

BPSC PATHSHALA

BPSC Mains General Studies – Current Affairs & IR

General Studies Paper-I

Section II: Current Affairs & IR

Topic: India Current Affairs

Structured Notes for **BPSC Mains Examination**

Prepared for serious aspirants focusing on **concept clarity, cultural understanding and answer writing preparation.**

These notes cover important topics of **India Current Affairs** relevant for **BPSC Mains GS Paper-I**

Prepared & Published By

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LESSON 1: INDIA CURRENT AFFAIRS

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1. Governance, Constitution & Electoral Reforms

1.1 Waqf (Amendment) Act

1. Introduction

The **Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025** amends the **Waqf Act, 1995** with the objective of improving the **administration, transparency, accountability, and efficient management of Waqf properties** in India. The Act introduces reforms relating to the **creation, registration, survey, governance, and dispute resolution** of Waqf properties, while promoting the use of digital records and strengthening institutional oversight. The government states that the amendments aim to address long-standing issues such as mismanagement, encroachment, and legal disputes over Waqf properties, whereas critics have raised concerns regarding religious autonomy and constitutional rights.

2. Why in News?

The **Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025** remained one of the most debated legislations in India due to its passage in Parliament, legal challenges before the Supreme Court, and the ongoing implementation of its provisions.

Recent Developments

- **8 August 2024:** The **Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024** was introduced in the Lok Sabha to amend the Waqf Act, 1995.
- **January 2025:** The Bill was examined by the **Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC)**, which recommended several changes before its passage.
- **3–4 April 2025:** Parliament passed the Bill after extensive debate in both Houses.
- **5 April 2025:** The Bill received the **President's assent** and became the **Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025**.
- **April 2025 onwards:** Several petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the Act were filed before the **Supreme Court**, mainly alleging violation of religious freedom and minority rights. The Court clubbed the petitions and began hearing the matter while granting limited interim protection on certain provisions.
- **2026:** The implementation process continued across states, including verification of Waqf properties and reconstitution of Waqf Boards under the amended law.

3. Definition of Waqf

Waqf is a permanent dedication of a movable or immovable property by a person professing Islam for **religious, pious, or charitable purposes** recognised under Islamic law. Once a property is declared as Waqf, it becomes **inalienable**, meaning it cannot ordinarily be sold, gifted, inherited, or transferred, and its income must be used only for the purpose for which it was created. Examples include mosques, graveyards, dargahs, schools, hospitals, orphanages, and other charitable institutions.

The administration of Waqf properties in India is governed by the **Waqf Act, 1995**, through the **Central Waqf Council** and **State Waqf Boards**. Waqf can be created mainly through **Waqf by declaration** and **Waqf-alal-aulad** (family Waqf for descendants with an ultimate

charitable purpose). The **Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025** has introduced significant changes in the creation, registration, and governance of Waqf properties.

4. Evolution of Waqf Laws in India

- **Mussalman Waqf Act, 1923:** Introduced mandatory registration and record-keeping of Waqf properties during British India.
- **Waqf Act, 1954:** Established the **Central Waqf Council** and **State Waqf Boards** for better administration and protection of Waqf properties.
- **Waqf Act, 1995:** Replaced the 1954 Act with a comprehensive legal framework, strengthened Waqf Boards, and created **Waqf Tribunals** for speedy dispute resolution.
- **Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2013:** Expanded the powers of Waqf Boards, strengthened protection against encroachment, and enhanced provisions relating to surveys and management of Waqf properties.
- **Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025:** Introduced reforms to improve transparency, digital governance, accountability, and dispute resolution in the administration of Waqf properties.

5. Need for the Waqf (Amendment) Act

- To **improve transparency and accountability** in the management of Waqf properties through digitisation, better record-keeping, and audits.
- To **address disputes, encroachments, and irregularities** in Waqf properties by strengthening the legal and administrative framework.
- To **streamline the registration, survey, and governance** of Waqf properties and improve the functioning of Waqf Boards.
- To **enhance transparency, inclusiveness, and efficient utilisation** of Waqf assets for religious, charitable, and community welfare purposes in line with constitutional principles.

6. Salient Features of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025

- **Renaming of the Act:** The **Waqf Act, 1995** has been renamed as the **Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency and Development (UMEED) Act, 1995**, reflecting its focus on transparent and efficient management of Waqf properties.
- **Changes in Creation of Waqf:** Only a person **practising Islam for at least five years** and having **lawful ownership** of the property can create a Waqf. The concept of "**Waqf by User**" has been removed prospectively, except for already registered Waqf-by-user properties.
- **Survey and Registration of Waqf Properties:** Survey of Waqf properties will now be carried out under the **District Collector** instead of Survey Commissioners. All Waqf properties must be registered through a **centralised digital portal** with proper documentation and geo-tagged records.
- **Dispute Resolution and Government Land:** If a property is claimed as both **government land and Waqf land**, the **District Collector** will determine its ownership

before it is recorded as Waqf. The unilateral power of Waqf Boards to declare any property as Waqf has been curtailed.

- **Reconstitution of Waqf Bodies:** Provides for **representation of women, non-Muslims, and different Muslim communities** in the Central Waqf Council and State Waqf Boards. Aims to make Waqf institutions more inclusive and accountable.
- **Transparency and Financial Reforms:** Mandatory **digitisation, auditing, and maintenance of accounts**. Encourages online monitoring of Waqf properties to improve transparency and prevent encroachments.

7. Significance of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025

- **Enhances Transparency and Accountability:** Introduces **mandatory digital registration, auditing, and maintenance of Waqf records**, reducing scope for irregularities and improving public accountability.
- **Better Protection of Waqf Properties:** Strengthens mechanisms to identify genuine Waqf properties, curb encroachments, and resolve ownership disputes through a structured legal process.
- **Improves Governance:** Reforms the composition and functioning of the **Central Waqf Council** and **State Waqf Boards**, promoting greater institutional oversight, inclusiveness, and efficiency.
- **Promotes Digital Governance:** Encourages the creation of a **centralised digital database** and geo-tagged records, facilitating better monitoring and transparent management of Waqf assets.
- **Ensures Legal Clarity:** Clarifies procedures relating to the creation, survey, registration, and dispute resolution of Waqf properties, thereby reducing ambiguity and prolonged litigation.

8. Concerns and Criticism of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025

Religious Autonomy

Critics argue that the inclusion of **non-Muslim members** in Waqf institutions and increased government oversight may dilute the autonomy of religious institutions protected under **Articles 25 and 26** of the Constitution.

Increased Executive Control

The Act empowers the **District Collector** to determine whether disputed land is government property before it is notified as Waqf. Opponents contend that this shifts authority from Waqf Boards to the executive, raising concerns about excessive governmental interference.

Impact on Existing Waqf Properties

The prospective abolition of **'Waqf by User'** and changes in ownership verification may affect properties lacking formal documentation, leading to fears of prolonged litigation and uncertainty over traditional Waqf assets.

Constitutional Validity

Several political parties, religious organisations and individuals have challenged the Act before the **Supreme Court**, alleging that certain provisions violate minority rights, equality, and freedom of religion guaranteed under the Constitution.

Administrative Challenges

Experts have pointed out that successful implementation will require accurate digitisation of records, coordination between revenue authorities and Waqf Boards, and effective dispute resolution mechanisms to avoid administrative delays.

9. Government's Stand

The Central Government has stated that the **Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025** is intended to make the administration of Waqf properties **more transparent, accountable, inclusive, and efficient**. According to the government, the amendments do not interfere with religious practices but focus on improving the governance and management of Waqf assets through better record-keeping, digitisation, and institutional reforms.

The Government has further argued that the Act seeks to curb encroachments, reduce litigation, protect genuine Waqf properties, and ensure that Waqf assets are utilised effectively for the welfare of the Muslim community. It has also maintained that the reforms are consistent with constitutional principles of transparency, good governance, and public accountability.

10. Supreme Court Proceedings / Current Status

Soon after the **Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025** came into force, several petitions challenging its constitutional validity were filed before the **Supreme Court** by political leaders, religious organisations, and other stakeholders. The petitioners argued that certain provisions violate **Articles 14, 25, 26, and 300A** of the Constitution by affecting religious autonomy, equality, and property rights. The Supreme Court clubbed these petitions for a consolidated hearing.

During the proceedings, the Union Government defended the Act as a governance reform, while assuring the Court that certain contentious provisions would not be implemented until further orders. The Supreme Court has granted interim relief on some provisions while the constitutional challenge remains pending. Thus, the **final validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 is yet to be decided by the Supreme Court**.

11. Way Forward

The effective implementation of the **Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025** requires a balanced approach that ensures **transparency, efficient management of Waqf properties, and protection of constitutional rights**. The government should complete the digitisation and geo-tagging of Waqf properties, strengthen institutional capacity of Waqf Boards, and establish a time-bound mechanism for resolving property disputes.

At the same time, implementation should respect the principles of **natural justice, religious freedom, and federalism**. Constructive dialogue among the government, Waqf institutions, and stakeholders, along with the Supreme Court's final verdict, will be crucial in ensuring that the reforms achieve their objective of better governance while safeguarding minority rights guaranteed under the Constitution.

12. Bihar Perspective

Bihar has a large number of Waqf properties administered by the **Bihar State Sunni Waqf Board** and the **Bihar State Shia Waqf Board** under the Waqf Act, 1995. These properties include mosques, graveyards, dargahs, educational institutions and other charitable assets. The State has witnessed issues relating to encroachment, incomplete records, property disputes and management of Waqf assets.

Following the enactment of the **Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025**, Bihar has initiated the digitisation and online registration of Waqf properties through the **UMEED Portal** to improve transparency and prevent illegal encroachments. The Act has also generated significant political and public debate in Bihar, making it an important issue from the BPSC Mains perspective.

13. BPSC Mains Practice Questions

Q1. *The Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 seeks to improve transparency and accountability in the management of Waqf properties. Critically examine its major provisions and discuss the constitutional concerns associated with the Act.*

Q2. *Discuss the need for the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025. How far do the recent amendments address the challenges in the administration and governance of Waqf properties in India?*

LESSON 2: BIHAR CURRENT AFFAIRS

Topics covered under this Lesson

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- 1.1 Bihar Caste Survey: Recent Developments
- 1.2 Land Survey and Digitisation in Bihar
- 1.3 Bihar Youth Policy and Bihar Youth Commission
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- 5.2 Social Security Pension Enhancement

1. Governance & Administrative Reforms

1.1 Bihar Caste Survey: Recent Developments

1. Introduction

The **Bihar Caste Survey** is the first comprehensive **State-sponsored caste-based socio-economic survey** conducted after Independence. It was carried out in **two phases during 2023**, and the survey findings were released on **2 October 2023**. Unlike a conventional population census, the survey collected not only caste-wise population data but also information on income, education, occupation, housing conditions, and other socio-economic indicators to facilitate evidence-based policymaking and targeted welfare interventions.

