claim for permanent seat at the UN** (then held by Taiwan).

#### 2. Border Disputes and the 1962 War

- **Unresolved boundaries** between British India and Qing China led to tensions:
  - **Aksai Chin (Ladakh region)** — claimed by India, controlled by China.
  - **Arunachal Pradesh (South Tibet)** — claimed by China, controlled by India.
- **1962 War**: China launched a **surprise attack**; India suffered a defeat.
- Deep mistrust followed, and diplomatic relations remained cold for decades.

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### III. Normalisation and Confidence-Building (1976–2008)

#### 1. Diplomatic Normalisation

- **Ambassadors exchanged in 1976**, after a 14-year diplomatic freeze.
- **Rajiv Gandhi's 1988 visit** was a turning point — start of **normalisation**.

#### 2. Confidence Building Measures (CBMs)

- **Agreements in 1993 and 1996** for maintaining peace along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
- Protocols established for **avoiding escalation** during patrol confrontations.

#### 3. Growing Economic Engagement

- **Trade increased exponentially** from early 2000s onwards.
- China became **India's largest trading partner**.
- Despite political mistrust, there was **economic pragmatism**.

---

### IV. Strategic Rivalry and Tensions (2008–Present)

#### 1. Areas of Cooperation

- Multilateral groupings:

- **BRICS, SCO, RCEP (India withdrew later), AIIB.**
- Climate change, regional development, and counterterrorism platforms.

## 2. Growing Competition

- China's:
  - Close ties with **Pakistan** (CPEC, military support).
  - Expanding presence in **South Asia and Indian Ocean** — “**String of Pearls**” strategy.
  - Obstruction to India's **NSG membership** and **UN listing of terrorists**.
- India's:
  - Participation in **QUAD** (with US, Japan, Australia).
  - Strengthening ties with **ASEAN, USA, and Indo-Pacific partners**.
  - **Boycott of BRI** (due to CPEC in PoK).

---

## V. Major Flashpoints

### 1. Doklam Standoff (2017)

- Bhutan–China–India trijunction.
- India opposed China's road construction; **73-day standoff** ended with disengagement.

### 2. Galwan Valley Clash (2020)

- Worst border violence since 1967.
- **20 Indian soldiers martyred**; China admitted to some casualties.
- Relations hit historic low; **economic disengagement** began.

### 3. Border Situation Post-Galwan

- **Military buildup on both sides** along the LAC.
- Several rounds of **corps commander-level talks**, with limited disengagement.
- No return to pre-2020 status quo in Ladakh.

---

## VI. Current Status (as of 2025)

### 1. Political and Diplomatic Relations

- Normal diplomatic exchanges continue, but **political trust is low**.
- India insists that **normal relations depend on border peace**.

### 2. Economic Relations

- **Trade remains strong** despite tensions: over \$120 billion in 2023.
- India dependent on China for:
  - Electronics
  - Active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs)
  - Solar panels, telecom gear
- But India is pushing **self-reliance (Aatmanirbhar Bharat)** and **supply chain diversification**.

### 3. Strategic Outlook

- India views China as its **biggest strategic challenge**.
- China sees India as a **regional competitor** allied with the West.
- **Dual-track policy:** Engagement + containment on both sides.

---

## VII. Conclusion

India–China relations are marked by **coexistence of cooperation and competition, engagement and conflict**. While both nations are ancient civilisations and major powers in Asia, their relationship is shaped by:

- **Unresolved borders**
- **Competing regional visions**
- **Strategic mistrust**

Future relations will depend on:

- **Border stability**
- **Mutual recognition of core interests**
- **Balance between economic ties and geopolitical rivalry**

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## India and Its Neighbours: A Brief Survey

India shares its borders with **seven countries: Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Afghanistan** (though land access to Afghanistan is via PoK). These countries form India's **immediate strategic neighbourhood**, vital for **security, trade, connectivity, and regional stability**.

---

### 1. Pakistan

#### Nature of Relationship: Hostile and Conflict-ridden

- **Major issues:** Kashmir dispute, cross-border terrorism, 1947, 1965, 1971 and 1999 wars.
- **Terror attacks** (e.g., Mumbai 2008, Pathankot 2016, Pulwama 2019) have hardened India's stance.
- **No formal dialogue since 2016**; diplomatic ties downgraded after **Article 370 abrogation (2019)**.

#### Trade & People-to-People Ties:

- Minimal trade via Wagah border.
- Cultural links (language, music, films) are strong but constrained.

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### 2. China

#### Nature of Relationship: Competitive and Tense

- Historical war in **1962**; unresolved border issues.
- Recent clashes: **Doklam standoff (2017)** and **Galwan Valley (2020)**.
- Despite tensions, **trade is robust** (China is one of India's top trading partners).
- Strategic rivalry in Indo-Pacific, **China–Pakistan axis**, and India's opposition to BRI.

---

### 3. Nepal

#### **Nature of Relationship: Deeply Intertwined but Occasionally Strained**

- **Open border, cultural & religious closeness** (shared Hindu–Buddhist heritage).
- Political instability in Nepal has led to oscillation between India and China.
- **2015 blockade allegations** and **2020 border map dispute** (Kalapani-Limpiyadhura) strained ties.
- Recent efforts at **reset and infrastructure cooperation**.

---

### 4. Bhutan

#### **Nature of Relationship: Exceptionally Warm and Trust-Based**

- No diplomatic relations with China; India is Bhutan's primary ally.
- Cooperation in **hydropower, education, military training**.
- India played a key role during **Doklam crisis (2017)**.
- Bhutan is seen as India's most reliable neighbour.

---

### 5. Bangladesh

#### **Nature of Relationship: Strong and Improving**

- After 1971 liberation war (with Indian support), relations have matured.
- Under PM **Sheikh Hasina**, ties have grown:
  - **Land Boundary Agreement (2015)**
  - **Water sharing talks** (Teesta issue still pending)
  - **Connectivity and trade projects** improving steadily.

## Challenges:

- Migration, river water sharing, and border killings.
- Rise of anti-India sentiment among some groups in Bangladesh.

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## 6. Myanmar

### Nature of Relationship: Strategic but Complex

- Shared border in Northeast; important for **connectivity and counter-insurgency**.
- India is building **Kaladan Multi-modal Transit Corridor** and **India–Myanmar–Thailand highway**.
- Post-2021 **military coup** led to Western isolation of Myanmar; India continues engagement for strategic reasons.

---

## 7. Afghanistan

### Nature of Relationship: Sympathetic but Disrupted

- India had strong ties with the former Afghan governments (1990s–2021).
- Major development aid: **Parliament building, roads, dams, scholarships**.
- After **Taliban takeover (2021)**, formal diplomatic presence ended.
- India now cautiously engaging with Taliban for regional security and humanitarian aid.

---

### Regional Engagement: SAARC & BIMSTEC

- **SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation)**: Dormant due to India–Pakistan tensions.

- **BIMSTEC**: India promotes it as a **SAARC alternative**, connecting South and Southeast Asia.

---

## Key Challenges in India's Neighbourhood Policy

1. **China's deepening influence** (esp. in Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Pakistan).
2. **Cross-border terrorism and security threats**.
3. **Migration and border disputes**.
4. **Balancing soft power with assertive diplomacy**.

