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# Remarks of the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at BIMSTEC Summit 2025

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Excellencies,

At the outset, I extend my sincere gratitude to Prime Minister Her Excellency Shinawatra and the Government of Thailand for the excellent organisation of this Summit.

First of all, on behalf of the people of India, I convey our deepest condolences over the loss of lives and property caused by the recent earthquake in Myanmar and Thailand. We stand in solidarity with those affected and wish a swift and full recovery to the injured.

I commend the Prime Minister and her team for their capable and effective leadership in steering BIMSTEC over the past three years. BIMSTEC serves as a vital bridge between South and Southeast Asia and is emerging as a powerful platform for advancing regional connectivity, cooperation, and shared prosperity.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that the BIMSTEC Charter came into force last year. I am confident that the Bangkok Vision 2030, which we are adopting today, will further our collective commitment to building a prosperous, secure, and inclusive Bay of Bengal region. To further strengthen BIMSTEC, we must continue to expand its scope and enhance its institutional capacities.

It is encouraging to note that the Home Ministers' mechanism is being institutionalized. This forum can play a major role in the fight against cybercrime, cybersecurity threats, terrorism, drug trafficking, and human trafficking. In this regard, I propose that India host the first meeting of this mechanism later this year.

For regional development, physical connectivity must go hand in hand with digital and energy connectivity. I am pleased to note that the BIMSTEC Energy Centre, based in Bengaluru, has commenced its operations. I would like to propose that our teams accelerate efforts towards achieving electric grid interconnection across the region.

India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) has revolutionized the delivery of public services. It has significantly enhanced good governance, increased transparency, and accelerated financial inclusion. We would be happy to share our DPI experience with BIMSTEC member states. To take this forward, a pilot study could be undertaken to better understand the specific needs and priorities of BIMSTEC countries in this area.

I would also like to propose establishing connectivity between India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and the payment systems of BIMSTEC member states. Such integration would bring substantial benefits across trade, industry, and tourism, enhancing economic activity at all levels.

Trade and business connectivity are equally vital to our collective progress. To strengthen collaboration and coordination among our business communities, I propose the establishment of a BIMSTEC Chamber of Commerce. Additionally, an annual BIMSTEC Business Summit will be organised to foster greater economic engagement. I would also suggest conducting a feasibility study to explore the

potential for trade in local currencies within the BIMSTEC region.

A free, open, secure, and safe Indian Ocean is our shared priority. The Maritime Transport Agreement concluded today will strengthen cooperation in merchant shipping and cargo transport, giving a significant boost to trade across the region.

India proposes the establishment of a Sustainable Maritime Transport Centre. This Centre will focus on capacity building, research, innovation, and fostering greater coordination in maritime policy. It will also serve as a catalyst for enhancing our cooperation in maritime security across the region. The recent earthquake has been a stark reminder of how vulnerable the BIMSTEC region remains to natural disasters. India has always stood by its friends as a first responder in times of crisis. We consider it a privilege to have been able to deliver timely relief to the people of Myanmar. While natural disasters may be unavoidable, our preparedness and ability to respond swiftly must always remain unwavering.

In this context, I propose the establishment of a BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence for Disaster Management in India. This Centre will facilitate cooperation in disaster preparedness, relief, and rehabilitation efforts. Additionally, the fourth joint exercise among the BIMSTEC Disaster Management Authorities will be held in India later this year.

Public health is a vital pillar of our collective social development. I am pleased to announce that India will extend support for training and capacity building in cancer care across BIMSTEC countries. In line with our holistic approach to health, a Centre of Excellence will also be established to promote research and dissemination of traditional medicine. Similarly, to benefit our farmers, we propose the establishment of another Centre of Excellence in India focused on the exchange of knowledge and best practices, research collaboration, and capacity building in the agriculture sector.

The strides made by Indian scientists in the field of space are a source of inspiration for youth across the Global South. We are ready to share our expertise and experience with all BIMSTEC member states.

In this regard, I propose the establishment of a

ground station for manpower training, the development and launch of nano-satellites, and use of remote sensing data for the BIMSTEC countries.

To enhance youth skilling across the region, we are launching the BODHI initiative, ie "BIMSTEC for Organised Development of Human Resource Infrastructure" initiative. Under this programme, 300 young individuals from BIMSTEC member countries will receive training in India each year. Scholarships will be offered to BIMSTEC students at India's Forestry Research Institute, and the scholarship scheme at Nalanda University will also be expanded. Additionally, an annual training programme will be organized for young diplomats from BIMSTEC member countries.

Our shared cultural heritage forms a strong foundation for our enduring ties. The 'Bali Jatra' of Odisha, the deep-rooted historical links between Buddhist and Hindu traditions, and the linguistic affinities among us—all stand as powerful symbols of our cultural interconnectedness. To celebrate and showcase these bonds, India will host the inaugural BIMSTEC Traditional Music Festival later this year.

To foster greater exchange among our youth, the BIMSTEC Young Leaders' Summit will be held later this year. We will also launch the BIMSTEC Hackathon and the Young Professional Visitors Programme to encourage innovation and collaboration.

In the field of sports, India proposes to host the BIMSTEC Athletics Meet this year. And looking ahead to 2027, on the occasion of BIMSTEC's 30th anniversary, we are pleased to announce that India will host the inaugural BIMSTEC Games.

For us, BIMSTEC is not merely a regional organisation. It is a model for inclusive development and collective security. It stands as a testament to our shared commitments and the strength of our unity. It embodies the spirit of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Prayas"

I am confident that together, we will continue to strengthen the spirit of solidarity, cooperation, and mutual trust, and take BIMSTEC to even greater heights. In conclusion, I extend a warm welcome to Bangladesh as the incoming Chair of BIMSTEC and convey my best wishes for its successful leadership.

Source: narendramodi.in

# Remarks of the BJP President Shri J.P Nadda

आदरणीय प्रधानमंत्री  
श्री नरेंद्र मोदी जी के नेतृत्व  
में भारत की सामरिक  
नीतियों ने पूरी दुनिया में  
भारत को देखने की दृष्टि  
बदली है।

आज भारत विश्व भर में  
वैश्विक मुद्दों पर अपना पक्ष  
रखने के साथ नीति-निर्माण  
में सहयोगी बन रहा है।

Source: X



# Message from the BJYM National President Shri Tejasvi Surya

Since 2014, India's foreign policy under Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has undergone a paradigm shift, redefining our nation's role on the global stage. The essence of this transformation lies in one word: leadership. PM Modi's vision has propelled India from a peripheral player to a Vishwa Guru—a global leader whose voice shapes international discourse. This shift, evident in our strategic, economic, and humanitarian engagements, reflects a bold "India First" approach, unencumbered by the naive idealism or vote-bank politics that once dictated our diplomacy.

Consider the G20 Delhi Declaration of 2023—a triumph of PM Modi's skilled diplomacy. By blending high ideals with realpolitik, India forged consensus on contentious global issues, showcasing a unique ability to balance morality and pragmatism. This wasn't just a win for India but for the world, proving our capacity to lead with empathy and strategic foresight. The declaration underscored India's growing influence, a stark contrast to the era when our foreign policy was held hostage to domestic appeasement, as seen in Congress's outdated stance on issues like the Israel-Palestine conflict.

PM Modi's leadership has also redefined India's strategic posture. The abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, met with global silence or tacit approval, highlighted the success of five years of diplomatic groundwork. The same is true for the Operation Sindoor to punish the terrorists who did the barbaric Pahalgam attack and their backers in Pakistan.