The survey has acquired national significance because its findings have influenced **reservation policy in Bihar**, triggered important constitutional litigation, and revived the national debate on **caste enumeration in the forthcoming Census**. Consequently, the focus has shifted from mere data collection to its implications for social justice, inclusive development, and evidence-based governance.

2. Major Findings of the Bihar Caste Survey

- **Total Population:** Bihar's population was estimated at **13.07 crore (130.7 million)** through the survey.
- **Caste-wise Population Composition:**
 - **Extremely Backward Classes (EBC): 36.01%**
 - **Other Backward Classes (OBC): 27.12%**
 - **Scheduled Castes (SC): 19.65%**
 - **Scheduled Tribes (ST): 1.68%**
 - **Forward (General) Castes: 15.52%**
- **Dominance of Backward Communities:** The combined share of **OBCs and EBCs is 63.13%**, making them the largest social group in Bihar.
- **Comprehensive Socio-economic Database:** Besides caste enumeration, the survey collected information on family income, educational attainment, occupation, housing conditions, land ownership, and other socio-economic indicators to facilitate evidence-based policymaking.
- **Income Profile:** The survey revealed significant economic disparities. Around **34.13% of families** earned **less than ₹6,000 per month**, while only **3.9% of households** reported a monthly income exceeding **₹50,000**.

3. Recent Developments

Revision of Reservation Policy

- Based on the findings of the Bihar Caste Survey, the **Bihar Legislature** passed the **Bihar Reservation (Amendment) Act, 2023**, increasing reservation for **SCs, STs,**

OBCs, and EBCs from 50% to 65% in public employment and educational institutions.

- With the existing **10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)** under the **103rd Constitutional Amendment**, the total reservation in Bihar increased to **75%**.

Judicial Developments

- On **20 June 2024**, the **Patna High Court** struck down the legislation enhancing reservation from **50% to 65%**, holding that it violated constitutional principles governing reservation.
- The **Bihar Government** challenged the High Court judgment before the **Supreme Court**, where the matter is currently pending. The litigation has raised important questions regarding the extent of reservation, the use of caste-survey data in policymaking, and the constitutional validity of breaching the 50% ceiling.

Influence on National Policy

- The Bihar Caste Survey revitalised the national debate on caste-based data and evidence-driven social justice policies.
- On **30 April 2025**, the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA) approved the inclusion of caste enumeration in the forthcoming national Census, marking a significant shift in the Union Government's approach.
- Bihar's experience is now widely regarded as a reference point for discussions on reservation policy, targeted welfare schemes, and inclusive development across India.

4. Significance and Challenges

The **Bihar Caste Survey** has strengthened **evidence-based policymaking** by providing detailed caste-wise and socio-economic data for the formulation of targeted welfare schemes. It enables the Government to identify disadvantaged communities more accurately, improve the targeting of public expenditure, and design policies for education, employment, healthcare, housing, and social welfare.

The survey has also reinforced the constitutional objectives of **social justice, inclusive development, and substantive equality**, while encouraging data-driven governance. Further, Bihar's initiative has influenced the national discourse on caste enumeration and contributed to the Union Government's decision to include **caste enumeration in the forthcoming Census**, highlighting its significance beyond the state.

At the same time, the survey has generated important legal, constitutional, and administrative challenges. The enhancement of reservation based on the survey findings was struck down by the **Patna High Court**, and the matter is presently pending before the **Supreme Court**, raising questions regarding the constitutional limits of reservation and the use of caste data in public policy.

Concerns have also been expressed regarding privacy of personal data, political polarisation, data accuracy, and the periodic updating of socio-economic information. Going

forward, the effectiveness of the survey will depend not merely on data collection but on its transparent, constitutionally compliant, and equitable utilisation for achieving inclusive development and reducing socio-economic disparities.

5. Way Forward

- **Use the survey as a policy tool rather than merely a demographic exercise** by integrating caste-wise socio-economic data into the planning and implementation of welfare schemes, education, healthcare, employment, and poverty alleviation programmes. This will help ensure that public resources reach the most disadvantaged sections of society.
- **Ensure constitutional and legal compliance** while framing reservation and affirmative action policies. Future policy decisions based on the survey should be consistent with constitutional principles and the final verdict of the Supreme Court to avoid prolonged legal uncertainty.
- **Strengthen data governance** by periodically updating socio-economic databases, ensuring transparency in the use of survey findings, and protecting the privacy and confidentiality of citizens' personal information. This will improve the credibility and long-term utility of the survey.
- **Promote evidence-based and inclusive governance** by using the survey findings to reduce regional and social disparities, improve targeting of development programmes, and strengthen social justice while maintaining social harmony and administrative efficiency.

BPSC Mains Practice Question

Q1. The Bihar Caste Survey has emerged as an important instrument for evidence-based policymaking and social justice. Critically examine the major findings of the survey and analyse its impact on reservation policy, governance, and the national debate on caste enumeration.

LESSON 3: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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- 1.2 India–Russia Relations
- 1.3 India–China Relations
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3. India's Relations with West Asia

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4. India's Regional and Strategic Partnerships

- 4.1 India–ASEAN Relations
- 4.2 India–Africa Relations
- 4.3 India–Central Asia Relations

1. India's Relations with Major Powers

1.1 India–USA Relations

1. Introduction

India and the United States share one of the most consequential bilateral relationships of the 21st century. From a period of mutual distrust during the Cold War, the relationship has evolved into a **Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership**, driven by shared democratic values, converging strategic interests, expanding economic ties, and cooperation in emerging technologies.

The United States is India's **largest trading partner**, a major source of foreign investment and advanced technology, an important defence partner, and home to the **largest Indian diaspora** in the world. The two countries also work closely in areas such as defence, maritime security, counter-terrorism, clean energy, space exploration, artificial intelligence, semiconductors, quantum technologies, and critical minerals. Bilateral cooperation has further expanded through frameworks such as the **Quad**, the **Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET)**, the **2+2 Ministerial Dialogue**, and the **India–U.S. COMPACT** (Catalyzing Opportunities for Military Partnership, Accelerated Commerce & Technology) initiative launched in 2025.

At the same time, differences persist on issues such as trade and tariffs, immigration and visa policies, technology regulations, climate commitments, India's defence ties with Russia, and approaches to certain geopolitical crises. Despite these challenges, both countries have demonstrated the ability to manage differences while expanding cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

For India, the United States is a key partner in achieving the objectives of **Viksit Bharat 2047**, strengthening national security, enhancing technological self-reliance, securing resilient global supply chains, and promoting a free, open, inclusive, and rules-based Indo-Pacific region. Consequently, India–USA relations have become one of the most important pillars of India's contemporary foreign policy.

2. Why in News?

- **India and the United States are close to finalising a Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)** aimed at expanding market access, reducing tariffs, strengthening supply chains, and boosting bilateral trade. Negotiations have intensified during 2026.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump reviewed progress under the India–U.S. COMPACT initiative** during their meeting on the sidelines of the G7 Summit (June 2026). Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation in defence, strategic technologies, energy, and trade.
- **Both countries agreed on a framework for an Interim Trade Agreement**, which serves as an important step towards the broader Bilateral Trade Agreement. The framework seeks to promote reciprocal market access, resilient supply chains, investment, and digital trade.

- **Trade negotiations remain active despite tariff-related issues.** India and the U.S. are simultaneously negotiating the BTA while engaging on U.S. Section 301 tariff investigations affecting Indian exports.
- **India and the U.S. continue to deepen strategic cooperation through the Quad,** focusing on a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific, maritime security, resilient supply chains, disaster response, and critical technologies.
- **Cooperation in Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET/COMPACT)** continues to expand in priority sectors such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), semiconductors, quantum computing, biotechnology, defence innovation, and space technology, making technology one of the fastest-growing pillars of bilateral relations.
- **Critical Minerals have emerged as a new area of strategic partnership,** with both countries working to build secure and diversified supply chains for minerals essential for electric vehicles, clean energy, semiconductors, and advanced manufacturing.
- **Despite growing cooperation, trade and tariff issues remain an important challenge,** with the U.S. proposing additional tariffs under Section 301 investigations while both sides continue negotiations to minimise their impact through the proposed trade agreement.

3. Evolution of India–USA Relations

Period	Major Developments
1947–1962: Early Engagement	• India and the United States established diplomatic relations in 1947 after India's independence. • Relations remained cordial but limited due to India's policy of non-alignment and differing foreign policy priorities. • The U.S. extended economic and food assistance under the PL-480 Programme.
1962–1971: Strategic Convergence	• The 1962 Sino-Indian War brought India and the U.S. closer, with Washington providing military assistance to India. • However, U.S. military support to Pakistan and Cold War politics limited deeper cooperation.
1971–1991: Cold War Mistrust	• Relations deteriorated during the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, when the U.S. supported Pakistan by deploying the USS Enterprise to the Bay of Bengal. • India's 1974 Pokhran-I nuclear test (Smiling Buddha) led to U.S. sanctions and restrictions on nuclear cooperation. • India moved closer to the Soviet Union, while the U.S. strengthened ties with Pakistan.
1991–2000: Beginning of Rapprochement	• India's 1991 economic liberalisation opened new opportunities for trade and investment. • Although the 1998 Pokhran-II nuclear tests triggered U.S. sanctions, the Jaswant Singh–Strobe Talbott dialogues helped rebuild trust and laid the foundation for a new strategic partnership.
2000–2008: Strategic Partnership Takes Shape	• President Bill Clinton's visit to India (2000) marked a turning point in bilateral relations. • The Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) was launched in 2004.

Period	Major Developments
	The landmark India–U.S. Civil Nuclear Agreement (2005) and the NSG Waiver (2008) ended India's nuclear isolation and transformed bilateral relations.
2008–2016: Expanding Strategic Cooperation	- Defence cooperation expanded significantly through defence trade, joint military exercises, and counter-terrorism initiatives. - Bilateral trade and investment grew rapidly. - In 2016, the U.S. designated India as a Major Defense Partner, recognising India's strategic importance.
2016–2022: Defence and Indo-Pacific Partnership	- India and the U.S. signed key foundational defence agreements: — LEMOA (2016) — COMCASA (2018) — BECA (2020). - The Quad was revitalised to promote a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific. - Cooperation deepened in maritime security, logistics, cyber security and defence interoperability.
2023–Present: Technology-Driven Comprehensive Partnership	- The launch of the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) elevated cooperation in AI, semiconductors, quantum computing, biotechnology and defence innovation. - During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's State Visit (2023), major agreements were signed on jet engine technology, semiconductor manufacturing and defence co-production. - In 2025, both countries launched the India–U.S. COMPACT (Catalyzing Opportunities for Military Partnership, Accelerated Commerce & Technology) initiative to deepen cooperation in defence, trade and advanced technologies. - Ongoing negotiations on the Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) and collaboration in critical minerals, clean energy and resilient supply chains indicate that India–U.S. relations have entered a phase of comprehensive strategic cooperation.

