

UPSC Syllabus Topic : GS Paper 2 International Relations – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests.

India-West Asia Relations: The Significance of Peace in the Region for India

India's relations with West Asia have evolved over time, influenced by historical links, post-independence foundations, and geopolitical challenges. Here is an overview:

West Asian Region:



Historical Links:

- Ancient trade links between the Indus Valley Civilization and Dilmun (modern Bahrain) and the Mesopotamian Civilization.
- Inclusion of Punjab in the Persian Empire (6th BC) indicating early connections.

Post-Independence Foundations:

- Strong ties with leaders like Egypt’s Gamal Abdel Nasser.
- Rooted in shared interests and participation in political movements like the Non-Aligned Movement.

Challenges from Pakistan’s Influence:

- Hurdles in enhancing ties due to Pakistan’s proactive politics in the region.
- Complications arising from suspicions of West Asian countries supporting Islamic fundamentalism in India.

India’s Foreign Policy towards West Asia (Since 2014):

- **Look West Policy:** Aims to fulfill national interests without entangling in regional Arab politics.
- **Economic Agreements:** Examples include the India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

- **Strategic Investments:** Notable examples include Saudi Arabia's investment in India's Jio platform.
- **Regional Cooperation:** Participation in forums like the India-Arab Cooperation Forum and cooperation with the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC).
- **De-Hyphenation Policy:** Engaging with conflicting parties independently, such as separate visits to Israel and Palestine, showcasing a balanced and autonomous diplomatic approach.

India's Major Achievements in West Asia:

- **Strategic and Counter-Terrorism Cooperation:** Enhanced cooperation in strategic and counter-terrorism areas.
- **De-Hyphenation Policy Success:** Independent engagement with Israel and Palestine, demonstrating a balanced approach.
- **Recognition at the Organisation of Islamic Countries:** Invited as the Guest of Honour at the OIC summit in 2019, a significant diplomatic achievement.
- **Part of I2U2:** Active participation in the I2U2 group, focusing on collaborative projects in food security and clean energy.

Why Peace in West Asia is Important for India:

- **Critical Energy Supplier:** West Asia is crucial for India's energy requirements, being the primary supplier of crude oil and natural gas.
- **Largest Trading Partner:** With a trade volume of \$150 billion, West Asia stands as India's largest trade partner.
- **Strategic and Maritime Security:** Stability in West Asia is vital for India's strategic interests and control of Indian Ocean maritime routes.
- **Indian Diaspora:** Approximately 8-9 million Indians reside in West Asia, emphasizing the importance of regional peace for their well-being.

UPSC Syllabus Topic : GS Paper 2 International Relations – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

The Myanmar Crisis: The Formidable Threat Posed by Resistance Forces to the Junta

The current situation in Myanmar is marked by significant political upheaval and armed resistance against the military government. Key developments include:

Political Transition (Before 2020):

- Transition to partial civilian rule with Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) winning in 2015.
- Tensions over the Rohingya crisis.

Post-2020 Developments:

- **November 2020:** NLD wins general elections, disputed by the military.
- **February 2021:** Military coup ousts the NLD government, leading to widespread protests and a

violent crackdown.

- **Late 2021 to 2022:** Ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) and People's Defence Forces (PDFs) intensify resistance, resulting in escalating conflicts.

Recent Events (2023):

- **October 27, 2023:** Three Brotherhood Alliance launches Operation 1027 in Shan State, causing significant territorial losses for the military.
- **Late 2023:** Rebels capture key areas, including Rikhawdar near the Indian border, leading to a refugee influx into Mizoram, India.



Threats of Operation 1027 to the Military Government:

- **Strategic Territory Loss:** Rebels take over more than 100 military outposts, weakening the military's control.
- **Unprecedented Coordination:** Effective coordination among rebel groups poses a major challenge.
- **Chinese Factor:** Indirect support or tacit approval from China adds to the challenges faced by the junta.
- **Military Morale Decline:** Significant drop in morale with internal pressure and high-level purges.

Impact on India:

- **Refugee Influx:** Around 5,000 refugees from Myanmar enter Mizoram, creating a humanitarian challenge.
- **Border Security Concerns:** Conflicts near the India-Myanmar border raise concerns about security and stability in Indian border states.
- **Implications for India's Act East Policy:** Ongoing conflicts affect strategic projects like the IMT trilateral highway, crucial for improving India's connectivity with ASEAN states.
- **Diplomatic Challenges:** India faces diplomatic challenges in balancing its response to the military coup while protecting its strategic interests.
- **Regional Stability:** The conflict poses a threat to the overall stability of the region, impacting India's Northeastern states and their socio-economic conditions.

UPSC Syllabus Topic : GS Paper 2 International Relations – Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India’s interests.

US-China Relations: Constructing a Foundation

Main Takeaways from the Recent US-China Summit:

1. **Stabilized Relations:** The summit has provided a promise of stabilizing the deteriorating relationship between the U.S. and China, alleviating growing global concerns.
2. **Concrete Agreements:** Tangible agreements were signed, including the restart of military-to-military direct dialogue and addressing issues related to artificial intelligence.
3. **Established Solid Ground:** Cautious optimism surrounds the belief that the effort to stabilize relations is grounded on more stable foundations.
4. **Realization of Direct Engagement's Importance:** Both countries acknowledge that high-level engagement and open communication channels are essential to prevent competitive dynamics from escalating into conflicts.

Upcoming Concerns Regarding US-China Relations:

1. **Taiwan Elections:** China cautions against interference in Taiwan, while the U.S. asserts opposition to any change in the status quo.
2. **US Elections Impact:** U.S. election campaigns often witness heated arguments against China, introducing uncertainties in the relationship.
3. **Differing Perspectives on Future Relations:** China criticizes the U.S. framing of the relationship as fundamentally competitive and urges restraint on issues like Taiwan and export controls.

Lesson for India: The summit underscores a crucial lesson for India in its relationship with China—engaging in dialogue is not a concession but a vital means to build a solid foundation for bilateral ties.