---

## India's Strategic Approach

India follows a "**Neighbourhood First Policy**", emphasising:

- Infrastructure, trade, digital connectivity
- Capacity building, health, education
- Regional security cooperation
- Promoting **Sagarmala** (maritime) and **Act East Policy** for deeper integration

---

## Conclusion

India's relations with its neighbours are shaped by **geography, history, culture, and geopolitics**. While India aspires to be a **regional stabiliser**, it faces persistent challenges due to:

- **Asymmetry of power** (India's dominance),
- **Internal politics of neighbours**, and
- **China's strategic interventions**.

The future of South Asia depends significantly on how India manages both **bilateral sensitivities** and **regional cooperation frameworks**.

## Pakistan

### I. Origins and Creation of Pakistan (Pre-1947 to 1947)

#### 1. Roots in British India

- The idea of Pakistan emerged during the **freedom struggle in colonial India**.
- **All-India Muslim League**, led by **Muhammad Ali Jinnah**, advocated for the rights of Muslims, fearing marginalisation in a Hindu-majority India.

#### 2. Two-Nation Theory

- Based on the belief that **Hindus and Muslims were distinct nations** with separate religions, cultures, and political interests.
- Coined by **Sir Syed Ahmed Khan**, and later politicised by Jinnah.

#### 3. Demand for a Separate Nation

- **Lahore Resolution (1940)**: Formal demand for separate Muslim homelands.
- Mounting communal tensions, political deadlock, and Partition became inevitable.

#### 4. Formation of Pakistan (1947)

- **14 August 1947**: Pakistan was created as a separate nation for Muslims.
- Comprised **two wings**: **West Pakistan** (modern-day Pakistan) and **East Pakistan** (modern-day Bangladesh).
- **Partition led to mass migration, violence, and the deaths of around 1 million people**.



## II. Early Years of the Republic (1947–1958)

### 1. Jinnah's Leadership and Death (1948)

- **Muhammad Ali Jinnah**, the "Quaid-e-Azam", was Pakistan's first Governor-General.
- He died in 1948, leaving a leadership vacuum.

### 2. Constitutional Struggles

- Pakistan adopted its first **constitution in 1956**, becoming an **Islamic republic**.
- Political instability, frequent PM changes, and **ethnic tensions** (Punjabis vs Bengalis).

---

## III. Military Rule and Wars with India (1958–1971)

### 1. Ayub Khan's Rule (1958–1969)

- First **military coup in 1958** — General **Ayub Khan** took over.
- Period of relative economic growth, but political suppression.

### 2. 1965 War with India

- Over Kashmir; resulted in a stalemate.
- **Tashkent Agreement** mediated by the Soviet Union.

### 3. Yahya Khan and Disintegration (1969–1971)

- **Ethnic and linguistic discrimination** against **East Pakistan (Bengalis)**.
- **1970 elections**: Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's **Awami League** won majority, but West Pakistan refused to transfer power.
- Led to **civil war** and Indian intervention.

#### 4. Creation of Bangladesh (1971)

- **India–Pakistan war (1971)** ended with Pakistan's surrender in Dhaka.
- Over **90,000 Pakistani soldiers** captured; **East Pakistan became Bangladesh**.
- This was Pakistan's **most traumatic national loss**.

---

### IV. Civilian Rule and Islamisation (1971–1977)

#### 1. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Government

- Founded the **Pakistan People's Party (PPP)**.
- Nationalised industries, drafted the **1973 Constitution**.
- Strengthened ties with China and the Islamic world.
- Initiated **Pakistan's nuclear programme**.

---

### V. Zia-ul-Haq Era (1977–1988): Military and Islamisation

#### 1. Military Coup (1977)

- General **Zia-ul-Haq** overthrew Bhutto, who was later **executed (1979)**.

#### 2. Islamisation of Law and Society

- Introduced **Sharia-based laws, Hudood Ordinances**, and blasphemy laws.
- Empowered **religious parties** and madrasa networks.

#### 3. Afghan Jihad (1979–1989)

- Supported **mujahideen** against Soviet forces in Afghanistan.
- Massive **US aid** and **Saudi funding** flowed in.

- Rise of **militant networks** (which later backfired).

---

## VI. Return to Democracy and Political Instability (1988–1999)

### 1. Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif Era

- Power alternated between **PPP (Benazir)** and **PML-N (Nawaz Sharif)**.
- Governance marred by **corruption, military interference, and economic troubles**.

### 2. Kargil Conflict (1999)

- Pakistani forces infiltrated Indian territory in Kargil (J&K).
- **International condemnation**, especially by the US.

---

## VII. Pervez Musharraf's Military Rule (1999–2008)

### 1. Military Coup (1999)

- General **Musharraf** overthrew Nawaz Sharif.
- Became a key **US ally after 9/11**, supporting the **War on Terror**.

### 2. Reforms and Crisis

- Promoted **economic liberalisation** and **local governance**.
- Survived multiple assassination attempts.
- Faced growing militancy (e.g., **Lal Masjid siege**, Taliban insurgency).
- Resigned in 2008 under pressure.

---

## VIII. Civilian Rule and Democratic Transition (2008–2018)

### 1. Return of Civilian Governments

- PPP and later **PML-N** returned to power.
- Pakistan witnessed its **first peaceful civilian transition (2013)**.

### 2. Rise of Terrorism

- **Taliban attacks**, especially **APS Peshawar massacre (2014)**.
- Launch of **Operation Zarb-e-Azb** to combat terrorism.

### 3. China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

- Announced in 2015 under the Belt and Road Initiative.
- \$60 billion infrastructure investment from China.

---

## IX. Imran Khan Era (2018–2022)

### 1. PTI Victory

- Former cricketer **Imran Khan** became PM with **military backing**.
- Anti-corruption image, but struggling economy and governance.

### 2. Civil-Military Tensions

- Ties with military soured in 2021–22.
- Economic crisis deepened — inflation, debt, IMF negotiations.

### 3. Ouster in 2022

- Lost no-confidence motion; replaced by **Shahbaz Sharif (PML-N)**.

- Imran launched a public protest movement; faced **arrests and legal cases**.

---

## X. Present Situation (as of 2025)

### 1. Economic Crisis

- Ongoing **debt burden, currency depreciation, inflation**.
- Heavy reliance on **IMF bailouts, Saudi/Chinese aid**.

### 2. Political Instability

- Frequent changes in leadership, mass protests, civil-military power struggles.
- Judiciary, media, and civil society under stress.

### 3. Security Concerns

- Resurgence of **TTP (Pakistani Taliban)** and sectarian militancy.
- Fragile control over Balochistan and tribal areas.

### 4. Foreign Relations

- Close ties with **China**, strained with **India and USA**.
- Engagements with **Gulf countries** for remittances and energy.

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## Conclusion

Pakistan's history reflects a **turbulent journey** — born out of ideological fervour, shaped by **military dominance, civil-military tensions, Islamisation, and external conflicts**.

While it has shown **resilience**, it continues to struggle with:

- **Institutional fragility**,

- **Economic vulnerability**,
- **Terrorism and extremism**, and
- **Geopolitical balancing** between powers like **China, USA, and Gulf states**.