- India–USA relations have evolved from **Cold War-era estrangement** to a **Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership**.
- Today, the relationship is driven by **shared strategic interests, technological collaboration, economic integration, defence cooperation, and a common vision for a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific**, while both countries continue to manage differences through sustained dialogue.

4. Areas of Cooperation

Political & Diplomatic Cooperation

- India and the USA share a **Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership**, covering political, economic, defence, technology, and global governance.

- Both countries maintain **regular high-level political engagements** through summit meetings, ministerial visits, and strategic dialogues, strengthening mutual trust.
- The **2+2 Ministerial Dialogue** is the highest institutional mechanism for cooperation in foreign policy and defence.
- Other important bilateral dialogue mechanisms include:
 - Trade Policy Forum (TPF)
 - Commercial Dialogue
 - CEO Forum
 - Defence Policy Group (DPG)
 - Strategic Energy Partnership
 - Homeland Security Dialogue
- The United States supports India's aspiration for permanent membership of a reformed UN Security Council (UNSC).
- Both countries cooperate closely in major multilateral forums such as **G20, Quad, East Asia Summit (EAS), IMF, World Bank, and WHO**.
- India and the USA jointly promote a Free, Open, Inclusive and Rules-Based Indo-Pacific, based on freedom of navigation, respect for international law, and peaceful resolution of disputes.
- Both countries coordinate on regional and global issues including:
 - Counter-terrorism
 - Maritime security
 - Global health
 - Supply chain resilience
 - Disaster management
- The **Indian diaspora in the United States** acts as a strong bridge for political goodwill, public diplomacy, and bilateral cooperation.
- The relationship is guided by shared democratic values, rule of law, respect for sovereignty, and a commitment to a stable international order.

Economic & Trade Cooperation

- **Largest Trading Partner:** The United States is India's **largest trading partner**, with bilateral trade exceeding **US\$190 billion**.
- **Trade Target:** Both countries aim to achieve **US\$500 billion bilateral trade by 2030** through the proposed Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA).
- **Trade Basket:** Major sectors include pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, petroleum products, gems & jewellery, electronics, IT services and agricultural products.
- **Investment:** The U.S. is among the leading sources of **FDI in India**, while Indian companies have invested significantly in the U.S. in IT, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing and hospitality.
- **Supply Chain Resilience:** Both countries are diversifying global supply chains through initiatives like the **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)** and trusted manufacturing partnerships.

- **Semiconductor Cooperation:** Collaboration in semiconductor manufacturing, design, research and talent development under the **India–U.S. Semiconductor Partnership** and **iCET**.
- **Critical Minerals:** Cooperation to develop secure supply chains for lithium, cobalt, nickel, graphite and rare earth elements essential for clean energy and advanced technologies.
- **Digital Economy:** Expanding cooperation in AI, digital public infrastructure, fintech, cybersecurity, e-commerce and emerging technologies.
- **Institutional Mechanisms:** The **Trade Policy Forum (TPF)** and **India–U.S. CEO Forum** facilitate trade, investment and business cooperation.

Defence & Security Cooperation

- **Major Defense Partner:** In **2016**, the U.S. designated India as a **Major Defense Partner**, facilitating access to advanced defence technologies.
- **Foundational Defence Agreements:** Bilateral defence cooperation is strengthened through:
 - **LEMOA (2016)** – Logistics support
 - **COMCASA (2018)** – Secure military communications
 - **BECA (2020)** – Geospatial intelligence
 - **ISA (2023)** – Security of military information
 - **SOSA (2024)** – Supply chain security for defence industries
- **Defence Trade:** The U.S. has emerged as one of India's largest defence suppliers, with defence trade increasing from **near zero in 2008 to over US\$25 billion**.
- **Joint Military Exercises:** Regular bilateral and multilateral exercises include:
 - Yudh Abhyas (Army)
 - Tiger Triumph (Tri-services)
 - Cope India (Air Force)
 - Vajra Prahar (Special Forces)
 - Malabar (Naval Exercise with Quad partners)
- **Defence Technology & Co-production:** Cooperation in jet engine technology (GE-HAL), unmanned systems, artillery, armoured vehicles and defence innovation under **INDUS-X** and the **Defence Industrial Cooperation Roadmap**.
- **Maritime Security:** Enhanced cooperation in the Indo-Pacific through maritime domain awareness, anti-piracy operations, freedom of navigation, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR).
- **Counter-Terrorism:** Close collaboration in intelligence sharing, counter-terrorism operations, cyber security and combating terrorist financing.
- **Indo-Pacific Cooperation:** Both countries work through the **Quad** to promote a **Free, Open, Inclusive and Rules-Based Indo-Pacific**.
- **Emerging Security Cooperation:** Expanding collaboration in cyber security, artificial intelligence, space security, quantum technologies and critical defence supply chains.

Science, Technology & Innovation

- **iCET: The Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET)** is the flagship framework for cooperation in advanced technologies.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Collaboration in AI research, governance, healthcare, agriculture and defence applications.
- **Semiconductors:** Joint efforts in chip manufacturing, design, packaging, research and skilled workforce development.
- **Quantum Technology:** Cooperation in quantum computing, communication and sensing technologies.
- **Biotechnology:** Partnership in healthcare, vaccine development, bio-manufacturing and life sciences.
- **Space Technology:** Collaboration between **ISRO and NASA**, including the **NISAR Earth Observation Mission**.
- **Cyber Security:** Cooperation on cyber resilience, critical infrastructure protection and cybercrime prevention.
- **Telecommunications:** Partnership in **5G/6G technologies** and trusted telecom networks.
- **Innovation & Start-ups:** Collaboration through **INDUS Innovation**, research institutions, universities and start-up ecosystems.
- **Critical Technologies:** Joint initiatives in advanced materials, clean technologies, defence innovation and critical minerals under **iCET**.

Space, Nuclear & Energy Cooperation

- **Space Cooperation:** ISRO–NASA collaboration in satellite technology, Earth observation, space exploration and the **NISAR Mission**.
- **Civil Nuclear Cooperation:** The **India–U.S. Civil Nuclear Agreement (2005)** and **123 Agreement** laid the foundation for peaceful nuclear cooperation.
- **Nuclear Energy:** Cooperation in civil nuclear energy, Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and nuclear safety.
- **Energy Security:** The U.S. is an important supplier of **crude oil and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)** to India.
- **Clean Energy:** Collaboration in renewable energy, solar energy, wind energy, green hydrogen and battery storage.
- **Critical Minerals:** Joint efforts to secure supply chains of lithium, cobalt, nickel and rare earth elements for clean energy transition.
- **Climate & Energy Partnership:** Cooperation under the **Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP)** to promote sustainable and low-carbon development.

Education, Culture & People-to-People Relations

- **Indian Diaspora:** The Indian diaspora in the U.S. (over **5 million**) acts as a strong bridge for economic, political and cultural cooperation.
- **Education:** The U.S. is the preferred destination for Indian students, with collaboration in higher education, research and academic exchanges.
- **Research Collaboration:** Joint research in science, technology, healthcare, agriculture and innovation through universities and research institutions.

- **Cultural Cooperation:** Promotion of Yoga, Ayurveda, Indian languages, cinema, arts and cultural festivals strengthens mutual understanding.
- **Tourism:** Growing tourism and business travel have enhanced people-to-people contacts.
- **Professional Mobility:** Indian professionals contribute significantly to the U.S. economy, particularly in IT, healthcare, finance and research.
- **Institutional Exchanges:** Programmes such as the **Fulbright-Nehru Fellowship** promote academic and cultural exchanges.
- **Soft Power:** Shared democratic values, a vibrant Indian-American community and expanding societal linkages continue to strengthen bilateral relations.

Cooperation on Regional & Global Issues

- **Indo-Pacific:** Both countries work for a **Free, Open, Inclusive and Rules-Based Indo-Pacific**, ensuring maritime security and freedom of navigation.
- **Quad:** Active cooperation through the **Quad (India, USA, Japan and Australia)** on maritime security, critical technologies, supply chains, disaster management and health security.
- **Counter-Terrorism:** Joint efforts to combat terrorism, violent extremism, terror financing and cyber threats.
- **Global Governance:** Cooperation in **G20, United Nations, IMF, World Bank, WTO and WHO** to strengthen global governance and promote reforms.
- **UNSC Reforms:** The United States supports India's aspiration for permanent membership of a reformed United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
- **Climate Change:** Collaboration on clean energy, climate resilience, green technologies and implementation of the Paris Agreement.
- **Global Health:** Partnership in pandemic preparedness, vaccine research, biotechnology and public health initiatives.
- **Supply Chain Resilience:** Joint initiatives to build resilient, trusted and diversified global supply chains for critical goods and technologies.
- **Global South:** Increasing cooperation in promoting sustainable development, food security and capacity building for developing countries.

5. Areas of Concern / Challenges

Strategic & Security Issues

- **India's Defence Ties with Russia:** India continues to procure major defence platforms (such as the **S-400 air defence system**) from Russia, while the U.S. seeks to reduce global dependence on Russian defence equipment under the **CAATSA** framework. This remains a recurring source of strategic friction.
- **CAATSA Sanctions Uncertainty:** Although India has not been sanctioned, the U.S. has **not granted a blanket CAATSA waiver**, creating uncertainty for future India–Russia defence transactions.
- **Different Approaches towards Pakistan:** India views **cross-border terrorism** as its primary security concern, whereas the U.S. has historically balanced its relations with both India and Pakistan due to regional security considerations. Despite growing convergence, differences occasionally persist.
- **Strategic Autonomy vs Alliance System:** India follows a policy of **Strategic Autonomy**, whereas the U.S. often expects greater strategic alignment on global

security issues. India's independent positions on Russia, Iran and West Asia sometimes create policy differences.

- **Indo-Pacific Expectations:** While both support a **Free and Open Indo-Pacific**, India favours an **inclusive Indo-Pacific** and avoids any formal military alliance against China, unlike some U.S. strategic expectations.
- **Defence Technology Restrictions:** Despite significant progress, cooperation is occasionally constrained by **U.S. export control regulations**, technology transfer limitations and licensing requirements for sensitive defence technologies.