By fostering robust ties with major powers, including Israel—a relationship stifled for decades by Congress's vote-bank politics—PM Modi has prioritised national interest over parochial considerations. This shift has unlocked new avenues for cooperation, from defence to technology, positioning India as a trusted partner.

India's humanitarian outreach further exemplifies this transformation. The Vaccine Maitri initiative during the COVID-19 pandemic showcased our values of empathy and brotherhood, earning global appreciation. By supplying vaccines to nations in need, India emerged as a force for global good, reinforcing our soft power. Meanwhile, strategic measures like appointing a Chief of Defence Staff, empowering intelligence agencies, and modernising our armed forces have strengthened our security framework, ensuring we can take the fight beyond our borders when necessary.

India's leadership in launching the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure has positioned us at the forefront of global climate diplomacy. The opening of new embassies in Africa, stronger ties with ASEAN through the Act East Policy, and the IMEC Corridor linking India to Europe via the Middle East show India's expansive and future-ready vision. India's response to the Ukraine crisis, balancing ties with Russia and engaging with the West, displayed nuanced diplomacy that few nations managed.

Under PM Modi, India's multilateral engagements have grown, with our policies reflecting confidence and clarity. Every step from strengthening relations with African countries to the India-UK Free Trade Agreement underscores a commitment to national interest and global responsibility. As I discussed at the Bengaluru launch of EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar's Why Bharat Matters, India's global standing has soared, making us a pivotal player in shaping a new world order. This is the legacy of Modi's foreign policy—a resurgent India, unapologetically pursuing its destiny as a global leader.

Vande Mataram!  
**Tejasvi Surya**

MP Lok Sabha,  
Bengaluru South





When Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi assumed office in 2014, he promised not just a new government, but a new vision for Bharat’s place in the world. A decade later, that vision has reshaped Indian foreign policy from a posture of passive non-alignment to one of confident engagement, strategic autonomy, and civilisational assertion. Today, India no longer waits to be consulted—it sets the agenda.

The transformation is rooted in clarity of purpose: “India First” with “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” as its moral compass. Under PM Modi, India has mastered the art of multi-alignment without compromise. Whether standing firm with traditional partners like Russia, deepening ties with the U.S., expanding defence cooperation with France and Israel, or engaging the Arab world and Africa with unprecedented warmth, India’s outreach is both pragmatic and principled.

From the historic hosting of the G20 Summit in New Delhi—where global consensus was forged amid deep international divides—to spearheading initiatives like the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), India has demonstrated that it can lead global conversations on climate, technology, and sustainable development.

India’s handling of the Russia-Ukraine conflict was a masterclass in balanced diplomacy. It preserved strategic partnerships, ensured energy security through discounted oil imports, and defended national interest, earning praise from world leaders while staying above bloc politics. At the same time, PM Modi’s firm but compassionate message to Vladimir Putin— “This is not an era of war”—resonated globally and symbolised India’s maturing voice of reason.

What sets this era of diplomacy apart is bold innovation paired with rooted confidence. PM Modi has used cultural diplomacy, such as Buddhist relic diplomacy in Thailand and the global celebration of International Yoga Day, to connect India’s civilisational values with contemporary statecraft. India’s role in facilitating the IMEC corridor, revitalising ties with Greece and Armenia, and asserting its presence in West Asia and the Mediterranean shows that geography is no longer a constraint—India is a stakeholder in every major global theatre.

Our diaspora diplomacy has added a powerful new dimension. PM Modi’s mass connect with the Indian diaspora—from New York to Sydney—not only rekindled patriotism among overseas Indians but turned them into brand ambassadors of Bharat. During crises like the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, India carried out swift and

humane evacuation operations, from Vande Bharat Mission to Operation Ganga, reinforcing the message: Every Indian life matters.

India’s proactive foreign policy has also fortified its neighbourhood. From Look East to Act East, from Neighbourhood First to SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region), the Modi government has expanded India’s regional influence through infrastructure, digital diplomacy, and defence cooperation. Even in complex situations like Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, India adopted a strategy of quiet diplomacy, balancing humanitarian outreach with hard-headed realism.

Meanwhile, economic diplomacy under PM Modi has achieved remarkable traction. India has signed or negotiated key Free Trade Agreements with Australia, the UAE, the UK, and the EU. The promotion of UPI as a global digital payment standard, the success of Make in India, and the push for semiconductor independence reflect the convergence of foreign policy and economic self-reliance.

Modi’s foreign policy is not a reaction to the world—it is a projection of India’s civilisational ethos and strategic clarity. It is diplomacy not shackled by past idealism, but driven by national interest, cultural pride, and a desire to shape a multipolar world.

As youth, we must internalise and champion this vision. PM Modi has not only redefined Bharat’s global image—he has challenged us to be flag-bearers of this new India, one that acts boldly, speaks confidently, and leads responsibly. This is Modiplomacy—a blend of purpose and principle, strategy and soul. And this is just the beginning.

# India on the World Stage: A Decade of Diplomacy under Prime Minister Narendra Modi

**Dr. Vijay Chauthaiwale**

In-charge, Department of Foreign Affairs, BJP

Historically, India's foreign policy was shaped by non-alignment—a stance born from the challenges of a newly independent nation seeking to avoid entanglement in global power blocs. While it provided strategic autonomy, it often limited India's influence on the world stage. That approach has evolved. Today, India follows a more confident and pragmatic diplomatic course under Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. It engages with a diverse range of global partners across sectors such as defence, technology, energy, and trade, guided firmly by national interest. This modern diplomacy is not about choosing sides but what best serves India's long-term goals with clarity, balance, and strategic foresight.

The U.S.-India partnership has reached new heights, driven by shared democratic values and strategic interests. The iCET platform has boosted cooperation in AI, quantum computing, semiconductors, and space. The U.S. has been India's top trading partner for four years, with bilateral trade hitting \$131.84 billion in 2024–25. PM Modi made history as the first Indian Prime Minister to address the U.S. Congress twice, highlighting India's rising influence. Meanwhile, India maintains strategic ties with Russia, continuing oil imports that saved over \$3.3 billion in early FY24.

PM Modi's diplomacy has strengthened India's ties with the UAE, with seven visits—more than any previous Indian leader—each adding depth to the





partnership. A standout achievement was the fast-tracked India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), signed in just 88 days. Economic ties have grown, along with cultural bonds, exemplified by the 2024 inauguration of the BAPS Hindu Temple in Abu Dhabi, a project pending since 1997. This milestone represents both a spiritual and a symbolic triumph of India's soft power and mutual respect between civilizations.

France, too, has emerged as a pivotal strategic partner. The long-stalled Rafale jet deal—stalled in negotiations during the UPA years—was finally concluded under Modi's leadership in 2016. But the deal was not just about aircraft. It included a 50% offset clause, which mandated reinvestment in India's aerospace sector, fueling job creation, technology transfer, and boosting the "Make in India" vision. Indo-French cooperation now spans maritime security, climate change, civil nuclear energy, and space exploration—making France a trusted and comprehensive partner.

One of the most defining moments of India's diplomatic rise was its G20 presidency in 2023. Far from ceremonial, it showcased India's growing confidence and ability to lead on the global stage. Hosting 43 heads of state, India managed one of the

most complex summits in recent memory. Amid deep divides over the Russia-Ukraine conflict, India's diplomatic skill prevailed—brokering a consensus after 200 hours of tough negotiations. The inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member of the G20—championed and facilitated by India—was a historic first.