## India - Pakistan relations

### I. Historical Origins of the Conflict

#### 1. Partition and Its Aftermath (1947)

- **Partition of British India** led to the creation of Pakistan on **14 August 1947**, and India on **15 August 1947**.
- It triggered **mass communal violence and the migration of over 15 million people**, with around **1 million deaths**.
- The **princely state of Jammu & Kashmir** became the main territorial dispute.

---

### II. Major Wars and Conflicts

#### 1. First War (1947–48)

- Over the princely state of **Jammu & Kashmir**.
- Result: **UN-mediated ceasefire**; Kashmir was divided — **India retained ~2/3**, and Pakistan took control of **PoK** (Pakistan-occupied Kashmir).
- The **Line of Control (LoC)** was established.

#### 2. Second War (1965)

- Initiated by Pakistan through **Operation Gibraltar** in Kashmir.
- Result: **Stalemate, Tashkent Agreement (1966)** brokered by the Soviet Union.

### 3. Third War (1971)

- Triggered by **Pakistan's military crackdown in East Pakistan**.
- India intervened on humanitarian and strategic grounds.
- Result: **Creation of Bangladesh**, and **Pakistan's surrender in Dhaka**.
- Over **90,000 Pakistani soldiers** taken as prisoners of war.

### 4. Kargil Conflict (1999)

- Pakistani soldiers and militants infiltrated Indian territory in **Kargil (Ladakh)**.
- India launched **Operation Vijay** to reclaim the heights.
- Result: India regained territory; international community criticised Pakistan.

---

## III. Other Flashpoints and Tensions

### 1. Cross-Border Terrorism

- Supported by Pakistan-based groups like:
  - **Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Hizbul Mujahideen**.
- Major attacks:
  - **1993 Bombay blasts**
  - **2001 Indian Parliament attack**
  - **2008 Mumbai attacks (26/11)**
  - **2016 Pathankot attack**
  - **2019 Pulwama suicide bombing**

### 2. Surgical Strikes and Balakot Air Strike

- **2016 Surgical Strikes**: In retaliation to Uri attack.

- **2019 Balakot Strike:** After Pulwama attack, India conducted airstrikes in Pakistan's territory (Balakot).

---

## IV. Peace Initiatives and Agreements

Year	Initiative / Agreement	Outcome
1949	<b>UN Ceasefire in Kashmir</b>	Established LoC
1972	<b>Simla Agreement</b>	Both agreed to resolve issues bilaterally
1999	<b>Lahore Declaration</b>	Confidence-building, but derailed by Kargil
2003	<b>Ceasefire Agreement on LoC</b>	Initially successful, later violated
2004–20 08	<b>Composite Dialogue Process</b>	Covered 8 issues, including Kashmir, trade, people-to-people ties
2021	<b>LoC ceasefire reaffirmed</b>	Tensions reduced briefly

---

## V. Key Issues Between India and Pakistan

### 1. Jammu and Kashmir

- The **core dispute**.
- After **Article 370 abrogation (2019)**, relations worsened.
- Pakistan downgraded diplomatic ties and expelled the Indian High Commissioner.

### 2. Terrorism

- India accuses Pakistan of **sponsoring cross-border terrorism**.
- Pakistan denies state involvement but acknowledges presence of terror groups.

### 3. Water Sharing

- Governed by the **Indus Waters Treaty (1960)**, brokered by the World Bank.
- India controls eastern rivers, Pakistan the western.
- Disputes continue over dam constructions and water usage.

### 4. Trade

- Formal trade **suspended since 2019**.
- Informal trade occurs via **third countries** (e.g., UAE).
- India granted MFN status to Pakistan in 1996, but Pakistan never reciprocated.

### 5. People-to-People Ties

- Visa regime is extremely restrictive.
- Shared cultural history, language, cinema, and family ties, but interaction is minimal.

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## VI. Regional and Global Dimensions

### 1. Nuclear Dynamics

- Both became **nuclear powers in 1998**.
- Possess **second-strike capability**.
- Deterrence has **prevented full-scale war**, but **proxy conflicts** continue.

### 2. China Factor

- China–Pakistan alliance (CPEC, arms, diplomacy) seen by India as strategic encirclement.
- India counters via QUAD, strategic ties with US, Japan, etc.

### 3. Role of International Community

- UN, US, and others have occasionally mediated or applied pressure.
- India maintains that all issues must be resolved **bilaterally**.

---

## VII. Current Status (as of 2025)

### 1. Diplomatic Ties

- **No full diplomatic relations**; embassies operating at **Charge d'Affaires** level.
- **No formal dialogue** since 2016; only backchannel contacts.

### 2. Military Situation

- **LoC remains volatile** despite 2021 ceasefire renewal.
- Armed forces on both sides are on high alert.

### 3. Public Sentiment

- Hostility, mistrust, and media-fuelled narratives on both sides.
- Sporadic calls for peace, especially from civil society and diaspora groups.

---

## VIII. Conclusion

India–Pakistan relations are defined by a **cycle of hope and hostility**. While there are moments of outreach, **deep-rooted mistrust, historical trauma, and conflicting national narratives** continue to block normalisation.

A stable, peaceful South Asia depends on:

- **Sincere efforts to combat terrorism**
- **Uninterrupted dialogue**

- **Cultural and economic confidence-building**
- **Respect for sovereignty and mutual sensitivities**

---

## Bangladesh

### I. Background: Bengal under Colonial Rule (1757–1947)

- **1757**: Battle of Plassey — British East India Company began control over Bengal.
- Bengal was divided in **1905** (by Lord Curzon) but reunited in 1911 due to mass protests.
- **Partition of India (1947)**:
  - Bengal split into:
    - **West Bengal (India)** – Hindu-majority
    - **East Bengal (Pakistan)** – Muslim-majority, became **East Pakistan**
- East Bengal became part of **Pakistan**, geographically separated from **West Pakistan by 1600 km**, with **no common border, culture, or language**.

---

### II. Discrimination and Rise of Bengali Nationalism (1947–1971)

#### 1. Linguistic Suppression

- In 1948, Pakistan declared **Urdu as the only national language**.
- Massive protests in East Pakistan led to the **Language Movement of 1952**.
- Several students were **killed on 21 February 1952**, which is now observed as **International Mother Language Day**.

## 2. Political and Economic Marginalisation

- Despite forming the **majority of Pakistan's population**, East Pakistan had:
  - Little say in government.
  - Discrimination in civil and military services.
  - Underdevelopment and exploitation of its resources.

## 3. Rise of Awami League and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

- **Awami League**, led by **Sheikh Mujib**, emerged as the dominant political force in East Pakistan.
- In **1970 general elections**, Awami League won **160 out of 162 East Pakistan seats** (majority in national assembly).
- But West Pakistani leaders **refused to transfer power**.

---

## III. Struggle for Independence and India's Role (1971)

### 1. Operation Searchlight and Genocide

- On **25 March 1971**, Pakistani army launched **Operation Searchlight** in Dhaka:
  - Massacres of students, intellectuals, and civilians.
  - Systematic targeting of **Hindus, Bengali nationalists**, and minorities.
- Estimated **3 million people killed**, over 2 lakh women raped, and **10 million refugees** fled to India.

### 2. Formation of Bangladesh

- On **26 March 1971**, **Bangladesh declared independence**.
- **Mukti Bahini (Liberation Army)** launched guerrilla resistance with **Indian logistical support**.