Trade & Economic Issues

- **Tariff Disputes:** Both countries continue to differ on tariff levels. The U.S. considers India's average tariff rates to be relatively high, particularly on agricultural and manufactured products, while India seeks greater market access for its exports.
- **Trade Deficit:** The U.S. recorded a **goods trade deficit of US\$45.7 billion with India in 2024**, making trade imbalance a key concern in bilateral negotiations.
- **Market Access Issues:** The U.S. demands greater access for dairy products, agricultural commodities, medical devices and digital services, whereas India seeks easier access for pharmaceuticals, textiles, engineering goods and IT services.
- **Non-Tariff Barriers:** Differences over product standards, certification requirements, import licensing, sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures and regulatory approvals continue to affect bilateral trade.
- **Section 301 Tariffs:** In 2026, the U.S. imposed an **additional 10% duty** on certain Indian imports under Section 301 investigations, although India was placed in the lower tariff category after bilateral engagement.
- **Protectionist Policies:** Changes in U.S. trade policy, including reciprocal tariffs and investigations under Sections **301** and **232**, create uncertainty for Indian exporters.
- **Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA):** Although negotiations are progressing, differences over tariffs, agriculture, digital trade and market access have delayed the conclusion of a comprehensive trade agreement.

Technology & Digital Issues

- **Technology Export Controls:** U.S. export control regulations on advanced technologies, including AI, semiconductors and defence technologies, can restrict technology transfer to India despite growing strategic trust.
- **Data Governance Differences:** India advocates **data sovereignty and data localisation**, whereas the U.S. supports the free flow of cross-border data and opposes stringent localisation requirements.
- **Digital Trade Regulations:** Differences persist over digital taxation, e-commerce regulations, competition policy and governance of large technology companies.
- **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR):** The U.S. regularly raises concerns regarding India's patent protection, pharmaceutical regulations and copyright enforcement through its **Special 301 Report**, while India prioritises affordable access to medicines.
- **Cyber Security Challenges:** Increasing cyber threats, ransomware attacks and protection of critical infrastructure require deeper coordination despite ongoing cooperation.

- **Dependence on Foreign Technology:** India continues to rely on U.S. companies for advanced technologies such as semiconductor equipment, cloud computing and high-end software, highlighting the need for greater technological self-reliance.

Immigration & Mobility Issues

- **H-1B Visa Restrictions:** Changes in U.S. immigration policies, higher scrutiny and longer processing time for **H-1B visas** affect thousands of Indian IT professionals and skilled workers.
- **Student Visa Challenges:** Delays in visa appointments, stricter documentation requirements and changing immigration rules create uncertainty for Indian students pursuing higher education in the U.S.
- **Green Card Backlog:** A large number of Indian professionals face **decade-long waiting periods** for employment-based permanent residency due to per-country visa caps.
- **Deportation of Illegal Immigrants:** The U.S. has increased action against undocumented migrants, leading to the deportation of Indian nationals who entered or stayed illegally, making migration management an important bilateral issue.
- **Mobility of Skilled Professionals:** India seeks easier movement of professionals in sectors such as IT, healthcare, engineering and research, whereas U.S. domestic employment policies often impose restrictions.
- **Recognition of Professional Qualifications:** Differences in licensing and recognition of educational and professional qualifications continue to limit labour mobility in certain sectors.

Climate & Environmental Issues

- **Climate Finance:** India emphasizes that developed countries, including the U.S., should fulfil their commitments on **climate finance** and technology transfer to support developing nations.
- **Historical Responsibility:** India advocates the principle of **Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC)**, while the U.S. often seeks greater emission reduction commitments from all major economies.
- **Carbon Border Measures:** Emerging carbon-related trade measures and stricter environmental standards in developed countries could affect the competitiveness of Indian exports.
- **Clean Technology Access:** Limited access to advanced clean energy technologies and intellectual property restrictions can slow India's energy transition.
- **Fossil Fuel Transition:** India prioritises **energy security and developmental needs**, whereas the U.S. pushes for a faster transition away from fossil fuels, leading to differences in the pace of decarbonisation.
- **Loss and Damage Funding:** India supports enhanced financial assistance for vulnerable developing countries, while differences remain among developed countries regarding the scale and mechanism of such funding.

Geopolitical Differences

- **Russia–Ukraine Conflict:** India has adopted a policy of **strategic neutrality**, emphasizing dialogue and diplomacy, whereas the U.S. has been one of Ukraine's strongest military and financial supporters. India's continued purchase of discounted Russian crude oil and defence equipment has been a recurring point of difference.
- **Iran Policy:** India considers **Iran** important for its energy security and connectivity projects such as the **Chabahar Port**, while U.S. sanctions on Iran have constrained India's economic engagement. 8□
- **West Asia (Middle East):** India follows a **balanced approach**, maintaining strong relations with both **Israel and Palestine**, whereas U.S. policy has traditionally been more strongly aligned with Israel. This occasionally leads to differences in diplomatic positions.
- **China Policy:** Although both countries seek to balance China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific, India avoids joining any formal military alliance or policy of containment, preferring **strategic autonomy** and issue-based cooperation.
- **Approach towards Global Conflicts:** India advocates **dialogue, diplomacy and peaceful resolution** of conflicts, while the U.S. has at times favoured sanctions and military interventions as instruments of foreign policy.
- **Reform of Global Institutions:** Both support reform of global governance institutions, but differences occasionally arise regarding the pace, priorities and implementation of reforms in institutions such as the **UN, WTO and IMF**.

6. Emerging Opportunities

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Expanding collaboration in AI research, governance, healthcare, agriculture, defence and responsible AI.
- **Semiconductors:** Joint investments in semiconductor manufacturing, packaging, design, research and skilled workforce development under **iCET**.
- **Critical Minerals:** Strengthening supply chains for lithium, cobalt, nickel, graphite and rare earth elements to support clean energy and advanced manufacturing.
- **Defence Co-development & Manufacturing:** Expanding cooperation in jet engines, unmanned systems, aerospace, naval systems and defence innovation under **INDUS-X** and the India–U.S. COMPACT initiative.
- **Space Economy:** Enhancing collaboration in satellite technology, Earth observation, deep-space exploration, commercial space activities and human spaceflight.
- **Clean Energy & Green Hydrogen:** Increasing cooperation in renewable energy, battery storage, green hydrogen, carbon capture and Small Modular Reactors (SMRs).
- **Digital Economy:** Deepening partnership in digital public infrastructure, fintech, quantum computing, cybersecurity and trusted telecommunications.
- **Supply Chain Resilience:** Building diversified and trusted supply chains for semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, electronics and critical technologies.
- **Indo-Pacific Cooperation:** Expanding maritime security, maritime domain awareness, disaster relief and connectivity initiatives through the Quad.
- **Global South Partnership:** Leveraging India's leadership among developing countries and U.S. technological and financial capabilities to promote sustainable development, food security and resilient infrastructure.

7. Way Forward

- **Conclude the Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)** at the earliest to achieve the target of **US\$500 billion bilateral trade by 2030**.
- **Deepen defence co-development and technology transfer** under **INDUS-X, iCET**, and the **India–U.S. COMPACT** initiative to strengthen India's defence manufacturing capabilities.
- **Expand cooperation in critical and emerging technologies**, including AI, semiconductors, quantum computing, biotechnology and cybersecurity.
- **Strengthen resilient supply chains** for semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, critical minerals and strategic technologies to reduce overdependence on single-country sources.
- **Enhance cooperation in clean energy** through green hydrogen, renewable energy, Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and climate-resilient technologies.
- **Facilitate greater mobility of students and skilled professionals** by simplifying visa procedures and addressing the Green Card backlog.
- **Promote regular strategic dialogue** to manage differences on trade, Russia, Iran, climate change and other geopolitical issues while respecting India's strategic autonomy.
- **Strengthen cooperation in the Indo-Pacific** through the Quad to ensure maritime security, freedom of navigation and regional stability.
- **Increase collaboration in multilateral forums** such as the G20, UN, IMF and World Bank to address global challenges and reform international institutions.
- **Leverage the Indian diaspora** to promote innovation, investment, entrepreneurship and people-to-people ties.

8. Conclusion

India–USA relations have evolved from **Cold War-era mistrust** to a **Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership**, emerging as one of the most significant bilateral relationships of the 21st century. The partnership today extends beyond defence and trade to critical technologies, clean energy, space, supply chain resilience, and global governance. While differences persist on issues such as trade, immigration, Russia, climate change and strategic priorities, both countries have demonstrated the maturity to manage disagreements through sustained dialogue and mutual respect. As the world's largest and oldest democracies, India and the United States are well-positioned to strengthen a **trusted, technology-driven and people-centric partnership** that contributes to regional stability, global prosperity and a **free, open, inclusive and rules-based international order**.

BPSC Mains Practice Questions

Q1. India–USA relations have transformed from strategic estrangement during the Cold War to a Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership. Discuss the major areas of cooperation and the challenges that continue to shape bilateral relations.

Q2. "Despite differences over trade, strategic autonomy, Russia, and climate change, India and the United States continue to deepen their strategic partnership." Critically analyse the statement and suggest measures to further strengthen India–USA relations.