Prime Minister Modi's foreign outreach is firmly rooted in the "Neighbourhood First" policy, emphasising cooperation, shared heritage, and mutual respect. A landmark example came in 2015 with the historic Land Boundary Agreement with Bangladesh, resolving a decades-old border issue and granting thousands of enclave residents clarity of identity and rights—a bold and humane act of diplomacy. Our ties with Nepal have deepened through cultural and economic collaboration, from the Ramayana Circuit to energy and infrastructure projects. In Sri Lanka, India's support spans housing, scholarships, and economic aid, reflecting a partnership beyond aid. Maritime cooperation with the Maldives has enhanced regional security through joint patrols, radar systems, and defence training. In Bhutan, India is leading the hydropower development, benefiting both economies and reinforcing regional integration.

Modi's foreign policy also shifted from a passive "Look East" approach to a dynamic and results-oriented "Act East" one. This pivot reflects India's growing stakes in Southeast Asia, not just as a neighbour, but as a regional influencer. The delivery of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to the Philippines was not only India's largest defence export deal but also a strong signal of India's emergence as a reliable defence partner in the Indo-Pacific. Moreover, infrastructure projects like the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway and Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project signify India's commitment to building seamless connectivity in the region—critical for trade, security, and people-to-people ties.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has redefined the role of travel in diplomacy, turning every foreign visit into a strategic opportunity to deepen ties, open new doors, and elevate India's global presence. Unlike the traditional approach of limited, reactive visits, PM Modi has embraced proactive outreach, often venturing into territories that had long remained outside the focus of Indian foreign policy. He became the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Mongolia, Rwanda, Bahrain, Israel, and Papua New Guinea—each visit a powerful message that India values every partnership, big or small, traditional or emerging. In 2024 alone, PM Modi undertook 11 foreign tours, covering 16 countries—a powerful reflection of his conviction that diplomacy begins with presence.

Perhaps one of the most transformative elements of Modi's diplomacy has been the embrace of the Indian diaspora. From packed stadiums in the US and Australia to heartfelt addresses in Israel, Denmark, and South Africa, PM Modi has positioned overseas Indians as vital partners in nation-building. Their \$129.4 billion contribution in remittances in 2024 alone speaks not just of economic strength, but of an enduring emotional bond with Bharat.

India's humanitarian efforts have reinforced its image as a Vishwabandhu—a true friend to the world. Through the Vaccine Maitri initiative, India supplied over 301 million COVID-19 doses to 101 countries, reflecting the principle that "no one is safe until everyone is safe." Swift rescue missions

like Operation Ganga (Ukraine), Devi Shakti (Afghanistan), and Maitri (Nepal earthquake) saved thousands of lives. PM Modi personally monitored these missions, ensuring stranded citizens had access to shelter, food, and safe passage home.

On the security front, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has ushered in a new era of assertiveness in India's counter-terrorism approach. This shift has been embodied in Operation Sindoor, a military response to terrorism, that signals zero tolerance toward terrorism in all its forms. Through this operation, PM Modi has laid out a clear and uncompromising three-point doctrine that underlines India's evolving security priorities:

- Any terrorist attack will be met with a firm and direct response.
- Nuclear threats or blackmail will not deter India's resolve
- No distinction will be made between terrorist organizations and state sponsors of terrorism.

This decisive doctrine marks a significant shift in India's security policy, combining military readiness with diplomatic clarity. It signals India's commitment to defending its citizens and supporting a global order rooted in peace and accountability.

As the world enters a multipolar era, PM Narendra Modi has positioned India as a confident and influential global player, redefining its international role. His leadership has earned numerous international honours, reflecting personal and diplomatic recognition of his vision.

As we reflect on this journey, one thing becomes clear—Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not just rewritten India's foreign policy playbook; he has redefined the very idea of global leadership with an Indian heart. His every handshake, summit, and speech reflect a statesman who carries the dreams of 1.4 billion Indians with conviction and pride. In a world searching for balance and purpose, India, under Modi, is not just participating in global conversations but shaping them. The story of India's rise on the global stage is, in many ways, the story of a leader who dared to dream beyond borders and made the world take notice.



# Global India, Assertive India

**Bilal Parray**

National Executive Member  
of the BJYM

As the world's largest democracy, India has long been poised to take its rightful place on the global stage. Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, India's foreign policy has undergone a transformative shift, catapulting the nation to unprecedented heights of international recognition and respect.

## **Strategic Partnerships: A Cornerstone of Modi's Foreign Policy**

One of the hallmarks of Modi's foreign policy has been forging strategic partnerships with like-minded nations. The Prime Minister's tireless efforts have strengthened ties with key countries such as the United States, Japan, Australia, and Israel. These partnerships have enhanced India's economic and security interests and provided a platform for the nation to assert its influence on global issues.

India's participation in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)—alongside the U.S., Japan, and Australia—marks a renewed commitment to a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific. This alignment reflects India's growing role in maintaining regional security architecture while deterring hegemonic threats.

Similarly, the India–U.S. Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership has deepened in areas such as defence technology, critical minerals, semiconductors, and clean energy. Establishing the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) with Washington signifies a futuristic approach to bilateral cooperation in AI, quantum, and space.

With Israel, the relationship has grown beyond defence to include water innovation, agriculture, and cybersecurity. In Japan, Modi has found a partner for infrastructure investments in the Northeast and the ambitious Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project, symbolising the fusion of economic diplomacy with national development.

### **Diaspora Outreach: A Bridge to the World**

The Indian diaspora has long been vital to the nation's foreign policy. Modi's government has made concerted efforts to engage with the diaspora, recognising its potential as a bridge between India and the world. Initiatives such as the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and the Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) scheme have helped foster a sense of belonging among the diaspora while leveraging their skills and expertise to promote India's interests abroad.

Modi's large diaspora events—from Madison Square Garden in New York to Wembley Stadium in London—have redefined India's global brand. These engagements are not just symbolic; they are strategic. The diaspora now plays an active role in lobbying for India's interests, shaping opinion in host countries, and attracting FDI and technology to India.

### **Bold Diplomatic Initiatives: A New Era of Indian Foreign Policy**

Modi's government has been characterized by its bold and innovative approach to diplomacy. From the Prime Minister's historic visit to Israel in 2017 to the Wuhan Summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2018, India has consistently demonstrated its willingness to engage with nations on its own terms. This newfound confidence has enabled India to assert its interests more effectively, whether through the Quad initiative, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, or the Voice of

Global South Summit India hosted during its G20 presidency.

India's presidency of the G20 in 2023 marked a defining moment in its diplomatic journey. India led the grouping with maturity and purpose and gave voice to developing nations that often feel excluded from elite forums. The inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member of the G20 at India's initiative underscored Modi's commitment to reshaping the global order into a multipolar, equitable, and inclusive one.

India also became a global crisis manager, whether through Vaccine Maitri during the COVID-19 pandemic or by providing food grains and humanitarian aid to African and South Asian nations amid global disruptions.

### **Defence Diplomacy and Energy Strategy**

A pragmatic defence and energy strategy has also complemented India's rise. With defence exports crossing ₹16,000 crore and joint exercises with over 30 nations annually, India is not just a consumer of global security but an emerging provider.

Meanwhile, India's purchase of discounted Russian oil despite Western sanctions showed a bold assertion of strategic autonomy. The move protected Indian consumers from global inflation and reaffirmed India's right to pursue national interests while maintaining cordial ties across geopolitical divides.