### 3. India's Role

- **Diplomatic:**
  - India raised the issue globally but found limited response from US-led Western bloc.
  - USSR signed the **Indo–Soviet Friendship Treaty (August 1971)**, ensuring strategic support.
- **Military:**
  - India provided **training, arms, bases, and intelligence support** to Mukti Bahini.
  - **Pakistan attacked Indian airbases (3 Dec 1971)**, triggering full-scale war.
- **India–Pakistan War (3–16 December 1971):**
  - India launched coordinated military action on **Eastern and Western fronts**.
  - Within **13 days**, Pakistani forces surrendered in Dhaka.

### 4. Liberation of Bangladesh

- On **16 December 1971**, General Niazi surrendered to Lt. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora.
- Over **93,000 Pakistani soldiers** taken as **prisoners of war**.
- **Bangladesh was born as a free nation**, with **Sheikh Mujibur Rahman** as its founding father.

---

## IV. Post-Independence Developments

### 1. Sheikh Mujib's Rule and Assassination

- Sheikh Mujib returned in 1972 and became **Prime Minister**.
- Introduced **secular, socialist democracy**.
- Assassinated in **August 1975** in a military coup, along with most of his family.

## 2. Military Regimes (1975–1990)

- **Ziaur Rahman** and later **H.M. Ershad** ruled as military dictators.
- Gradual shift toward **Islamic identity**; '**Secularism**' dropped from the Constitution.

## 3. Return to Democracy (1991 onwards)

- Alternating power between:
  - **Awami League (Sheikh Hasina)** — Mujib's daughter.
  - **Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP, Khaleda Zia)** — Ziaur Rahman's widow.
- Political rivalry often violent and deeply polarised.

---

# V. Contemporary Bangladesh (2009–2025)

## 1. Sheikh Hasina's Leadership

- Since 2009, under **PM Sheikh Hasina**, Bangladesh has seen:
  - Strong economic growth.
  - Infrastructure development (bridges, roads, power).
  - Crackdown on Islamist groups and war crimes trials.

## 2. Challenges

- **Authoritarianism** and **suppression of dissent**.
- **Rohingya refugee crisis** from Myanmar.
- Rising concerns about **freedom of press and judiciary**.

---

# India–Bangladesh Relations: A Snapshot

## 1. Shared Interests

- **1971 legacy:** Emotional and strategic bond.
- Cultural and linguistic affinity (esp. with **West Bengal** and Northeast India).
- Security cooperation against **terrorism and insurgency**.

## 2. Major Developments

- **Land Boundary Agreement (2015):** Resolved 40-year-old border enclave issue.
- Improved **border trade, connectivity, and energy cooperation**.
- Ongoing negotiations on **Teesta water sharing**.

## 3. Challenges

- **Migration issues** and concerns in Assam.
- Border security incidents (BSF–BGB clashes).
- Rising **Islamist sentiment** and anti-India elements in Bangladeshi politics.

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## Conclusion

The **creation of Bangladesh in 1971** is a landmark event in South Asian history — an outcome of **ethnic, linguistic, and political oppression**, a **popular uprising**, and **India's decisive humanitarian and military intervention**.

Today, Bangladesh is a **vibrant nation** with growing global relevance. Its ties with India are **deep and strategic**, though not without challenges. The **spirit of 1971** continues to shape the relationship, and managing it wisely remains critical for regional stability.

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## India-Bangladesh Relations: A Comprehensive Survey

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### I. Historical Foundation: Born from Shared Struggles

#### 1. 1971 Liberation War

- India played a decisive role in the creation of Bangladesh by:
  - Supporting **Mukti Bahini** (liberation fighters).
  - Hosting over **10 million refugees**.
  - **Militarily intervening** against Pakistani forces.
- On **16 December 1971**, Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation.
- **Sheikh Mujibur Rahman** acknowledged India's role in multiple speeches.

#### 2. Early Years (1971–1975)

- Relations were strong during **Sheikh Mujib's rule**.
- India helped Bangladesh in **reconstruction, infrastructure, and training institutions**.
- However, the **assassination of Sheikh Mujib (1975)** and subsequent military regimes in Bangladesh led to a **cooling of ties**.

---

### II. Period of Uncertainty and Distrust (1975–1991)

- Rise of **anti-India sentiment** during military rule (Ziaur Rahman, Ershad).
- Promotion of **Islamic identity** over Bengali cultural identity.
- Bangladesh leaned towards **China, OIC, and Pakistan** in foreign relations.
- Border tensions and **migration concerns** also emerged in this period.

---

## III. Normalisation and Neighbourhood First (1991–2008)

### 1. Return to Democracy

- Alternating rule between:
  - **Awami League (Sheikh Hasina)** – pro-India.
  - **BNP (Khaleda Zia)** – relatively hostile to India.

### 2. India's Strategic Shift

- Late 1990s and early 2000s: India adopted a more **nuanced neighbourhood policy**.
- Realised the importance of **regional integration** and **economic diplomacy**.

---

## IV. Golden Phase in Relations (2009–Present)

Under Prime Minister **Sheikh Hasina** (since 2009), India–Bangladesh ties have significantly improved:

### ✓ A. Security Cooperation

- Bangladesh cracked down on **anti-India insurgent groups** operating in its territory.
- **Joint border management**, intelligence sharing, and counter-terrorism cooperation strengthened.

### ✓ B. Connectivity Projects

- Revival of old **rail links**: e.g., **Kolkata–Dhaka–Agartala**, **Khulna–Kolkata**.
- Development of **road and inland water routes** to connect Northeast India via Bangladesh.
- **Maitree Setu** bridge over Feni River (Tripura–Bangladesh) inaugurated in 2021.

### ✓ C. Trade and Economic Ties

- Bangladesh is **India's largest trading partner in South Asia**.
- **Bilateral trade crossed \$18 billion in 2023**.
- India provides **credit lines and duty-free access** to Bangladeshi exports.

### ✓ D. Energy Cooperation

- India supplies **electricity to Bangladesh** (from Tripura and West Bengal).
- Joint ventures in **power generation and transmission** (e.g., Rampal Power Plant).

### ✓ E. Cultural and People-to-People Ties

- Shared linguistic, cultural, and historical bonds.
- India has helped in restoration of **Bangabandhu's legacy**, historical sites, and **UNESCO projects**.
- Students, tourists, and medical patients from Bangladesh visit India frequently.

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## V. Irritants and Challenges in the Relationship

Issue	Description
Teesta River Dispute	Bangladesh seeks fair water-sharing of the Teesta. Agreement is stalled due to opposition from <b>West Bengal government</b> .
Border Killings	Civilians involved in smuggling are killed along the border; India promises "non-lethal" measures, but incidents continue.
Illegal Migration	India alleges <b>illegal migration</b> from Bangladesh, especially to Assam and West Bengal.

**Rise of Islamist Politics** Anti-India rhetoric occasionally resurfaces from opposition parties or radical groups.

**Trade Imbalance** Bangladesh has a **trade deficit** with India and demands more access for its goods.

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## VI. Multilateral and Regional Cooperation

- Both countries work together in:
  - **SAARC** (though limited due to India–Pakistan deadlock).
  - **BIMSTEC** – Focus on Bay of Bengal connectivity.
  - **BBIN (Bhutan–Bangladesh–India–Nepal) Motor Vehicle Agreement** – for regional transport.
  - **BCIM corridor** (with China and Myanmar) – slow progress.