One-Page Revision Sheet

Topic	Quick Revision
Nature of Relations	Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership
Why Important?	Largest trading partner, Major Defense Partner, Indo-Pacific, Critical Technologies, Largest Indian diaspora
Recent Developments	India–U.S. COMPACT (2025), Bilateral Trade Agreement (under negotiation), iCET, Semiconductor Partnership, Critical Minerals Cooperation
Major Dialogue Mechanisms	2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, Trade Policy Forum, CEO Forum, Commercial Dialogue, Strategic Energy Partnership, Defence Policy Group
Major Defence Agreements	LEMOA (2016), COMCASA (2018), BECA (2020), ISA (2023), SOSA (2024)
Major Defence Exercises	Yudh Abhyas, Tiger Triumph, Cope India, Vajra Prahar, Malabar
Major Areas of Cooperation	Political, Trade & Investment, Defence, Science & Technology, Space, Nuclear Energy, Clean Energy, Education, Diaspora, Indo-Pacific, Global Governance
Major Challenges	Russia–Ukraine, CAATSA, Trade & Tariffs, Technology Transfer, Data Localisation, H-1B Visa, Green Card Backlog, Climate Finance, Iran Policy
Emerging Opportunities	AI, Semiconductors, Quantum Technology, Critical Minerals, Green Hydrogen, Defence Manufacturing, Space Economy, Digital Economy, Supply Chain Resilience
Way Forward	Conclude BTA, Expand Technology Transfer, Defence Co-production, Strengthen Indo-Pacific Cooperation, Promote Skilled Mobility, Enhance Multilateral Cooperation
Important Facts	• Largest trading partner of India • Bilateral trade target: US\$500 billion by 2030 • Defence trade exceeds US\$25 billion • Indian diaspora in the U.S. exceeds 5 million
Keywords for Mains Answers	Strategic Autonomy • Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership • Major Defense Partner • iCET • COMPACT • Quad • Indo-Pacific • Trusted Technology • Supply Chain Resilience • Critical & Emerging Technologies

LESSON 4: INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, REPORTS & SUMMITS

Topics covered under this Lesson

1. International Organizations and India

- 1.1 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and India (*Permanent Membership*)
- 1.2 BRICS and India
- 1.3 G20 and India
- 1.4 G7 and India
- 1.5 Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and India
- 1.6 QUAD and India
- 1.7 BIMSTEC and India
- 1.8 South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and India
- 1.9 Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and India
- 1.10 International Solar Alliance (ISA) and India
- 1.11 I2U2 and India
- 1.12 Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) and India

2. International Reports and Indices

- 2.1 Human Development Report (HDR) 2025
- 2.2 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2025
- 2.3 World Happiness Report 2026
- 2.4 Global Gender Gap Report 2025
- 2.5 Corruption Perceptions Index 2025
- 2.6 Global Innovation Index 2025
- 2.7 Global Hunger Index 2025
- 2.8 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Report 2025
- 2.9 Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and India

3. Major International Summits and Dialogues

- 3.1 G20 Summit 2025
- 3.2 BRICS Summit 2025
- 3.3 SCO Summit 2025
- 3.4 ASEAN Summit 2026
- 3.5 G7 Summit 2025
- 3.6 COP-30 2025
- 3.7 World Economic Forum (Davos)
- 3.8 Raisina Dialogue 2026
- 3.9 Global South and India's Leadership

4. International Agreements

- 4.1 India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)
- 4.2 NATO Plus and India

1. International Organizations and India

1.1 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and India (*Permanent Membership*)

1. Introduction

The **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** is the principal organ of the United Nations responsible for maintaining **international peace and security**. Established in **1945** under the UN Charter, it comprises **15 members**, including **five permanent members (P5)** with veto power and **ten non-permanent members** elected for two-year terms. Its decisions are legally binding on all UN member states, making it the most influential body in the global security architecture.

However, the UNSC's structure largely reflects the geopolitical realities of the post-Second World War era rather than the contemporary world order. Growing demands for a **more representative, democratic and effective Security Council** have intensified the call for reforms. As the **world's largest democracy**, a leading economy, and a major contributor to UN peacekeeping and global governance, India has emerged as one of the strongest contenders for permanent membership in a reformed UNSC.

2. Need of UNSC Reform

Outdated Post-World War II Structure

The current structure of the UNSC reflects the geopolitical realities of **1945**, when the United Nations was established. Although the UN's membership has expanded from **51 founding members to 193 member states**, the number of **permanent members has remained unchanged at five**. The only structural reform occurred in **1965**, when the number of non-permanent seats increased from **6 to 10**, making the Council's composition increasingly disconnected from contemporary global realities.

Inadequate Representation of the Global South

The existing composition of the UNSC fails to adequately represent **Africa, Latin America and the Global South**, despite these regions comprising the majority of UN member states. Africa, with **54 UN member states**, does not have a single permanent seat, while Latin America is also excluded from permanent representation. This imbalance weakens the Council's legitimacy and inclusiveness.

Emergence of New Global Powers

Since 1945, countries such as **India, Brazil, Germany and Japan** have emerged as major economic and political powers with significant contributions to global peace, trade and development. However, the present structure does not reflect this shift in global power, limiting the Council's ability to represent contemporary international realities.

Frequent Deadlock Due to the Veto System

The veto power enjoyed by the **five permanent members (P5)** has often prevented the Security Council from taking timely action on major international crises. Recent conflicts, including the **Russia–Ukraine war** and the **Israel–Hamas conflict**, have exposed the limitations of the existing system, where competing geopolitical interests frequently override collective security objectives.

Need for a More Effective and Credible Security Council

The world today faces complex transnational challenges such as **terrorism, cyber threats, climate change, pandemics and maritime security**, which require collective action. A more representative and accountable Security Council would enjoy greater legitimacy and be better equipped to address these evolving security challenges.

Growing International Consensus for Reform

There is increasing international support for comprehensive UNSC reform through the **Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN)** process. The **Pact for the Future (2024)** also reaffirmed the need to make the Security Council **more representative, inclusive, transparent, efficient and effective**, with particular emphasis on improving the representation of developing countries, especially Africa.

3. Why Does India Deserve Permanent Membership of the UNSC?

World's Largest Democracy and One-Sixth of Humanity

India is the **world's largest democracy** and the **most populous country**, representing nearly **one-sixth of humanity**. Despite its demographic significance and democratic credentials, India remains outside the permanent decision-making structure of the UNSC. Granting India permanent membership would make the Council more representative and democratic, ensuring that the interests of a large section of the global population are reflected in global security decisions.

Major Economic Power and Driver of Global Growth

India has emerged as one of the **largest and fastest-growing major economies** in the world and is widely regarded as a key engine of global economic growth. It plays an increasingly important role in international trade, digital innovation, climate finance and sustainable development. As global economic influence has shifted towards Asia, India's inclusion in the UNSC would better align the Council with contemporary geopolitical and economic realities.

Strong Commitment to International Peace and Security

India has consistently demonstrated its commitment to global peace through its unparalleled contribution to **UN Peacekeeping Operations**. Since **1948**, India has deployed **over 2,90,000 peacekeepers** in nearly **50 UN peacekeeping missions**, making it one of the

largest cumulative troop-contributing countries. India's participation reflects its willingness to shoulder international responsibilities beyond its national interests.

Responsible and Credible Global Power

India has established itself as a **responsible nuclear power** with a strong record of nuclear restraint and adherence to international norms. It follows a **No First Use (NFU)** policy and supports the peaceful use of nuclear energy. India's consistent respect for international law, commitment to a **rules-based international order**, and responsible conduct in global affairs strengthen its claim for permanent membership.

Voice of the Global South

India has emerged as a leading advocate of the **Global South**, consistently raising concerns related to climate justice, food security, development financing, debt sustainability and equitable access to technology. During its **G20 Presidency (2023)**, India ensured the **African Union** became a permanent member of the G20, reflecting its commitment to making global governance more inclusive. This leadership enhances India's credibility as a representative of developing nations.

Proven Leadership in Multilateral Institutions

India has played an active role in strengthening multilateral cooperation through initiatives such as the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)** and the **Global Biofuel Alliance**. It has also served as a **non-permanent member of the UNSC eight times**, gaining extensive experience in addressing international peace and security issues. This demonstrates India's capability to contribute constructively as a permanent member.

Broad International Support for India's Candidature

India's bid for permanent membership enjoys support from a large number of countries across regions. The **United States, Russia, France and the United Kingdom** have publicly endorsed India's candidature. India is also a member of the **G4 grouping (India, Brazil, Germany and Japan)**, which jointly advocates expansion of both permanent and non-permanent seats. This widespread diplomatic backing reflects the growing international recognition of India's rightful place in a reformed UNSC.

4. Challenges to India's Permanent Membership of the UNSC

Opposition from China

China remains the **biggest diplomatic hurdle** to India's permanent membership. Although it acknowledges India's growing international role, it has not explicitly endorsed India's candidature for a permanent seat. Geopolitical rivalry, unresolved border disputes, and China's strategic competition with India in the Indo-Pacific continue to influence its position. Since any amendment to the UN Charter requires the approval of all five permanent members, China's opposition remains a significant obstacle.

Resistance from the 'Uniting for Consensus' (UfC) Group

The **Uniting for Consensus (UfC)** group, also known as the **Coffee Club**, opposes the creation of new permanent seats. Members such as **Pakistan, Italy, Argentina, Mexico and South Korea** argue that expanding permanent membership would make the Security Council less democratic and less accountable. Instead, they advocate increasing only the number of non-permanent seats, thereby limiting India's chances of obtaining permanent membership.

Complex UN Charter Amendment Process

Reforming the UNSC requires an amendment to the **UN Charter**, which is an extremely difficult process. Any amendment must be approved by a **two-thirds majority of the UN General Assembly (at least 129 of 193 member states)** and subsequently ratified by **two-thirds of UN member states, including all five permanent members (P5)**. This stringent procedure gives each permanent member an effective veto over Security Council reforms.

Lack of Consensus on the Reform Model

While there is broad agreement that the UNSC requires reform, member states remain divided over who should be granted permanent membership, how many new seats should be created, whether new members should have veto power, and how regional representation should be ensured. These competing proposals have prolonged the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) process without reaching a consensus.

Debate over the Veto Power

One of the most contentious issues in UNSC reform is whether new permanent members should enjoy **veto power**. Some countries argue that extending the veto would increase inequality and make decision-making even more difficult, while others believe permanent membership without veto would create a second-class category of permanent members. The absence of agreement on this issue continues to delay comprehensive reform.

Slow Progress in Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN)

Since the launch of the **Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN)** in **2009**, discussions on UNSC reform have made limited progress due to the consensus-based approach and divergent national interests. Despite repeated calls by the **UN Secretary-General**, the **G4 countries**, and a large number of developing nations, negotiations have yet to produce a concrete roadmap for reform.

5. Way Forward

- **Comprehensive Reform of the UNSC:** The Security Council should be expanded in both **permanent and non-permanent categories** to reflect the contemporary geopolitical and economic realities of the 21st century.
- **Greater Representation for the Global South:** Developing regions, particularly **Africa, Latin America and Asia**, should receive equitable representation to enhance the Council's legitimacy, inclusiveness and credibility.

- **Time-bound and Text-based Negotiations:** The ongoing **Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN)** should move beyond procedural discussions to **text-based negotiations** with a defined timeline for achieving meaningful reforms.
- **Consensus on the Veto Issue:** Member states should evolve a pragmatic consensus on the **veto question**, ensuring that reforms strengthen the effectiveness of the Security Council rather than creating new institutional inequalities.
- **Strengthening India's Diplomatic Outreach:** India should continue building wider international support through platforms such as the **G4, BRICS, G20, Quad and Global South initiatives**, while engaging constructively with countries that remain sceptical of UNSC expansion.
- **Merit-based and Representative Membership:** Permanent membership should be based on objective criteria such as population, economic strength, contribution to international peace and security, commitment to multilateralism, and global responsibilities. India's credentials strongly satisfy these parameters.