### **Conclusion**

As we reflect on India's foreign policy achievements under Modi's leadership, it's clear that the nation has made significant strides on the global stage. From strategic partnerships to diaspora outreach, from G20 diplomacy to energy pragmatism, Modi's vision for a stronger, more assertive India has begun to take shape.

India today is not a balancing power but a leading voice of the Global South, a civilizational state reclaiming its stature through confidence, culture, and competence. As we look to the future, it's evident that India's rise as a global power is no longer a distant dream—it is the emerging reality of the 21st century.

# From NAM to MAHASAGAR: India's New Foreign Policy Horizon

**Sandip Kumar Singh**

Assistant Professor of  
International Politics, School  
of International Studies, JNU

The contemporary geopolitics is characterised through the lens of the Global North-South divide and an era increasingly shaped by intensifying great power rivalries and contested multilateralism. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, India has become a champion in making its global role through the powerful advocacy of the Global South's causes. Since taking office in 2014, Modi's foreign policy in general and Global South approach in particular, has undergone a complete transformation that places its concerns, aspirations, and developmental priorities at the centre of India's diplomacy. Through initiatives like the Voice of Global South Summit and the much-appreciated and successful presidency of the G20 in 2023, New Delhi has been bridging the structural divide between the Global North and South, positioning itself as a mediator between developed and developing countries.



India's ambition to become a leading voice of the Global South is not ahistorical, but it has a strong legacy. The foundation laid during the NAM (Non-Aligned Movement) era, based on a normative and diplomatic approach in the Cold War, now Prime Minister Modi's articulation reimagines this legacy within a contemporary and pragmatic framework of the changing world politics. The Modi government has made special focus on South-South cooperation, not merely a solidarity-based normative discourse but a mechanism for recalibrating global governance, particularly in institutions such as the United Nations, the IMF, and the World Bank, where representation from the Global South remains inadequate. In the last decade, the government in New Delhi has played a very active role in raising the voice of the Global South at all the multilateral platforms, be it climate justice and financing, pandemic-like Covid-19 impacts on the Global South, victims of terrorism in the developing world, and development assistance.

### **A New Chapter in India's Foreign Policy**

Modi's foreign policy approach vis-à-vis the Global South makes a distinct departure from the doctrinal non-alignment period underpinning India's external engagements during the Nehruvian era. While the first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru solely emphasised moral solidarity among newly independent states through forums like the Afro-Asian Conference or the Bandung Conference and the NAM, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has adopted a more pragmatic and strategic interest-driven posture—what External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar calls it as a “multi-alignment” (Jaishankar 2024) approach. This approach enables India to pursue strategic autonomy by engaging simultaneously with diverse global actors—including the United States, Russia, Europe, China and many key partners in the Global South—without being tied to any bloc in contemporary world politics.



This redefined vision has yielded substantive outcomes in India's foreign policy outcomes in the last couple of years. Like, India's presidency of the G20 in 2023 was marked by the landmark inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member in the grouping as the 21st member—an institutional breakthrough widely regarded as a victory for equitable global governance and inclusion of the weaker countries in the Global Order. The Voice of Global South Summit made a strong presence and significant impact during India's G20 presidency and beyond. This kind of diplomatic innovation of the Modi government provides a consultative space for countries from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean to articulate collective concerns in a very cordial environment without feeling the pressure of the Global North. By 2025, this platform had evolved to produce the MAHASAGAR framework, which proposes a roadmap for South-South collaboration premised on mutually beneficial trade, sustainable technology transfer, and concessional development finance within the Global South countries, and which scholar explains as “India's new MAHASAGAR vision signals strategic continuity in the Indian Ocean, expanding SAGAR's scope to embrace trade, development, and security” (Halder 2025).

These new developments in diplomacy underscore the Prime Minister Modi's personalised approach in diplomatic engagements and aim to position India as a leading voice of the Global South in the contemporary world. His prolific international outreach—visiting over 100 countries since assuming office in 2014—has projected an image of India as a confident, aspirational country committed to shaping the emerging global order and its outcomes without any hesitation, which has not been the case in the past. Initiatives like the International Solar Alliance (ISA), co-founded with France, further exemplify India's leadership in addressing climate justice through South-South cooperation, particularly among solar-rich developing nations. Moreover, development partnerships—including grants, capacity-building programs, and technical assistance across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean—make a transition from rhetorical solidarity of the Cold War era to actionable support in the present time.

Prime Minister Modi's much-touted statement that “India's growth is not just for India—it's for the world,” delivered during the 2023 G20 summit, encapsulates the philosophical pivot of Indian diplomacy under his tenure. This approach reflects an effort to project India's rise at the global stage not as a ‘hegemonic’ power like many other powers of the past and contemporary time, but as a shared opportunity and solidarity, particularly for countries historically marginalised in global decision-making multilateral forums like those from the Global South.

However, pursuing this role is not devoid of contradictions in the given contemporary geopolitical context. India will have to make decisions wisely and tread carefully through a landscape marked by geopolitical realignments, especially in the context of increasing US-China rivalry under the Trump presidency, tariff wars. It will also have to manage the country's internal developmental needs and challenges, and the heterogeneity within the Global South framework. African, Latin American, Caribbean and Asian countries each bring divergent interests, political cultures and historical experiences with globalisation, making collective mobilisation a complex challenge for any country in the Global South, which is a significant challenge for India to manage it successfully.

Therefore, while Modi's vision holds the potential to democratise global politics and diplomacy while asserting India's leadership position in a multipolar global order, it also raises some critical questions. To what extent is this projection of leadership driven by normative commitments to global equity and justice, and how much of it is focused on advancing India's strategic and economic interests in the Global South? As India manages this delicate balance, the answer may lie in how the country translates rhetoric into sustained action through capacity-building programmes, skill and technology transfer, and equitable development partnerships beyond symbolic summits and diplomatic grandstanding in the future. And the Modi government has been doing it over the last decade through various programmes sponsored across the Global South region.

# Navigating Contradictions: Modi's Realpolitik in the Middle East

**Dr Pavan Chaurasia**

Foreign Policy Analyst and a Research Fellow  
at India Foundation.



After the tragic news of the attack on tourists in the Pahalgam region of Jammu & Kashmir broke out some days ago, condemnation of the attack and prayers for the victims of this gruesome terror attack started pouring in from all parts of the world. Strong words of condemnation and support for India also emerged from Saudi Arabia, Iran and Israel, the three key players of West Asia, considered to be arch rivals of each other. However, their coming together in support of India, which seems rare, reflects how India's West Asia policy has strengthened in the last decade under Prime

Minister Modi, known for his unconventional and out-of-the-box thinking. It is worth mentioning that PM Modi was visiting Saudi Arabia for a bilateral meeting with the Saudi leadership at a time when the attack took place and had to cut short his visit to come back to India.

Since PM Modi came to power in 2014, India's foreign policy has undergone a tectonic shift in the right direction. New Delhi has started to be more confident and has put up concrete efforts to assert itself more and seek its rightful place in the world order. From 'High grounds' to 'High table', New

Delhi's presence is now too big to be ignored by scholars, academics and foreign policy enthusiasts alike. The perfect balance of serving its own national interest without compromising on the globally accepted core principles of values, norms and laws has changed the perception of the world towards New Delhi. All this is acutely reflected in India's West Asia Policy under PM Modi. Noted scholar Dr Pradhan has argued that Prime Minister Modi's 'Think West' policy has further prioritised engagement with the West Asian countries. It seeks to balance relations with competing powers and co-op the contradictory powers of the region like Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Israel while fostering economic and security cooperation with all of them.