---

## VII. Recent Developments (2023–2025)

- PM **Sheikh Hasina's** visits to India and vice versa reaffirmed strategic ties.
- Focus areas:
  - **Climate resilience and disaster management**
  - **Blue economy in the Bay of Bengal**
  - **Defense training and joint production**
- India actively supports Bangladesh's **graduation from LDC (Least Developed Country) status**.

---

## VIII. Conclusion

India–Bangladesh relations have evolved from **foundational solidarity (1971)** to **strategic partnership (present day)**. Though occasional tensions arise, the current trajectory is marked by:

- Mutual respect
- Pragmatic cooperation
- Shared commitment to regional stability

India sees Bangladesh not only as a **trusted neighbour**, but also as a **gateway to Southeast Asia**, and a **model for regional diplomacy**.

History of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation)

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## I. Introduction

- **Full Form:** *South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation*
- **Founded:** 8 December 1985
- **Headquarters:** Kathmandu, Nepal
- **Founding Members:** India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives
- **Afghanistan** joined as the **8th member in 2007**

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## II. Background and Origin

### 1. Conceptualisation

- The idea of a regional forum was first proposed by **President Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh** in the late 1970s.

- South Asia had **low regional integration**, despite cultural and historical connections.
- Rising global examples like **ASEAN and the EU** inspired South Asia to follow suit.

## 2. Initial Skepticism

- India was initially cautious, fearing it might be ganged up on by smaller neighbours.
- Pakistan feared India's dominance in the forum.
- Eventually, consensus emerged around **non-political cooperation** (e.g., poverty, education, disaster relief).

## 3. First SAARC Summit

- **Held in Dhaka, 1985.**
- Charter signed by the seven founding members.
- SAARC aimed to **promote peace, development, mutual understanding, and regional cooperation.**

---

## III. Objectives of SAARC

As per the **SAARC Charter**, its primary goals are to:

- Promote **welfare of South Asians** and improve **quality of life**
- Accelerate **economic growth, social progress, and cultural development**
- Strengthen **collective self-reliance** among South Asian countries
- Promote **active collaboration and mutual assistance**
- Ensure **peace and stability** in the region through cooperation

---

## IV. Institutional Framework

- **Summit:** Held every 2 years (heads of state/government).
- **Council of Ministers:** Foreign Ministers meet to formulate policies.
- **Standing Committee:** Foreign Secretaries oversee implementation.
- **SAARC Secretariat:** Coordinates day-to-day activities (based in Kathmandu).

---

## V. Key Areas of Cooperation

### **Economic:**

- **SAFTA (2006):** South Asian Free Trade Area — aimed to reduce tariffs and promote trade.
- Regional economic integration remains a goal, though progress is slow.

### **Social and Cultural:**

- SAARC University (New Delhi), cultural exchanges, youth festivals.

### **Environment:**

- Collaboration on **climate change, disaster management**, and sustainable development.

### **Health:**

- SAARC TB and HIV/AIDS Centre (Nepal).
- Collaborative public health responses.

### **Agriculture and Rural Development:**

- Food security and poverty alleviation programmes.

---

## VI. Major Achievements

Area	Achievements
Education	<b>South Asian University</b> in New Delhi established in 2010
Trade	SAFTA signed; sensitive lists reduced; some trade promotion
Health	Joint efforts on <b>COVID-19</b> , creation of <b>SAARC COVID Fund (2020)</b>
Culture	SAARC Film Festival, literature awards, people-to-people exchanges
Disaster Relief	SAARC Disaster Management Centre, joint exercises

---

## VII. Challenges and Criticism

### ✗ 1. India–Pakistan Rivalry

- Bilateral conflicts often stall SAARC's functioning.
- Pakistan has **repeatedly blocked connectivity proposals** citing security concerns.
- **2016 SAARC summit in Islamabad was cancelled** after the Uri attack; since then, no summit has been held.

### ✗ 2. Lack of Binding Authority

- Decisions are taken by **consensus**, which gives every country **veto power**.
- No enforcement mechanisms for implementation.

### ✗ 3. Trade is Minimal

- Intra-SAARC trade is just **5%** of total South Asian trade — very low compared to **ASEAN (25%)**.
- Non-tariff barriers, infrastructure issues, and political distrust hinder trade.

### ✗ 4. Asymmetry and Trust Deficit

- Smaller nations fear **Indian hegemony**.
- India is frustrated by **Pakistan's obstructionism**.

---

## IX. Present Status (as of 2025)

- SAARC is **largely dormant** due to:
  - Lack of summits (none since 2014–15)
  - **India–Pakistan tensions**
  - COVID-19 provided temporary momentum but not sustained cooperation

**Most member countries now prefer BIMSTEC or bilateral agreements** with India or China.

---

## X. Conclusion

SAARC began with great promise as a platform for **regional peace and prosperity**, but has been **undermined by geopolitics, especially Indo-Pak rivalry**.

While the **idea of South Asian unity remains relevant**, SAARC needs:

- **Structural reforms**
- **Revival of political will**
- **A focus on non-contentious issues** like health, climate, education

Otherwise, it risks becoming a **symbolic forum** rather than a functional organisation.

---

## India and SAARC: A Strategic Survey

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### I. India's Foundational Role in SAARC

#### 1. Founding Member (1985)

- India is one of the **seven original members** of SAARC, established on **8 December 1985** in Dhaka.
- Though initially cautious, India eventually supported SAARC's formation as a platform for **regional cooperation and peace**.

#### 2. India's Motivation

- Promote **regional stability and development**.
- Build **economic and cultural integration** among South Asian neighbours.
- Manage **bilateral irritants** through multilateral dialogue.

---

### II. India's Contributions to SAARC

#### ✓ 1. Economic Support

- India is the **largest contributor to SAARC's budget**, contributing **more than 50%** to its operational and programme funding.
- **Duty-free access** to Indian markets for **least developed SAARC countries**.

#### ✓ 2. Institutional Development

- Hosts key SAARC institutions:
  - **SAARC Development Fund's Secretariat (in Thimphu) is Indian-backed.**

- **South Asian University (New Delhi):** Flagship academic institution for regional integration.

### ✓ 3. Disaster Management and Health

- India leads in:
  - **SAARC Disaster Management Centre**
  - **COVID-19 SAARC Emergency Fund (2020)** — India pledged **\$10 million**.
  - Medical diplomacy and vaccine outreach during the pandemic.

### ✓ 4. Connectivity Initiatives

- India has proposed and supported:
  - **SAARC Motor Vehicle Agreement**
  - **Energy cooperation frameworks**
  - **SAARC Satellite (2017):** Provided free to other SAARC countries except Pakistan.

---

## III. Political Challenges in India–SAARC Engagement

### ✗ 1. India–Pakistan Rivalry

- SAARC's consensus-based decision-making means **Pakistan often blocks Indian proposals**, especially those related to connectivity and trade.
- **2016 SAARC Summit in Islamabad was cancelled** after the **Uri terror attack** — India pulled out and other countries followed suit.
- Since then, **no full summit has been held**, paralysing the organisation.