6. Conclusion

Reforming the **United Nations Security Council** has become essential to make the institution more **representative, credible and effective** in addressing contemporary global challenges. As the world's largest democracy, a leading economy, a major contributor to UN peacekeeping, and a responsible stakeholder in global governance, India possesses strong political, economic and moral credentials for permanent membership. A reformed UNSC that includes India would not only correct historical imbalances but also strengthen the legitimacy and effectiveness of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security.

BPSC Mains Practice Question

Q1. *"Discuss the need for reforms in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Examine India's claim for permanent membership and the major challenges in achieving this objective."*

LESSON 5: WORLD CURRENT AFFAIRS

Topics covered under this Lesson

1. Global Conflicts and Geopolitics

- 1.1 Russia–Ukraine War
- 1.2 Israel– Hamas Conflict
- 1.3 Israel–USA–Iran Conflict
- 1.4 Hormuz Strait Crisis
- 1.5 Iran's Nuclear Programme
- 1.6 South China Sea Dispute
- 1.7 Greenland and Arctic Geopolitics

2. Global Economy and Strategic Competition

- 2.1 Global Trade Disruptions
- 2.2 Critical Minerals Race
- 2.3 De-dollarisation Debate
- 2.4 Global Energy Security

1. Global Conflicts and Geopolitics

1.1 Russia–Ukraine War

1. Introduction

The **Russia–Ukraine War** is one of the most significant geopolitical conflicts of the 21st century and the largest conventional military conflict in Europe since the Second World War. On **24 February 2022**, Russia launched a full-scale military invasion of Ukraine, transforming a regional dispute into a global crisis with far-reaching political, economic, humanitarian, and strategic consequences. However, the roots of the conflict date back to **2014**, when Russia annexed Crimea and supported separatist movements in eastern Ukraine following the Euromaidan Revolution.

The war extends far beyond the battlefield, influencing global security architecture, energy markets, food security, supply chains, international diplomacy, and great-power competition. It has intensified tensions between **Russia and the Western bloc (NATO and the European Union)**, accelerated the trend towards a **multipolar world order**, and reshaped defence and foreign policies across Europe and beyond.

For India, the conflict has posed complex diplomatic challenges. While maintaining its long-standing strategic partnership with Russia, India has consistently emphasized respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, dialogue and diplomacy, and strategic autonomy. At the same time, India has safeguarded its national interests by ensuring energy security, protecting its citizens through **Operation Ganga**, and advocating a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Thus, the Russia–Ukraine War is not merely a bilateral conflict but a defining event in contemporary international relations, with profound implications for global governance, regional stability, and the future of the rules-based international order.

2. Historical Background: From Soviet Dissolution to Full-Scale War

The Russia–Ukraine War did not begin suddenly in 2022. Its origins lie in the geopolitical changes that followed the **dissolution of the Soviet Union (USSR) in 1991**, competing security interests in Eastern Europe, Ukraine's growing integration with the West, and Russia's determination to retain influence over its strategic neighbourhood. The conflict evolved gradually over three decades before culminating in the full-scale invasion of February 2022.

1991: Dissolution of the Soviet Union

- On **24 August 1991**, Ukraine declared independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union.
- In a nationwide referendum held on **1 December 1991**, over **90%** of Ukrainians voted in favour of independence.
- Ukraine inherited significant military assets, including the **world's third-largest nuclear arsenal**, making it a strategically important state in Europe.

1994: Budapest Memorandum

- Under the **Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances (1994)**, Ukraine agreed to surrender its nuclear weapons and join the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)** as a non-nuclear state.
- In return, **Russia, the United States, and the United Kingdom** assured Ukraine that they would respect its **independence, sovereignty, and existing borders** and refrain from the use or threat of force.
- The events of 2014 and 2022 have raised serious questions regarding the effectiveness of such security assurances.

NATO Expansion and Russia's Security Concerns

- After the Cold War, several former Soviet republics and Warsaw Pact countries joined **NATO**, including Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and later the Baltic States.
- At the **2008 NATO Bucharest Summit**, NATO declared that **Ukraine and Georgia would eventually become members**, although no timeline was specified.
- Russia viewed NATO's eastward expansion as a direct threat to its national security and opposed the possibility of Ukraine becoming a NATO member.

2004: Orange Revolution

- The **Orange Revolution** was triggered by allegations of electoral fraud in Ukraine's presidential election.
- Massive public protests demanded democratic reforms and closer ties with Europe.
- The movement strengthened pro-Western political forces while increasing tensions with Russia.

2013–2014: Euromaidan Revolution

- In late **2013**, President **Viktor Yanukovich** suspended plans to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union in favour of closer economic ties with Russia.
- This decision sparked large-scale protests, known as the **Euromaidan Movement**, demanding European integration and democratic governance.
- In **February 2014**, Yanukovich fled the country, and a new pro-Western government assumed power.
- Russia regarded these developments as an unconstitutional change of government supported by Western countries.

2014: Annexation of Crimea

- In **March 2014**, Russian forces took control of **Crimea**, a strategically important peninsula on the Black Sea.
- Following a disputed referendum, Russia formally annexed Crimea.
- Most countries and the **United Nations General Assembly** did not recognize the annexation, affirming Ukraine's territorial integrity.

Conflict in Donbas

- Soon after the Crimea crisis, armed separatist movements emerged in the **Donetsk** and **Luhansk** regions of eastern Ukraine.
- These groups declared self-proclaimed republics with Russian support.
- Fighting between Ukrainian forces and separatists continued for years, causing thousands of deaths and displacing millions of people.

Minsk Agreements (2014–2015)

- To end the fighting, the **Minsk I (2014)** and **Minsk II (2015)** agreements were negotiated with the mediation of **France and Germany** under the **Normandy Format**.
- The agreements called for: Immediate ceasefire, Withdrawal of heavy weapons, Constitutional reforms in Ukraine and Greater autonomy for parts of Donetsk and Luhansk.
- However, repeated violations by both sides prevented full implementation, and the conflict remained unresolved.

Escalation Towards Full-Scale War (2021–2022)

- Throughout **2021**, Russia deployed a large number of troops, tanks, and military equipment near Ukraine's borders.
- Russia demanded legally binding guarantees that Ukraine would never join NATO and that NATO would halt further eastward expansion.
- Diplomatic negotiations between Russia, the United States, NATO, and European countries failed to resolve these differences.
- On **21 February 2022**, Russia recognized the self-proclaimed **Donetsk People's Republic (DPR)** and **Luhansk People's Republic (LPR)** as independent entities.
- Three days later, on **24 February 2022**, Russia launched a full-scale military invasion of Ukraine, marking the beginning of the largest armed conflict in Europe since World War II.

The historical trajectory demonstrates that the Russia–Ukraine War is the result of decades of unresolved geopolitical rivalries, competing security perceptions, contested identities, and failed diplomatic efforts rather than a sudden outbreak of violence.

3. Why Did the Russia–Ukraine War Begin?

The Russia–Ukraine War is the result of multiple historical, political, strategic, and economic factors rather than a single event. While Russia considers the war necessary to safeguard its national security and strategic interests, Ukraine and most Western countries view it as a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The major causes are discussed below.

Russia's Security Concerns

Russia has consistently argued that the expansion of NATO towards its borders poses a direct threat to its national security. Since the end of the Cold War, several former Soviet

republics and Eastern European countries have joined NATO, significantly reducing Russia's strategic buffer zone. Moscow believes that Ukraine's potential NATO membership would allow Western military infrastructure to be stationed close to major Russian cities, thereby undermining its security. Consequently, Russia sought legally binding assurances that Ukraine would remain outside NATO, but these demands were not accepted by the Western alliance.

NATO and European Union Expansion

Ukraine's increasing political, economic, and military cooperation with the **European Union (EU)** and **NATO** became another major source of tension. Following the **Orange Revolution (2004)** and the **Euromaidan Revolution (2014)**, successive Ukrainian governments adopted a pro-Western foreign policy and openly pursued membership in both organisations. Russia viewed this shift as an attempt by the West to expand its influence into what Moscow considers its traditional sphere of influence, thereby intensifying geopolitical rivalry in Eastern Europe.

Historical and Cultural Claims

Russia and Ukraine share deep historical, cultural, and religious ties dating back to **Kievan Rus**, regarded as the common historical origin of both nations. Russian leadership has repeatedly argued that Russians and Ukrainians constitute "one people" with a shared historical identity. President Vladimir Putin has also questioned Ukraine's independent statehood in several public statements. In contrast, Ukraine strongly asserts its distinct national identity, sovereign statehood, and right to determine its own political and foreign policy choices. These competing historical narratives have contributed significantly to the conflict.

Geopolitical and Strategic Interests

Ukraine occupies a strategically important location between Russia and Europe, making it a vital geopolitical buffer state. Russia considers maintaining influence over Ukraine essential to preventing Western military presence near its borders. The **Crimean Peninsula**, home to Russia's **Black Sea Fleet** at Sevastopol, is of immense strategic importance for projecting Russian naval power into the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Additionally, control over eastern and southern Ukraine strengthens Russia's military position and helps establish a land corridor connecting mainland Russia with Crimea.

Economic and Energy Factors

Ukraine possesses some of the world's most fertile agricultural land and is a major exporter of wheat, maize, barley, and sunflower oil. The eastern **Donbas** region is rich in coal, heavy industries, and manufacturing facilities. Moreover, Ukraine has traditionally served as an important transit corridor for Russian natural gas exports to Europe. Control over these economic assets, transport routes, and energy infrastructure has added another strategic dimension to the conflict, although economic considerations alone do not explain the outbreak of war.

Failure of the Minsk Agreements

The **Minsk I (2014)** and **Minsk II (2015)** agreements were intended to end the conflict in eastern Ukraine through a ceasefire, withdrawal of heavy weapons, and greater autonomy for separatist-controlled areas. However, both Russia and Ukraine accused each other of violating the agreements, and key political provisions were never fully implemented. As mutual trust deteriorated, diplomatic efforts failed to produce a lasting settlement, leaving the conflict unresolved and increasing the likelihood of military escalation.

Immediate Trigger: Events Leading to the 2022 Invasion

During **2021**, Russia deployed nearly **two lakh troops** along Ukraine's borders while demanding security guarantees from the United States and NATO, including a commitment that Ukraine would never become a NATO member. When negotiations failed, Russia recognised the self-proclaimed **Donetsk People's Republic (DPR)** and **Luhansk People's Republic (LPR)** on **21 February 2022**. On **24 February 2022**, Russia launched a full-scale military invasion of Ukraine, describing it as a "**special military operation**" aimed at the "demilitarisation" and "denazification" of Ukraine. Ukraine and the majority of the international community rejected these justifications and condemned the invasion as a violation of international law and the UN Charter.