### **Why is West Asia Important for India?**

West Asia is a part of India's extended neighbourhood, which comprises six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries – Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, and Bahrain – Levant countries like Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine and Israel, and other key states like Iran, Iraq, and Yemen. The region is not only the birthplace of all three Abrahamic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – but is also mired with numerous inter-religious and intra-religious clashes. The region has also suffered due to the continuous interference of global powers like the US, China and Russia. So profound is West Asia's impact on global affairs that what happens in West Asia rarely stays confined to it—it echoes across continents, shaping the course of geopolitics worldwide.

Historically, India has had an intense relationship with major countries of the region. West Asia has been vital to India's energy security, supplying over 60% of its crude oil imports. The Indian diaspora in West Asia, numbering over 8 million, has been a crucial source of remittances. In 2021, India received around USD 87 billion in remittances, with about 50% coming from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Apart from this, India is also the home to the world's third-largest Muslim population (about 200 million), making developments in West Asia, particularly regarding Islamic holy sites, of domestic importance. The region has been critical due to its proximity to India (via the Arabian Sea),

control over vital maritime routes (e.g., the Strait of Hormuz), and its role as a global energy hub.

### **Modi and West Asia**

Despite such great relevance, West Asia remained out of the priority list for the establishment of Indian Foreign Policy for several decades. No high-profile visits, limiting the avenues of cooperation to specific sectors and looking at the region primarily through domestic vote bank politics defined New Delhi's approach towards the region. Before 2014, India's West Asia strategy had no strategic depth and was mainly concerned with trade, remittances from the Indian diaspora, and energy security (oil and gas imports). All that changed with the coming of Prime Minister Modi to power. In August 2015, Modi made the first visit by an Indian prime minister in thirty-four years to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), marking the beginning of his outreach to the region during his first term. Since then, regular high-level trips by Modi, such as to Saudi Arabia (2016, 2019, 2025), Qatar (2024), and the United Arab Emirates (2015, 2018, 2024), have significantly improved India's relations.

To make India a major participant in the region, the Modi government has also broadened the relations with West Asian states to cover sectors like defence, security, technology, and connectivity. In keeping with the "Make in India" campaign, Modi has aggressively pursued investments from Gulf sovereign wealth funds for India's industrial and infrastructure sectors. To strengthen economic ties and regional connectivity, PM Modi has also pushed for ideas like the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) launched during India's 2023 G20 presidency. It is one initiative that aims to offset China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), improve connectivity, lower trade costs and bring India closer to the European markets via the West Asia rail and sea network.

With defence pacts struck with the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, India has established itself as a reliable security partner in recent years. Maritime security cooperation with the leading regional player has been highlighted by joint naval and military exercises, such as those with Saudi Arabia (Al-Mohed Al-Hindi) and the

United Arab Emirates (Zayed Talwar), as well as anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden. Also, the highest civilian honours to PM Modi, like Saudi Arabia's King Abdulaziz Sash (2016) and the United Arab Emirates' Zayed Medal (2019), have demonstrated his close relationship with regional leaders. Cultural projects that foster soft power and improve relations with the Indian diaspora, including the 2024 opening of the first Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi, have been a noteworthy feature of Modi's West Asia policy.

One of the most discussed features of Modi's Foreign policy has been the policy of dehyphenation, under which India's relations with one country are not defined in terms of its relations with another country. It has helped India greatly in maintaining its relations with countries that do not get along very well, especially in the case of the West Asian region, which has multiple centres of power. PM Modi moved away from the convention when he made a standalone visit to Israel in 2017 without going to Palestine, which was the first visit to that country by any Indian Prime Minister. Similarly, India has refused to vote against Israel in various international forums, like the UN, on various occasions. Yet it has continued to provide aid and financial support to the people of Palestine.

### **The Need for Cautious Optimism**

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to state that India's relations with West Asia under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi are perhaps in their best phase, wherein all the countries of the region have started acknowledging India's role as a responsible and receptive economic and military power, which has the will and potential to deliver what it promises—no wonder they also want India to be on their side in case of any conflict or contestation. Today, when India speaks, the world listens! Yet, certain challenges for India – both long-term and short-term – continue to serve as significant impediments to reaching the zenith of these partnerships.

The Israel-Palestine conflict, Iran-Saudi Arabia friction, and Israel-Iran tensions are some significant points of concern for India because any escalation of conflict between these countries

pushes New Delhi to drop its neutral position and take sides, something that it wants to avoid at any cost. Moreover, the rise in Chinese interference over the last couple of years in the region has been a source of constant trouble and tension for India. This has coincided with the USA's receding role, the region's de facto hegemon.

Another irritant in the region is Turkey, a country desperately trying to replace Saudi Arabia as the leader of the Muslim world since the rise of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to power. Over the years, Turkey has moved closer to India's nemesis, Pakistan and has also made several comments on India's domestic affairs, like the Kashmir issue, thereby increasing the gap and mistrust between the two countries. Reports have also emerged about Turkey supplying arms to Pakistan in the wake of the Pahalgam Terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir, whose links to the Pakistani deep state are an open secret. Interestingly, this has come when the Gulf monarchs, the traditional supporters of Pakistan, are moving away from it and inching closer to India.

Also, the role of the USA, though diminished, still carries some weight. If President Trump imposes new sanctions on Iran or goes for a military operation against it, then it would be an economic nightmare for India, owing to the sensitivity of the region of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, which play a critical role in India's energy security.

As long as it resolves internal issues and maintains its balanced stance, India has the opportunity to expand its regional influence through opportunities in economic diversification, connectivity initiatives, and defence cooperation. The success of this policy depends on India's capacity to handle intricate regional dynamics while capitalising on its rising international prominence. PM Modi has been able to navigate successfully against the tides that have emerged in the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea and Red Sea. But in the coming days, India's diplomatic agility will increasingly be tested in the Mediterranean arc, particularly in navigating the complex dynamics of Turkey, Israel, and Palestine.

# From Passive Ties to Strategic Leverage: Modi and the Arab Gulf

**Dr. Monica Verma**

New Delhi-based geopolitical commentator who teaches International Relations at NECU, Dimapur

On the eve of the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, a wide section of foreign policy ‘experts’ in India were busy sowing doubts regarding the BJP’s Prime Ministerial candidate, Narendra Modi. The crux of their argument was what the Chief Minister of a provincial government (Gujarat) would know about foreign policy? Even if he tows his own party line on matters of international relations, he is only likely to take an antagonist position on Pakistan and a very sympathetic position towards Israel. This, as

per them, was going to be the centrepiece of Modi’s foreign policy if, at all, he won the elections in the first place. But as much as the election results were a shocker to this section, what was even more surprising was how PM Modi’s foreign policy turned out to be a very nuanced, detailed and coherent one with engagement of every single actor that was beneficial to the country’s national interest.

In this light, one can understand relations between India and the Arab world in the last decade. In the



year 1991, when PM Narasimha Rao had unleashed reforms in India's economy, he had also given a mantra to 'Look East'. This was an attempt to increase India's integration with the emerging economies of Southeast Asia and beyond, which was seen as a necessary step towards diversification of partners after the disintegration of the country's Cold War ally, the Soviet Union. Although the 'Look East' policy later took a life of its own when subsequent leaders, including PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee, gave it a strategic impetus as well, looking only east ended up making another critical region of India's West, devoid of any meaningful attention. So there was 'Look East' but no 'Look West'.