### ✗ 2. Bilateralism over Multilateralism

- India finds **greater success in bilateral frameworks** (e.g., with Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan).

- India often faces **diplomatic balancing** as smaller neighbours express **fears of Indian dominance**.

---

## IV. Shift in India's Regional Focus

### ► From SAARC to BIMSTEC and BBIN

- Frustrated by SAARC's dysfunction (mainly due to Pakistan), India has shifted focus to:
  - **BIMSTEC** (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation)
  - **BBIN** (Bangladesh–Bhutan–India–Nepal) group for transport and energy cooperation
- These exclude Pakistan and offer **issue-based progress without veto politics**.

### ► Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific Vision

- India's regional diplomacy now includes **ASEAN**, **IORA**, and **QUAD**, expanding beyond South Asia.
- SAARC, in contrast, is seen as **narrow in scope and plagued by internal politics**.

---

## V. India's Vision for SAARC

Despite its shift, India does not reject SAARC. It sees value in:

Area	India's Strategic Outlook
People-to-People Contact	Cultural diplomacy, education, tourism
Non-political Cooperation	Health, disaster relief, environment

**Development Partnerships** Poverty alleviation, women's empowerment

**Counterterrorism** Limited due to lack of consensus, but still important

India has repeatedly stated that “**terror and talks can't go together**”, and until Pakistan addresses **cross-border terrorism**, full SAARC engagement will remain on hold.

---

## VI. Conclusion

India remains **the backbone of SAARC**, providing financial, political, and strategic leadership. However, due to **Pakistan's obstructive stance** and **structural weaknesses in SAARC**, India has pragmatically shifted its focus to **smaller regional groupings**.

### **SAARC's revival depends on:**

- Political will, especially **India–Pakistan thaw**
- Focusing on **non-controversial sectors**
- Reforms in decision-making (e.g., majority-based voting)

Until then, India's “**Neighbourhood First Policy**” will continue through **BIMSTEC, BBIN, and bilateral diplomacy** rather than through SAARC.

---

## ASEAN - Association of Southeast Asian Nations

### I. Introduction

- **Full Form:** *Association of Southeast Asian Nations*
- **Established:** **8 August 1967**
- **Founding Members:**
  - **Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand**
- **Headquarters:** **Jakarta, Indonesia**
- **Official Motto:** *"One Vision, One Identity, One Community"*

---

### II. Historical Background

#### 1. Geopolitical Context of the 1960s

- The Cold War had spread to Southeast Asia — **Vietnam War, Communist insurgencies, and regional instability.**
- Newly independent nations sought **regional stability and cooperation.**
- There was a need to counter both **external intervention** (e.g., **US, USSR, China**) and **internal threats** (separatism, coups, ideological conflicts).

#### 2. Formation of ASEAN (1967)

- **Bangkok Declaration (8 August 1967)** signed by five founding members.
- Aimed at promoting:
  - **Regional peace and stability**
  - **Economic growth**
  - **Social and cultural development**

- ASEAN was **not** a military alliance — it was a **non-aligned, cooperative grouping**.

---

### III. Expansion of Membership

Year	Country Added
------	---------------

1984	<b>Brunei Darussalam</b>
------	--------------------------

1995	<b>Vietnam</b>
------	----------------

1997	<b>Laos and Myanmar</b>
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1999	<b>Cambodia</b>
------	-----------------

→ Total Members Today: **10**

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### IV. Key Milestones in ASEAN's History

- ◆ **1976 – First ASEAN Summit**

- Held in **Bali, Indonesia**.
- Adopted the **Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC)** — commitment to **non-interference, peaceful settlement of disputes, and regional unity**.

- ◆ **1992 – ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA)**

- Goal: Reduce **intra-ASEAN tariffs** and boost regional trade.
- Created **Common Effective Preferential Tariff (CEPT)** scheme.

- ◆ **1997 – ASEAN Plus Three (APT)**

- Dialogue partners added: **China, Japan, South Korea**.
- Aimed at broader East Asian integration, especially after the **Asian Financial Crisis (1997)**.

- ◆ **2007 – ASEAN Charter**

- Made ASEAN a **rules-based organisation with legal status**.
- Outlined commitments to **democracy, human rights, and rule of law**.

◆ **2015 – ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)**

- Formalised the idea of a **single market and production base**.
- Focused on **trade, investment, services, and skilled labour mobility**.

---

## V. ASEAN's Organisational Structure

- **ASEAN Summit**: Heads of state/government (annual).
- **ASEAN Ministerial Meetings**: Sector-specific (e.g., defence, trade, environment).
- **ASEAN Secretariat**: Based in **Jakarta**, coordinates activities.
- **ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)**: Security dialogue platform including India, US, China, Russia, etc.

---

## VI. Key Areas of Cooperation

### ✓ 1. Political and Security

- **Non-aggression principle**, confidence-building measures.
- Maritime security, counterterrorism, cybercrime coordination.

### ✓ 2. Economic Integration

- **AFTA, RCEP** (ASEAN-led mega trade deal with Asia-Pacific partners).
- **Intra-ASEAN trade** accounts for over 25% of regional trade.

### ✓ 3. Socio-cultural and Environmental

- Education, cultural exchange, disaster relief, health (COVID-19 coordination), climate initiatives.

---

## VII. ASEAN and India

- India became a **Sectoral Partner in 1992, Full Dialogue Partner in 1996, and Strategic Partner in 2012.**
- Regular **ASEAN–India Summits, FTA in Goods (2010) and Services (2015).**
- **Act East Policy** is India's core policy to enhance ties with ASEAN.

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## VIII. Challenges Facing ASEAN

Challenge	Description
<b>Consensus-based model</b>	Slows decision-making; any one country can block action.
<b>South China Sea Dispute</b>	ASEAN lacks a unified stance due to China's economic influence.
<b>Myanmar Crisis (2021–Present)</b>	Military coup and human rights issues have created internal divisions.
<b>Economic disparities</b>	Gap between richer members (Singapore, Malaysia) and poorer ones (Laos, Myanmar).

---

## IX. Present Status (as of 2025)

- ASEAN remains **one of the world's most successful regional organisations** in the Global South.
- Balances relations with **China, USA, India, EU, and Japan.**
- Central to **Indo-Pacific strategy** — ASEAN's centrality is recognised by all major powers.
- Continuing efforts to finalise:

- **ASEAN Digital Economy Framework**
- **Greater labour and financial integration**

---

## X. Conclusion

ASEAN has evolved from a modest five-member grouping in 1967 to a **10-member economic and political community**, offering a unique model of **regional cooperation without supranationalism**.

Its success lies in:

- **Non-interference**,
- **Gradual integration**, and
- **Diplomatic consensus**.

Despite internal and external challenges, ASEAN continues to be a **pillar of stability, dialogue, and development in Southeast Asia**, with growing relevance in **global geopolitics**.

## India-ASEAN Relations: A Comprehensive Survey

---

## I. Introduction

- **ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)**: A regional grouping of 10 Southeast Asian countries.
- **India** shares deep **historical, cultural, economic, and strategic ties** with Southeast Asia.
- Over the past three decades, the relationship has evolved into a **multi-dimensional strategic partnership**, centred on **mutual growth, connectivity, and stability in the Indo-Pacific**.