The outbreak of the Russia–Ukraine War was therefore driven by a combination of **security dilemmas, geopolitical competition, historical disputes, strategic calculations, and the failure of diplomatic mechanisms**, making it one of the most complex conflicts in contemporary international relations.

4. Major Developments in the War

Phase I: Initial Russian Offensive (February–March 2022)

- Russia launched a full-scale military invasion of Ukraine on **24 February 2022**.
- The offensive was carried out from multiple directions, including Russia, Belarus, and Crimea.
- Russia targeted major cities such as **Kyiv, Kharkiv, Mariupol, Kherson, and Chernihiv**.
- Russian forces aimed for a rapid capture of Kyiv and a change in Ukraine's political leadership.
- Ukraine mounted strong resistance, preventing Russia from achieving a quick military victory.
- By the end of March 2022, Russian forces withdrew from northern Ukraine, including the Kyiv region.

Phase II: Shift of Focus to Eastern and Southern Ukraine (2022)

- Russia shifted its military strategy towards the **Donbas region**.
- Intense fighting took place in **Luhansk** and **Donetsk**.
- Russia captured the strategically important port city of **Mariupol** after a prolonged siege.

- The capture of Mariupol enabled Russia to establish a land corridor connecting mainland Russia with Crimea.
- Russia consolidated control over significant parts of southern Ukraine, including **Kherson** and **Zaporizhzhia**.

Phase III: Ukrainian Counteroffensives (Late 2022)

- Ukraine launched successful counteroffensives with military assistance from Western countries.
- Ukrainian forces regained large parts of the **Kharkiv** region.
- Russia withdrew from the western bank of the **Dnipro River**, including **Kherson city**.
- The counteroffensives demonstrated Ukraine's growing military capability and effective use of Western weapons.

Annexation of Ukrainian Territories

- In September 2022, Russia announced the annexation of **Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson** after conducting referendums in occupied territories.
- Ukraine and the majority of the international community rejected these referendums as illegal.
- The **United Nations General Assembly** reaffirmed Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Prolonged War of Attrition (2023–2024)

- The conflict evolved into a prolonged war of attrition with limited territorial gains by either side.
- Heavy fighting continued around **Bakhmut, Avdiivka**, and other frontline areas.
- Extensive trench warfare became a defining feature of the conflict.
- Both sides increased the use of artillery, missiles, and precision-guided weapons.
- Casualties and destruction of infrastructure continued to rise.

Rise of Drone and Missile Warfare

- The war witnessed the large-scale use of **unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)** for surveillance and attacks.
- Long-range missiles and drones targeted military bases, energy infrastructure, and logistics networks.
- Electronic warfare became an important component of military operations.
- Artificial intelligence, satellite imagery, and real-time intelligence significantly influenced battlefield decisions.
- The conflict became a major example of modern technology-driven warfare.

Black Sea and Maritime Conflict

- Russia imposed restrictions on maritime movement in parts of the **Black Sea**.
- Ukrainian ports and grain export facilities became frequent targets.
- The disruption of Black Sea shipping affected global food supplies.

- Ukraine developed innovative maritime drone capabilities to challenge Russia's naval dominance.
- The Black Sea emerged as a critical theatre of military and economic competition.

Current Situation (2025–2026)

- The conflict remains active with no comprehensive peace agreement.
- Russia continues missile and drone attacks on Ukrainian cities and critical infrastructure.
- Ukraine continues long-range strikes against military and logistical targets inside Russian territory.
- Western countries continue to provide military, financial, and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine.
- Diplomatic efforts have continued, but major differences over territory and security guarantees have prevented a negotiated settlement.
- The war has evolved into a prolonged geopolitical confrontation between Russia and the Western bloc, with significant implications for global security and international relations.

5. International Response

NATO

- NATO strongly condemned Russia's invasion as a violation of international law and European security.
- It has provided extensive military assistance, intelligence sharing, training, and logistical support to Ukraine.
- Member countries have supplied advanced weapon systems, including **HIMARS, Patriot air defence systems, Leopard tanks, Abrams tanks, Storm Shadow missiles, and F-16 fighter aircraft.**
- NATO has significantly strengthened its military presence along its eastern flank by deploying additional troops and enhancing air and missile defence capabilities.
- The alliance has accelerated defence spending, with many member states increasing military expenditure to meet or exceed the **2% of GDP** target.

United States

- The United States has emerged as Ukraine's largest military and financial supporter.
- It has provided billions of dollars in military assistance, economic aid, and humanitarian support.
- Washington has imposed multiple rounds of sanctions targeting Russian banks, defence industries, technology exports, and key individuals.
- The U.S. has coordinated closely with NATO allies to strengthen Ukraine's defence capabilities.
- It has also played an active role in diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving a negotiated settlement while maintaining pressure on Russia.

European Union (EU)

- The European Union has imposed one of the most comprehensive sanctions regimes in its history against Russia.
- Sanctions target the financial sector, energy exports, technology transfers, transport, shipping, and individuals associated with the Russian government.
- The EU has provided substantial financial assistance for Ukraine's economy, governance, and reconstruction.
- It has granted Ukraine **EU candidate status**, strengthening Kyiv's long-term integration with Europe.
- European countries have also welcomed millions of Ukrainian refugees and provided humanitarian assistance.

United Nations (UN)

- The **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** has passed multiple resolutions reaffirming Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity.
- The **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** has remained largely ineffective because Russia, as a permanent member, has exercised its veto power.
- UN agencies such as **UNHCR, WFP, WHO, UNICEF, and OCHA** have provided humanitarian assistance to displaced populations.
- The United Nations has repeatedly called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and adherence to international humanitarian law.
- Investigations into alleged violations of human rights and international humanitarian law have been initiated under various UN-supported mechanisms.

China

- China has maintained a neutral public position while avoiding direct condemnation of Russia.
- It has consistently called for dialogue, ceasefire, and peaceful negotiations.
- China has opposed unilateral sanctions that are not authorised by the United Nations.
- Economic and strategic cooperation between China and Russia has continued during the conflict.
- China has presented peace proposals, although these have received mixed responses from Ukraine and Western countries.

Turkey

- Turkey has positioned itself as an important mediator between Russia and Ukraine.
- It facilitated negotiations during the early stages of the conflict.
- Turkey played a key role in the **Black Sea Grain Initiative**, which enabled the export of Ukrainian agricultural products.
- It has maintained diplomatic relations with both Russia and Ukraine while balancing its commitments as a NATO member.

Other Important Countries

- **Iran** has been accused by Western countries of supplying drones to Russia, a charge that Iran has denied.
- **North Korea** has expanded defence cooperation with Russia and has been accused of supplying military equipment and ammunition.
- **Belarus** has allowed Russian forces to use its territory for military operations against Ukraine.
- **Japan** and **South Korea** have imposed sanctions on Russia and provided humanitarian and economic assistance to Ukraine.
- Countries such as **Brazil, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates** have advocated dialogue and supported diplomatic efforts without directly participating in the conflict.

The international response to the Russia–Ukraine War reflects the emergence of **new geopolitical alignments**, highlighting deep divisions between Russia and the Western bloc while demonstrating the growing role of middle powers in mediation and conflict resolution.

6. India's Position on the Russia–Ukraine War

India has adopted a policy of **strategic autonomy**, balancing its long-standing partnership with Russia, expanding relations with the West, and its commitment to international law. Instead of aligning with any one bloc, India has consistently advocated **dialogue, diplomacy, and peaceful resolution** while protecting its national interests.

Strategic Autonomy as the Guiding Principle

- India has refused to join any military or political bloc in the conflict.
- It has followed an independent foreign policy based on **strategic autonomy**.
- India's decisions have been guided by national interests rather than external pressure.
- India has maintained engagement with both Russia and Ukraine throughout the conflict.

India's Stand on Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity

- India has consistently emphasized the importance of **respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the UN Charter**.
- It has called upon all parties to resolve differences through peaceful dialogue.
- India has avoided directly blaming either Russia or Ukraine in its official statements.
- It has reiterated that lasting peace can only be achieved through diplomacy.

India's Position at the United Nations

- India has **abstained** on several resolutions related to the Russia–Ukraine conflict in the **UN General Assembly (UNGA), UN Security Council (UNSC), and Human Rights Council (UNHRC)**.
- India has explained that abstention does not signify neutrality towards violence but reflects its belief that dialogue is the only sustainable solution.

- During every UN debate, India has reiterated the need for an immediate cessation of violence and humanitarian assistance.
- India has supported humanitarian resolutions aimed at protecting civilians and ensuring relief operations.

Diplomatic Engagement with Both Countries

- India has maintained regular diplomatic contacts with both Moscow and Kyiv.
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has held multiple discussions with Russian President **Vladimir Putin** and Ukrainian President **Volodymyr Zelenskyy**.
- External Affairs Minister **Dr. S. Jaishankar** has remained actively engaged with leaders from Russia, Ukraine, Europe, and the United States.
- India has used international forums such as the **G20**, **BRICS**, **SCO**, and the **United Nations** to advocate peaceful negotiations.

India's Peace Diplomacy

- India has repeatedly called for an **immediate ceasefire and direct negotiations**.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement that "**Today's era is not an era of war**" became one of India's most widely acknowledged diplomatic messages during the conflict.
- India has encouraged both parties to pursue diplomacy instead of prolonged military confrontation.
- India has expressed its willingness to contribute to any credible peace initiative accepted by both Russia and Ukraine.

Humanitarian Assistance

- India launched **Operation Ganga** in February 2022 to evacuate Indian nationals, particularly students, stranded in Ukraine.
- More than **22,500 Indian citizens** were safely evacuated through coordinated efforts involving neighbouring countries such as Poland, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, and Moldova.
- India supplied humanitarian assistance, including medicines, medical equipment, blankets, tents, generators, and relief materials to Ukraine.
- India has continued to support humanitarian efforts through international organisations.

Energy Security

- Following Western sanctions, India substantially increased imports of **discounted Russian crude oil** to protect its energy security.
- Affordable oil imports helped reduce inflationary pressures and supported domestic economic stability.
- India has maintained that purchasing energy is necessary to meet the needs of its large population.
- The government has clarified that energy trade is based on national interest and market considerations.