For almost seven decades after independence, India had always viewed the immediate region to the West through the prism of the Arab-Israel conflict, where the Nehruvian worldview of considering Israel as an occupying force and Palestine as a victim played a dominant role in how that region was treated in India's overall foreign policy. It did not matter that this region was also home to some of the biggest suppliers of crude oil to India's rising economy. Nor did the fact that this region was providing employment to the largest group of Indian migrants and also a significant source of remittances mean anything to our foreign affairs community. Mere transactionalism and not strategic calculations dominated India's relations with West Asia. But soon this underwent a transformative change.

One of the key changes that the Modi doctrine has brought to India's relations with the Arab countries is the way he has brought an element of foresight and strategic imperative to it. This region is not a mere collection of states that share a common ethnic identity, but it is also home to a large reserve of hydrocarbons, which are key to India's long-term energy security. In addition to this, these countries are now looking to diversify their economies beyond oil due to diminishing monetary returns. A series of reforms have been undertaken by every single country in the region, including the UAE and Saudi Arabia, to this effect. On one hand, these countries want to be a part of the emerging economic order, and on the other, they are also modernising their

outlook on Islam, where a radical variant of the religion has now taken a backseat. In its place, these countries are embracing liberal and plural values instead. PM Modi has shown an excellent vision in tapping into this rare convergence of interests.

He has filled the historic void of warmth and personal camaraderie between India and these countries by making multiple visits to the region. It is quite a sight when he lands in capital cities in the Gulf region, and a top-ranking leader breaks protocol to receive him. The respect they shower on him also reflects India's economic dynamism, which is thriving under his leadership. If his government has launched multiple flagship initiatives to build India's economic strength, then Modi understands that the Gulf region can be a huge source of investment for India. After all, together, this region accounts for the world's largest sovereign wealth funds.

The way PM Modi has steered India's relations with West Asia towards a win-win cooperation becomes more significant when we analyse its geopolitical dimension. Interestingly, this region, which was once the prime backer of radicalisation in Kashmir, has now become one of the most prominent cheerleaders of India's development plans in the state. This includes Dubai-based Emaar Group, which has invested millions to develop a shopping complex in Srinagar. The same is true for other countries, which also regularly express clear interest in the economic opportunity that Kashmir presents in the post-370 scenario at various forums, including the Gulf Business Summit.

A wind of change is blowing in India's equation with Arabia. The old permutations and combinations have given way to new-age drivers, where the region has even become key to India's mega connectivity strategy. Once operational, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor will be a game-changer for all the economies involved. All these developments were unthinkable just a decade ago. One can easily say that Modi's personal investment in leveraging West Asia for India's national interest was a great move. The time is now ripe to reap dividends.

# Beyond Oil: India's Energy Revolution in the Middle East

**Dr. Pooja Paswan**

Assistant Professor of Public  
Administration at Jamia  
Millia Islamia University

In 2024–2025, the Modi government has intensified India's engagement with the Middle East, particularly with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia, by transforming traditional energy ties into comprehensive strategic partnerships. The initiative moves beyond the conventional paradigm of crude oil imports as India's foreign policy now emphasises collaboration in renewable energy, green hydrogen production, strategic petroleum reserves, and cross-border energy corridors.



The key initiatives, such as the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), reflect this shift, creating new connectivity and energy trade routes that position India as a critical hub linking Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. Now that the renewable energy cooperation has deepened, with the UAE and Saudi Arabia investing in India's solar and wind energy projects, India also reciprocates through technology-sharing agreements and clean energy infrastructure development.

The partnership extends to building strategic petroleum reserves, ensuring energy security during global market volatility. Equally significant is the focus on green hydrogen, which is a vital component of India's Net Zero ambitions, where joint ventures aim to create sustainable supply chains. Through these initiatives, the Modi government has effectively broadened India's energy diplomacy, enhancing economic resilience, supporting the energy transition, and strengthening India's position as a key player in the evolving global energy landscape.

### **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**

The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) was launched during the G20 New Delhi Summit in 2023 and was actively pursued into 2024. It represents one of the most ambitious infrastructure and connectivity projects initiated by the Modi government. It strengthens economic integration between Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. The IMEC establishes a multi-modal corridor connecting India with the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, and ultimately Europe. At its core, IMEC focuses on facilitating trade, energy security, and sustainable development through the development of critical infrastructure. It envisions an integrated network of railways, shipping lanes, pipelines, and electricity grids, creating a seamless flow of goods, energy, and information across regions. One of the corridor's most strategic dimensions lies in its focus on energy infrastructure—specifically the establishment of pipelines for green hydrogen, electricity transmission corridors, and digital connectivity hubs.



The IMEC is positioned as a counterbalance to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), offering an alternative model grounded in transparency, sustainability, and mutually beneficial cooperation. Thus, for India, IMEC is more than a trade route; it is a geopolitical and economic strategy to secure energy supplies, expand renewable energy exports, and reinforce India's status as a major player in the evolving global order.

### **Strategic Petroleum Reserve Agreements: Strengthening India's Energy Security**

India significantly expanded its Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) in 2024–2025 by entering into key agreements with the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. Under these agreements, India secured access to overseas crude storage facilities, allowing it to stockpile oil closer to supply sources. This move enhances India's energy resilience by safeguarding against global oil price volatility, supply disruptions, and geopolitical uncertainties. Hence, by diversifying the geographic spread of its reserves, the Modi government has adopted a forward-looking energy security strategy, ensuring that India maintains stable access to critical energy resources during market instability.

### **Green Hydrogen Diplomacy: Pioneering Sustainable Energy Partnerships**

India intensified its green energy collaboration by signing Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia to produce and export green hydrogen jointly. These agreements focus on establishing integrated hydrogen supply chains, developing large-scale green ammonia production facilities, and launching pilot projects that connect Gulf production hubs to Indian ports, particularly in Gujarat. This strategic initiative supports India's clean energy transition goals and positions the country as a major global hub for green hydrogen trade, fostering innovation, sustainability, and long-term energy security.

### **Cross-Investments in Renewable Energy: Deepening India-Middle East Collaboration**

In 2024–2025, India witnessed a surge in cross-investments in renewable energy with strategic partners from the Middle East. The Abu Dhabi National Energy Company (TAQA) is exploring

major stakes in Indian solar and wind energy projects. Saudi Aramco and ACWA Power are investing heavily in India's emerging green hydrogen and clean energy sectors. Simultaneously, leading Indian companies such as Adani Green Energy and Reliance New Energy are partnering with Middle Eastern sovereign funds to expand renewable energy infrastructure. These collaborations mark a significant shift toward sustainable energy development and reinforce India's ambition to become a global clean energy hub.

### **Joint Technology and Innovation Platforms: Shaping the Future of Energy**

Over the last few years, India, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia deepened their cooperation through joint technology and innovation platforms in the energy sector. It has culminated in several collaborative initiatives to focus on advancing carbon capture technologies, developing sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), and improving energy-efficient port logistics to support greener trade corridors. Both Gulf nations view India as a strategic testing ground for deploying and scaling their next-generation energy technologies for broader Asian markets. These partnerships accelerate India's energy transition and position it as a critical hub for innovation, commercialization, and deployment of sustainable energy solutions across the Indo-Pacific region.