---

## II. Historical and Civilisational Ties

- **Ancient cultural exchanges:** Indian religions (Hinduism, Buddhism), scripts, art, and architecture spread to Southeast Asia (e.g., Angkor Wat in Cambodia, Borobudur in Indonesia).
- **Chola naval expeditions**, trade routes, and maritime connectivity linked Indian ports with **Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Myanmar** for centuries.
- Shared **colonial experiences** and post-colonial aspirations further connect India and ASEAN nations.

---

## III. Evolution of India–ASEAN Engagement

Year	Milestone	Description
1992	Sectoral Partner Dialogue	India's formal entry into ASEAN-led processes begins.
1996	Full Partner Dialogue	Regular political engagement, summits, and ministerial meetings start.
2002	Summit-level Partnership	Annual ASEAN–India Summits launched.
2012	Strategic Partnership	On the 20th anniversary of relations.
2014 onwards	Act East Policy	Greater focus on connectivity, commerce, and strategic cooperation.

---

## IV. Key Areas of Cooperation

### ✓ 1. Political and Strategic Engagement

- India participates in all major ASEAN-led forums:
  - **East Asia Summit (EAS)**
  - **ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)**
  - **ADMM+ (ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus)**

- Shared concerns about **Indo-Pacific security, freedom of navigation, and terrorism.**
- India supports **ASEAN Centrality** in regional architecture.

## 2. Economic and Trade Relations

- **ASEAN is India's 4th largest trading partner.**
- **India–ASEAN Free Trade Agreement:**
  - **FTA in Goods (2010)**
  - **FTA in Services and Investment (2015)**
- Bilateral trade: **Over \$130 billion in 2023.**
- Focus on **supply chain resilience, digital economy, and agri-trade.**

## 3. Connectivity and Infrastructure

- **India–Myanmar–Thailand Trilateral Highway** (being extended to Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam).
- **Kaladan Multi-modal Transit Project** (linking Kolkata to Sittwe Port in Myanmar).
- Maritime connectivity and **air links** under ASEAN–India Connectivity Master Plan.

## 4. Socio-Cultural and Educational Cooperation

- **ASEAN–India Youth Summit**, cultural festivals, scholarships, and exchange programmes.
- **Nalanda University** as a symbol of shared heritage.
- **Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)** promotes Indian culture in ASEAN nations.

## 5. Science, Technology, and Environment

- Joint initiatives on **space, renewable energy, agriculture, and disaster management.**

- India established the **ASEAN–India Green Fund and Science & Technology Fund**.
- Cooperation in **blue economy and climate action** is increasing.

---

## V. Key Challenges in the Relationship

Issue	Description
<b>Trade Imbalance</b>	ASEAN enjoys a trade surplus; Indian exporters seek better market access.
<b>Connectivity Gaps</b>	Projects like the <b>Trilateral Highway</b> face delays (land acquisition, instability in Myanmar).
<b>Geopolitical Pressures</b>	Rising influence of <b>China</b> in ASEAN; balancing India's strategic engagement.
<b>ASEAN Unity</b>	Internal differences within ASEAN (e.g., over South China Sea) limit collective decision-making.

---

## VI. India's "Act East Policy" and ASEAN's Role

- Launched in **2014** (upgraded from "Look East Policy").
- Focus areas:
  - **Connectivity** (land, sea, air, digital)
  - **Commerce and investment**
  - **Culture and diaspora**
  - **Cooperation in Indo-Pacific region**
- ASEAN is central to India's vision of a "**free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific**".

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## VII. Recent Developments (2022–2025)

- **30th Anniversary (2022):** Celebrated as **ASEAN–India Friendship Year**.
- Establishment of **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**.
- Expanded focus on:
  - **Supply chain diversification**
  - **Digital public infrastructure**
  - **Health cooperation post-COVID-19**
- India participating in **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** negotiations earlier, but **opted out in 2019** due to trade concerns.

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## VIII. Future Prospects

### Potential Areas of Growth:

- **Deeper defence and maritime cooperation** (joint exercises, naval visits).
- **Digital cooperation** (fintech, AI, cyber security).
- **Tourism, education, and skill development**.
- Greater integration of **India's Northeast with ASEAN economies**.

---

## IX. Conclusion

India–ASEAN relations represent a **civilisational bond renewed in the 21st century**. The partnership has matured into a **comprehensive strategic engagement** encompassing **trade, culture, connectivity, and security**.

For India, ASEAN is:

- **A gateway to East Asia**,
- **A balancer in Indo-Pacific geopolitics**, and

- A partner in inclusive regional development.

## United Nations

# History of the United Nations (UN)

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## I. Background and Origins

### 1. League of Nations (1919–1946): The Failed Precursor

- Formed after **World War I** as part of the **Treaty of Versailles** (1919).
- Aim: Prevent future wars through **collective security and diplomacy**.
- **Weaknesses:**
  - The USA never joined.
  - No enforcement power.
  - Failed to prevent aggression by Italy, Germany, and Japan.
- **Collapsed during World War II**, exposing the need for a stronger global body.

---

## II. Formation of the United Nations

### 1. Wartime Planning

- **1941 Atlantic Charter**: FDR (USA) and Churchill (UK) envisioned a post-war peace system.
- **1942 Declaration by United Nations**: 26 Allied nations pledged to fight Axis powers and uphold human rights.
- Subsequent conferences shaped the structure:
  - **Moscow Conference (1943)**

- **Tehran Conference (1943)**
- **Dumbarton Oaks Conference (1944)**
- **Yalta Conference (1945)** — agreed on **veto power** for five permanent members.

## 2. San Francisco Conference (April–June 1945)

- Representatives from **50 countries** drafted the **UN Charter**.
- Charter signed on **26 June 1945**.
- **United Nations officially came into existence on 24 October 1945** (now celebrated as **UN Day**).

---

## III. Objectives of the UN (as per Article 1 of the UN Charter)

1. Maintain **international peace and security**.
2. Develop **friendly relations** among nations.
3. Promote **human rights** and **fundamental freedoms**.
4. Encourage **economic, social, and cultural development**.
5. Serve as a **centre for harmonising international actions**.

---

## IV. Principal Organs of the UN

Organ	Function
<b>1. General Assembly (UNGA)</b>	All 193 member states; deliberative body; each has one vote.
<b>2. Security Council (UNSC)</b>	15 members (5 permanent with veto + 10 elected); responsible for peace and security.

<b>3. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)</b>	Coordinates socio-economic work of the UN.
<b>4. International Court of Justice (ICJ)</b>	Judicial body; settles disputes between states.
<b>5. Secretariat</b>	Headed by the <b>UN Secretary-General</b> ; administrative arm.
<b>6. Trusteeship Council</b>	Inactive since 1994; oversaw decolonisation and trust territories.

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## V. Permanent Members of the UNSC (P5)

- **United States**
- **United Kingdom**
- **France**
- **Russia** (successor of USSR)
- **China**

Each has **veto power**, which often blocks Security Council action.

---

## VI. Major Milestones and Achievements

Period	Key Events and Contributions
1940s–50	<b>Decolonisation</b> : Supported independence movements in Asia and Africa.
1960s	<b>UN Peacekeeping</b> operations expanded; Congo Crisis, Cyprus.
1970s	Promoted <b>New International Economic Order (NIEO)</b> .
1980s	Focus on <b>apartheid in South Africa</b> , environmental concerns.
1990s	Role in post-Cold War world: Gulf War (1991), Rwanda (failure), Yugoslavia.
2000s	<b>Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)</b> launched (2000).
2015	Adopted <b>Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b> (17 goals for 2030).