Defence and Strategic Relations with Russia

- Russia remains one of India's largest defence partners.
- India continues to procure spare parts, maintenance support, and defence equipment from Russia.
- The conflict highlighted India's dependence on Russian military platforms and reinforced the importance of defence diversification.
- India has simultaneously expanded defence cooperation with countries such as the United States, France, and Israel to reduce long-term dependence on any single supplier.

Economic and Trade Relations

- Bilateral trade between India and Russia increased significantly during the conflict, primarily due to higher imports of crude oil and fertilisers.
- India continued imports of fertilisers to safeguard domestic agricultural production and food security.
- Efforts were made to strengthen alternative payment mechanisms to facilitate trade despite financial sanctions on Russia.
- India has sought to maintain stable economic relations with both Russia and Western economies.

India's Relations with the West

- Despite differences over the Ukraine issue, India's relations with the **United States, European Union, Japan, Australia, and other Western partners** have continued to strengthen.
- Western countries have largely acknowledged India's strategic compulsions and its energy security requirements.
- India has successfully ensured that disagreements over Ukraine do not adversely affect cooperation in areas such as defence, technology, trade, and the Indo-Pacific.

Leadership of the Global South

- India has consistently highlighted the impact of the conflict on **developing countries**, particularly rising food prices, fuel costs, fertiliser shortages, inflation, and debt vulnerabilities.
- During its **G20 Presidency (2023)**, India promoted consensus on addressing the global economic consequences of the conflict.
- India has advocated for uninterrupted supplies of food, fuel, and fertilisers to vulnerable countries.
- It has projected itself as a responsible voice representing the concerns of the **Global South**.

Challenges for India

- Balancing strategic relations with Russia while expanding partnerships with Western countries.
- Ensuring uninterrupted defence supplies from Russia.

- Managing volatility in global crude oil and fertiliser prices.
- Protecting India's diplomatic credibility in competing geopolitical blocs.
- Responding to evolving global security dynamics without compromising strategic autonomy.

Significance for India's Foreign Policy

- The conflict has reinforced the relevance of **strategic autonomy** as the cornerstone of India's foreign policy.
- It has demonstrated India's ability to maintain productive relations with competing global powers simultaneously.
- The crisis has accelerated India's efforts towards **energy diversification, defence indigenisation (Aatmanirbhar Bharat)**, and resilient supply chains.
- India's balanced approach has enhanced its image as a responsible, pragmatic, and credible global actor capable of engaging with all major powers.

India's response to the Russia–Ukraine War reflects a careful balance between **national interest, strategic partnerships, humanitarian responsibility, and commitment to peaceful conflict resolution**, making it one of the most nuanced foreign policy approaches adopted by any major power during the conflict.

7. Global Implications of the Russia–Ukraine War

Global Security Architecture

The Russia–Ukraine War has fundamentally altered the global security landscape. It has revived **great-power rivalry** between Russia and the Western bloc, increased defence spending across Europe, and reinforced the importance of military alliances such as NATO. Several European countries have reassessed their security policies, while countries across the world are strengthening their defence preparedness. The conflict has also raised concerns about the effectiveness of existing international security institutions in preventing major interstate wars.

Energy Security

The war disrupted global energy markets, particularly in Europe, which had long depended on Russian oil and natural gas. Sanctions on Russia and disruptions in energy supplies led to sharp increases in oil and gas prices, triggering an energy crisis in several countries. In response, European nations accelerated efforts to diversify energy sources by increasing imports of liquefied natural gas (LNG), expanding renewable energy capacity, and reducing dependence on Russian energy.

Global Food Security

Russia and Ukraine are among the world's leading exporters of wheat, maize, barley, and sunflower oil. The conflict disrupted agricultural production, damaged transport infrastructure, and affected grain exports through the Black Sea. As a result, food prices increased globally, particularly affecting developing countries that rely heavily on imports.

Although initiatives such as the **Black Sea Grain Initiative** temporarily eased the crisis, repeated disruptions continued to threaten global food security.

Global Economy and Inflation

The war contributed significantly to rising global inflation by increasing the prices of fuel, food, fertilisers, and industrial raw materials. Higher transportation costs and supply chain disruptions slowed global economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. Many countries experienced slower economic growth, rising fiscal pressures, and tighter monetary policies as central banks increased interest rates to control inflation.

Supply Chains and International Trade

The conflict exposed the vulnerability of highly interconnected global supply chains. Disruptions in shipping routes, sanctions, export controls, and restrictions on critical commodities affected manufacturing and international trade. Countries have increasingly focused on supply chain diversification, friend-shoring, and reducing dependence on a limited number of suppliers for essential goods, including semiconductors, energy resources, and critical minerals.

Technological Transformation of Warfare

The Russia–Ukraine War has become a defining example of **21st-century warfare**. The extensive use of drones, artificial intelligence, satellite intelligence, cyber operations, electronic warfare, precision-guided weapons, and real-time intelligence sharing has transformed modern military operations. The conflict has demonstrated that technological superiority, innovation, and information dominance are becoming as important as conventional military strength.

Impact on the Global South

Developing countries have been among the most affected by the indirect consequences of the war. Rising prices of food, fuel, and fertilisers have increased inflation, poverty, and fiscal burdens in many low- and middle-income economies. Countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America have also faced challenges related to debt sustainability and food insecurity. Consequently, many Global South nations have called for an early peaceful resolution while avoiding alignment with either geopolitical bloc.

Emergence of a Multipolar World Order

The conflict has accelerated the transition towards a **multipolar international system**. While the United States and its allies have strengthened their collective response, countries such as India, China, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and others have pursued independent foreign policies based on their national interests. The growing influence of middle powers and regional groupings indicates a gradual shift away from a purely unipolar or bipolar global order.

Implications for International Law and Global Governance

The war has intensified debates over the principles of **sovereignty, territorial integrity, humanitarian intervention, and the use of force** under the **United Nations Charter**. It has also highlighted the limitations of the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**, where the veto power of permanent members has often prevented decisive action. The conflict has therefore renewed calls for comprehensive reforms of global governance institutions to make them more representative, accountable, and effective.

Overall, the Russia–Ukraine War has evolved from a regional military conflict into a global geopolitical crisis, influencing international politics, economic stability, energy security, technological innovation, and the future direction of the international order.

8. Challenges to Achieving Peace

Territorial Disputes

- Russia continues to claim **Crimea, Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson** as part of its territory.
- Ukraine insists on the complete restoration of its internationally recognized borders.
- Neither side is willing to make significant territorial concessions.
- The status of occupied territories remains the biggest obstacle to a peace agreement.

Security Guarantees

- Ukraine seeks legally binding security guarantees against future aggression.
- Ukraine continues to aspire for closer integration with NATO and the European Union.
- Russia opposes Ukraine's NATO membership, considering it a direct threat to its national security.
- Differences over future security arrangements remain unresolved.

Lack of Mutual Trust

- Years of conflict and repeated violations of ceasefire agreements have created deep mistrust.
- Both countries accuse each other of violating international humanitarian law.
- Political leadership on both sides remains sceptical of each other's commitments.
- This trust deficit has weakened successive peace negotiations.

Military Calculations

- Both Russia and Ukraine continue to believe that battlefield developments can improve their negotiating position.
- Continuous military assistance to Ukraine has encouraged Kyiv to continue resistance.
- Russia continues to mobilise military resources to strengthen its position.
- Ongoing military operations reduce the immediate prospects for meaningful negotiations.

External Geopolitical Rivalry

- The conflict has evolved into a broader geopolitical confrontation between Russia and the Western bloc.
- Competing strategic interests of major powers complicate diplomatic efforts.
- Military, financial, and intelligence support from external actors has prolonged the conflict.
- Consensus among major powers on a peace framework remains elusive.

Economic Sanctions

- Western sanctions against Russia have become a major point of disagreement.
- Russia demands the removal or relaxation of sanctions as part of any settlement.
- Western countries link sanctions relief to Russia's actions on the battlefield.
- The sanctions issue complicates diplomatic negotiations.

Humanitarian Concerns

- Millions of refugees and internally displaced persons require long-term rehabilitation.
- Reconstruction of damaged cities and infrastructure will require enormous financial resources.
- Civilian casualties and human rights concerns continue to fuel hostility.
- Humanitarian issues remain closely linked to political and security negotiations.

Domestic Political Constraints

- Public opinion in both Russia and Ukraine limits political flexibility.
- Nationalist sentiments make territorial compromise politically difficult.
- Leadership changes or domestic political developments could influence future negotiations.
- Sustaining public support remains a major consideration for both governments.

Weakness of International Mediation

- Previous peace initiatives, including the Minsk Agreements, failed to produce lasting results.
- The United Nations Security Council remains constrained by Russia's veto power.
- Multiple peace proposals have lacked acceptance from all stakeholders.
- No universally acceptable mediation framework has yet emerged.

9. Way Forward

- **Revive diplomatic dialogue** through sustained negotiations with the support of neutral mediators.
- **Respect the UN Charter**, international law, sovereignty, and territorial integrity while addressing the legitimate security concerns of all parties.
- **Promote confidence-building measures**, including ceasefires, prisoner exchanges, humanitarian corridors, and protection of civilians.

- **Strengthen the role of international institutions**, particularly the United Nations, in facilitating negotiations and post-war reconstruction.
- **Ensure uninterrupted global supplies** of food, fertilisers, and energy to minimise the conflict's impact on developing countries.
- **Support Ukraine's reconstruction** through coordinated international financial and technical assistance.
- **Reform global governance institutions**, especially the UN Security Council, to improve their effectiveness in addressing major international conflicts.
- **Leverage India's diplomatic credibility** to promote dialogue, advocate peaceful resolution, and represent the concerns of the Global South.

10. Conclusion

The Russia–Ukraine War has emerged as one of the defining geopolitical conflicts of the 21st century, reshaping international relations, global security, and the world economy. It has demonstrated the limitations of military solutions and highlighted the need for a balanced international order based on **dialogue, diplomacy, respect for sovereignty, and adherence to the UN Charter**. The conflict has also accelerated geopolitical realignments, strengthened the role of middle powers, and underscored the importance of energy security, resilient supply chains, and technological innovation in modern warfare. For India, the crisis has reaffirmed the relevance of **strategic autonomy**, enabling it to safeguard national interests while advocating peaceful conflict resolution. A durable peace will ultimately depend on sustained diplomatic engagement, mutual security assurances, and a rules-based international order that balances the legitimate interests of all stakeholders.

BPSC Mains Practice Questions

Q1. Discuss the major causes of the Russia–Ukraine War. How have historical, geopolitical, and security factors contributed to the conflict?

Q2. Critically examine the global implications of the Russia–Ukraine War. Evaluate India's response to the conflict in the context of its policy of strategic autonomy and national interests.

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