The Modi government's proactive energy diplomacy in 2024–2025 has strategically aligned India's international engagements with its national energy transition goals. Through expanded partnerships in renewable energy, green hydrogen, and critical technologies, India is advancing toward its Net Zero target for 2070. Furthermore, by reducing fossil fuel dependency and building resilient supply chains, the government has positioned India as a key player in global clean energy transformation. These initiatives reflect the Modi government's vision of combining sustainability with strategic autonomy, ensuring India's growth trajectory is energy-secure, environmentally responsible, and globally influential in the evolving energy governance landscape.

# From Startup Nation to Strategic Nation: India's Global Pivot

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**Amey Nitin Agharkar**  
PhD at the Indian Institute of  
Science, Bengaluru

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has transformed India's position as a global power through economic expansion, a booming startup ecosystem, and enhanced defence capabilities. The strategic partnerships between India and major nations expanded through shared defence research and strategic mineral extraction. India's diplomatic agility—evident in its handling of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and energy diversification—reflects its commitment to “strategic autonomy.”



At the same time, the government has championed bold environmental goals—reducing carbon intensity, expanding non-fossil capacity, and spearheading the National Green Hydrogen Mission to advance clean-energy production. The government's outreach to the diaspora via the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and streamlined Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) schemes has strengthened cultural and economic ties with over 4 million OCI cardholders worldwide. Bold diplomatic initiatives, from balancing great-power rivalries to championing climate commitments, underscore India's emerging role as an independent voice in global affairs.

### **India's Global Rise: Economic Power, Diplomatic Prestige**

India's economic progress under PM Modi's leadership has shown exceptional results. International Monetary Fund projections for 2025 show that India will rank fourth globally in 2025 with an estimated nominal GDP reaching \$4.19 trillion, which equals Japan and surpasses Germany as an economic power. The economists predict India's major economy will expand at a 6.2 per cent rate in 2025, marking the fastest growth among all the G20 countries. In March 2025, India declared over 100 unicorn companies, establishing its position as the world's third-biggest startup centre after China and the United States. Under PM Modi, India has elevated its diplomatic profile. In 2023, France awarded him the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour—the first Indian premier to receive it; Egypt conferred the Order of the Nile, its highest state honor; Russia bestowed the Order of St. Andrew in July 2024; and Kuwait, Nigeria, Dominica, Guyana, Barbados, and Mauritius followed with their top civilian awards in late 2024 and early 2025.

### **Strategic Partnerships**

The February 2025 U.S.–India Summit led both nations to sign a new framework for the U.S.–India Major Defence Partnership that lasts ten years while elevating India to Tier-1 status and facilitating stronger technology exchange programs. India signed a \$4 billion agreement to buy 31 MQ-9B SkyGuardian/SeaGuardian drones to strengthen border and maritime surveillance capabilities. The leadership position of India in securing the Indian

Ocean Region is established through its trilateral Malabar exercises with the United States, Japan, and Australia, in addition to bilateral activations such as Exercise Tiger Triumph with the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. The U.S.–India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) began operations in May 2022 by supporting semiconductor manufacturing initiatives, research partnerships, and staff training programs through investments by American companies LAM Research and Applied Materials. Through the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM), India plans 1,200 exploration ventures up to 2030 to gain control over lithium, cobalt, nickel, and rare earths needed for defence technologies and clean energy systems.

### **Bold Diplomatic Initiatives**

India maintained strategic autonomy by deliberately avoiding UNGA votes that condemned Russia for invading Ukraine while sustaining defence partnerships with Russia and diplomatic connections with Western nations; 65 nations abstained when voting on Resolution ES-11/8 in February 2025, including India. During Western sanctions on Russia, India emerged as the top importer of discounted Russian crude in FY 2024-25, taking advantage of imports that reached 36% of total volumes at the expense of OPEC, declining to 48.5%. The Indian approach toward energy security is demonstrated pragmatically through its support for marine cargo insurance coverage from Russian companies and its spread-out acquisition strategies.

Through its balanced approach to foreign relations, India established fair diplomatic ties with the United States and Russia, as well as China, by hosting trilateral meetings, chairing Quad summits, and conducting defence and energy negotiations with Russia while implementing defence frameworks and iCET mechanisms to upgrade ties with the United States. India's "Neighbourhood First" policy is manifested by official visits and development collaborations with Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Afghanistan to promote regional security by leveraging infrastructure, connectivity, and capacity training initiatives.



### **India's Environmental Leadership & Forging Sustainable Future**

India has effectively decoupled GDP growth from emissions on the environmental front. The Indian government reported in its 2021 Biennial Update to the UNFCCC that emissions intensity reduced by 24 per cent from 2005 to 2016, surpassing interim targets while setting a goal to minimise carbon intensity by 45 per cent by 2030. The development of non-fossil energy capacity has exceeded expectations. It now reaches 173 GW and contributes more than 40 per cent to the total installed capacity as India moves toward achieving 500 GW of non-fossil capacity by 2030. India initiated the National Green Hydrogen Mission through a 2022 ₹ 400 crore financial appropriation to develop green-hydrogen hubs and test hard-to-abate sectors while setting a target of five million tons of yearly green hydrogen production for 2030.

Under PM Modi's vision, India is a rising power and a pioneer in sustainable development. Through government support of increased SIGHT program funding and collaborations with state-run refineries, the National Green Hydrogen Mission, along with green-ammonia programs, targets to produce green ammonia at five million tons annually of green hydrogen by 2030 for fertilizer, refinery, and city-gas network integration. India establishes leadership throughout the global clean-energy transition by combining newly developed programs, new non-fossil infrastructure

capacity, and enhanced critical-mineral defense measures.

### **Diaspora Engagement and Cultural Diplomacy**

Under PM Modi's leadership, India now views diaspora as a strategic asset, revitalizing outreach initiatives. During the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas event in Bhubaneswar in January 2025, the organization brought together thousands of people of Indian origin while leveraging the "Diaspora's Contribution to a Viksit Bharat" theme to start the Pravasi Bharatiya Express heritage train and bestow Pravasi Bharatiya Samman awards upon distinguished NRIs. The OCI program expands lifelong visa opportunities for cardholders to access wholehearted economic equality, better education services, and improved property rights and banking privileges. The extensive influence of Indian human capital can be observed through numerous technology company leaders who trace their origin to India after integrating into global enterprises.

Under PM Modi's leadership, India demonstrates strategic leadership while projecting confident self-assurance about its international position. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has directed India toward future success through his combination of ambitious diplomatic approaches with economic reforms, environmental leadership, sustainability, and international collaboration. Today, India navigates through complex global circumstances by acting as a leading power with unwavering purpose while setting its conditions for global engagement.



# The Bharat Way: Civilisational Wisdom Meets Strategic Vision

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**Abhinandan Kaul**

TV Panelist, Blogger & Actor

**Mahir Bhandari**

Entrepreneur, Author,  
And IR Scholar

Back in 2014, when a new government took charge in India under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, many wondered: could a country of 1.4 billion people, often bogged down by bureaucracy and self-doubt, reimagine its place in the world? Fast forward to 2025, and the answer is no longer a question. It's an emphatic yes! Many doubted PM Modi's foreign policy acumen and perceived his rise as a potential challenge to India's engagement with the Islamic world. On the contrary, PM Modi has emerged as a globally respected leader, having received 21 international civilian awards—including 9 from Muslim-majority countries—one of the highest such tallies in the world, underscoring his broad diplomatic acceptance and influence.