**2020s**      Role in **COVID-19 pandemic response, climate change, and global vaccine equity.**

---

## VII. UN and India

- **Founding member** of the UN.
- **Large contributor to peacekeeping forces.**
- India has served multiple terms as a **non-permanent member of the UNSC**.
- India strongly advocates **reform of the UNSC**, demanding:
  - Expansion of membership.
  - Inclusion of **India as a permanent member**.

---

## VIII. UN Peacekeeping Missions

- Launched in **1948** (first in Palestine).
- India is among the **top troop contributors**.
- Peacekeeping in **Congo, Lebanon, Sudan, South Sudan, Cyprus**, etc.
- Peacekeepers wear **blue helmets**; must be neutral and lightly armed.

---

## IX. UN Specialised Agencies and Programmes

Agency	Function
WHO	Global health (COVID-19, polio, disease surveillance)
UNESCO	Education, science, culture, world heritage sites
UNICEF	Children's welfare, health, education
UNDP	Development and poverty reduction
WTO (observer status)	Trade cooperation

## X. Criticisms and Limitations

### ✗ 1. UNSC Structure

- **Veto power leads to deadlock** (e.g., Syria, Ukraine).
- Representation is outdated — excludes major powers like **India, Brazil, Japan**.

### ✗ 2. Peacekeeping Failures

- **Rwanda genocide (1994)** and **Srebrenica massacre (1995)** highlight UN's limits.

### ✗ 3. Politicisation and Bureaucracy

- UN often accused of being **slow, inefficient, and dominated by powerful states**.

### ✗ 4. Implementation Gaps

- Many UN resolutions are **non-binding** or lack enforcement.

---

## XI. The UN in the 21st Century (2025 and Beyond)

- **Reform and revitalisation** remain key goals.
- Focus areas:
  - **Climate action**
  - **Gender equality**
  - **Digital governance and AI**
  - **Pandemic preparedness**
  - **Peacebuilding in fragile states**

- Proposals to make the **UNSC more democratic and representative** continue.

---

## Conclusion

The **United Nations** is the most important international organisation ever created. Despite its **limitations**, it remains central to:

- **Global peacekeeping**
- **Humanitarian response**
- **Sustainable development**
- **Multilateral diplomacy**

As the world becomes more **multipolar**, the UN must **adapt to remain relevant**, with greater participation from the **Global South**, including India.

## India and the United Nations: A Comprehensive Overview

---

### I. Historical Background

#### 1. Founding Member of the UN

- India (then under British rule) was among the **original signatories** of the **UN Charter in 1945**, even before gaining independence in 1947.
- **Sir Arcot Ramasamy Mudaliar** represented India at the **San Francisco Conference (1945)**.

#### 2. Early Contributions

- India supported **decolonisation**, **racial equality**, and **disarmament** in the General Assembly.
- Strong voice for **Africa, Asia, and the Global South** in early decades of the UN.

---

## II. India's Role in UN Peacekeeping

### ✓ 1. Major Contributor to UN Peacekeeping Forces

- India is **one of the largest troop contributors** to UN Peacekeeping Missions.
- Over **250,000 Indian personnel** have served in **49 missions**.

### ✓ 2. Key Missions

- Congo (ONUC), Korea, Gaza, Cambodia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Lebanon, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo.
- **Indian women's police unit in Liberia (2007)** was the first of its kind.

### ✓ 3. Recognition

- Several Indian peacekeepers have received **UN Gallantry Awards** posthumously.
- India's peacekeeping is widely respected for professionalism and neutrality.

---

## III. India's Stand on Key UN Issues

### ◆ 1. UNSC Reform

- India advocates for reform of the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**, which still reflects the **power structure of 1945**.
- India demands:
  - **Permanent membership with veto or equal status.**
  - Greater representation for the **Global South** (e.g., Africa, Latin America).

### ◆ 2. Support for Multilateralism

- India strongly supports a **multilateral, rules-based international order**.
- Stands for **sovereignty, non-interference, and peaceful dispute resolution**.

◆ **3. Disarmament and Non-proliferation**

- India supports **global nuclear disarmament**, but is **not a signatory to the NPT** (Non-Proliferation Treaty), calling it discriminatory.
- Supports a **time-bound, universal disarmament plan**.

◆ **4. Climate Change**

- India is a key supporter of **UNFCCC** and **Paris Agreement**.
- Played a leadership role in launching the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**.

◆ **5. Sustainable Development**

- Actively engaged in the implementation of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- India has presented **voluntary national reviews (VNRs)** to the UN on its SDG progress.

---

## IV. India's Candidature for Permanent Membership in UNSC

### India's Case for Permanent Seat

- **Largest democracy**, 1.4+ billion population.
- **Top troop contributor** to UN peacekeeping.
- **Growing global economic and strategic influence**.
- **Consistent supporter** of UN and multilateralism.

### Supporters of India's Bid

- **G4 Group**: India, Japan, Germany, Brazil — all demand UNSC reform.
- India has strong support from **Russia, France, UK, and African Union**.

- **China and USA** remain cautious or non-committal.

---

## V. India's Engagement with UN Agencies and Initiatives

Agency / Initiative	India's Role
<b>UNESCO</b>	Active in world heritage preservation and education.
<b>WHO</b>	Major contributor to global vaccination campaigns and health diplomacy.
<b>UNDP</b>	Collaborates with India on poverty, digital inclusion, governance.
<b>UN Women</b>	Promotes gender equality and women's empowerment in South Asia.
<b>UNHRC</b>	India has served multiple terms; advocates balanced approach to human rights.

---

## VI. Recent Developments (2020–2025)

### India's Non-permanent Membership (2021–2022)

- India served its **8th term** on the UNSC.
- Focused on:
  - Counter-terrorism
  - Maritime security
  - Reformed multilateralism

- Peacebuilding and technology for peace

### Counter-terrorism Initiatives

- India chaired **UN Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee**.
- Strongly advocated for a **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)**, pending since the 1990s.

### UN Day and UN@75

- India participated in UN@75 events, reaffirming support for a **more inclusive, effective UN**.
- India has reiterated that the **UN must reform or risk irrelevance**.

---

## VII. Criticism and Challenges

Area	Concern
<b>UNSC Veto Power</b>	India's exclusion from P5 despite global clout.
<b>Unequal Representation</b>	Overrepresentation of West, underrepresentation of Global South.
<b>Politicisation</b>	UN agencies sometimes criticised for <b>Western bias</b> or <b>selective human rights scrutiny</b> .
<b>Delayed Reforms</b>	Despite global support, <b>UNSC reforms are stalled</b> due to lack of consensus.

---

## VIII. Conclusion

India's relationship with the United Nations reflects its **commitment to a peaceful, rules-based international order** and a **multilateral approach to global challenges**.

India now seeks:

- A **larger role in decision-making**, especially in the Security Council.
- More focus on **Global South priorities** like poverty, climate justice, terrorism, and equitable growth.

As the world moves toward **multipolarity**, India's voice at the UN becomes **increasingly influential**.