Praise from an opponent is the most pleasing of all commendations. Nothing explains this better than the words of Richard Steele, brought alive recently by none other than Shashi Tharoor at the Raisina Dialogue 2025. A well-read, articulate thinker and a staunch political opponent of our beloved Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Tharoor candidly admitted:

*“Wiping the egg off my face because I was the one person in the parliamentary debate who criticised the Indian position at the time back in 2022... Three years later, it does look like policy has meant that India actually has a prime minister who can hug both the president of Ukraine and the president of Moscow, two weeks apart, and be accepted at both places, and therefore India is in a position where it can make a difference...”*

This rare moment of acknowledgement from the other side of the aisle is a testimony to how far India’s diplomacy has come. Today, India’s foreign policy is not just playing catch-up with the world. It’s setting the pace. And it’s doing so not by abandoning its soul, but by embracing it, blending ancient Indic wisdom with the demands of a bold, modern future.

#### **From Balancing Act to Leadership Role**

For decades, Indian diplomacy was careful, cautious—sometimes even a little defensive. But

today, under Prime Minister Modi, India has stepped out of the shadows. India now walks into global forums, meets the world’s gaze without hesitation, and puts real solutions on the table.

A case in point was India’s G20 Presidency in 2023. Far from treating it as a ceremonial gathering, India used the platform to bring the concerns of the Global South—issues impacting real people across Asia, Africa, and Latin America—into the centre of global discourse. Beyond that, through initiatives like the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, India has demonstrated leadership where it is most urgently needed: energy, sustainability, and survival.

When COVID-19 struck and the world was gripped by panic, India did not retreat inward. Instead, it launched Vaccine Maitri, a mission that sent vaccines to over 100 countries. This initiative was neither about charity nor geopolitics—it was about living the ancient Indian truth: Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, “the world is one family,” or, as Prime Minister Modi says, “One Earth, One Family, One Future.”

#### **Neighborhood First, But Global Always**

A prime minister’s oath ceremony was traditionally viewed as a domestic affair. PM Modi turned it into a statement of foreign policy. In 2014, he invited



SAARC leaders. In 2019, BIMSTEC. And in 2024, all SAARC nations—except Afghanistan and Pakistan—joined the ceremony. This strategic gesture reinforced the Neighbourhood First doctrine, signalling inclusion, respect, and partnership. From major infrastructure projects in Nepal and Bhutan to energy cooperation with Bangladesh to disaster relief for Sri Lanka, India is redefining itself not as a “big brother” but as an elder sibling who uplifts without dominating.

Yet, India has not limited its outreach to its immediate neighbourhood. Through initiatives like the Act East Policy, which deepens ties with ASEAN; the Link West Policy, which strengthens relations with Arab partners; the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC), which expands India’s strategic reach in the Indo-Pacific; and the India-Africa Forum Summits, which revitalise old bonds—India continues to think regionally, globally, and even civilisationally.

### **Strategic Autonomy: Our Signature Style**

In a polarized world, India has fiercely preserved its strategic autonomy, staying true to its interests without becoming anyone’s camp follower. Be it buying energy from Russia amidst Western sanctions while simultaneously signing LEMOA, COMCASA, and iCET with the USA or maintaining strong ties with Israel while continuously supporting Palestinian aspirations, Indian diplomacy refuses to be boxed into simplistic binaries. As the External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar puts it, this is not non-alignment but multi-alignment—pragmatic, interest-driven, and sovereign. And the world respects that. Because in an age of alignment blocs, India’s independent voice—practical yet principled—is a rare asset.

Today, India is a strategic partner for the United States, a key player in QUAD (with Australia, Japan, and the US), a trusted voice at BRICS, and a vital bridge between East and West. And, contrary to sceptics, this isn’t any tightrope walk; instead, it’s a dance—confident, agile, graceful!

### **Road Ahead: The Bharat Way!**

India stands uniquely poised as the world navigates climate change, AI revolutions, fractured geopolitics, and post-pandemic recovery, not as a

superpower that dominates, but as a Vishwa Guru: a guiding light, a problem-solver. India’s soft power has transformed diplomacy from cold protocol into a warm, agile, and assertive force. The International Day of Yoga—celebrated in over 190 countries—is not just cultural outreach but a universal message of harmony and health. Initiatives like Digital India, Make in India, Startup India, and cutting-edge space and military capabilities have rebranded India as a builder, not a borrower, tech-savvy, and visionary.

Thanks to Trump’s erratic foreign policy and China’s imperialism, the world is closer than ever to India, seeing it as a friend-shoring destination and a dependable ally capable of providing certainty in an increasingly chaotic and uncertain global landscape. Europe, which has been the major trading partner of the US, China, Russia, and more, is viewing India as a probable long-term bet. Due to uncertainty with all the major powers, the EU has a TINA moment (‘There is no alternative’). Similarly, this can be a ‘1991 moment’ for India, giving a rebirth to its economy. The first visit of the European Union’s College of Commissioners outside the European continent since the start of their new mandate to India in February this year clearly shows their intent. The EU is prepared to collaborate with India across various areas, including clean energy, critical technologies, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), and promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific. By expediting the FTA process with the EU, India can not only hedge the risk of ongoing tariff escalation but can also come out victorious. This is a golden opportunity for New Delhi to finalise FTAs with the EU, UK, ASEAN, Canada, and Australia. Lastly, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent notes that India could be the first to seal a historic US trade deal, gaining a rare strategic advantage.

Therefore, the best time for this ancient civilisation has arrived. Its capable, confident, and compassionate people are ready to help make the world a better place.



## Modiplomacy - Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas

**Srikar Srivatsa Dahagam**

Student pursuing an MA in International Economics at IHEID, Geneva

Diplomacy is the art of maintaining skilled conversations between governments in the international relations spectrum. India's diplomacy over the Modi decade has undertaken a huge leap in the field of international relations and diplomacy. India today stands as a ray of hope amidst polarising geopolitics. The idea of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas is also implemented in the diplomatic world today, where India, under the efficient leadership of Narendra Modi, is marching ahead to become the sixth permanent member of the UN Security Council.

One of the core features of the past decade of PM Narendra Modi's diplomatic doctrine has been to help countries humanitarily during times of natural disasters. The government of India has overseen humanitarian operations like Operation Dost, which was a rescue operation initiated when massive earthquakes jolted Turkey and Syria in February 2023. More recently, India launched Operation Brahma to help our eastern neighbour, Myanmar, where air force aircraft and navy ships were utilised to help out the distressed. The Indian Army also built a new hospital in both these cases.

Apart from these 2, India has consistently launched natural disaster operations like Operation Maitri in 2015, by the armed forces in the aftermath of the brutal earthquake in Nepal. Some more examples of the HADR include - Operation Samudra Maitri in 2018 to assist Indonesia post the earthquake and tsunami in Sulawesi, Operation Sadhbav in 2024 to help out Vietnam in response to Typhoon Yegi's impact where humanitarian aid of close to 1 million US\$ was provided.

Apart from these, India's Vaccine Maitri during the times of the coronavirus pandemic, which distributed COVID-19 vaccines to many Least Developed Countries in different continents of the world, helped these countries mitigate the impact of the pandemic in their respective countries. One such country was Papua New Guinea, which bestowed the Grand Companion of the Order of Laghou (GCL). India has also recently sent vaccines at an economical cost to Afghanistan for combating diseases like rabies. Under PM Modi, India has truly

emerged as the first responder in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, which has actually showcased India's commitment to global solidarity in times of crisis.

The second cornerstone of PM Modi's diplomatic doctrine has been to take care of NRIs, PIOs, and OCIS settled in different countries of the world. India successfully evacuated almost 20,000 citizens stranded in Ukraine in 2022, during the brutal Russia-Ukraine war under Operation Ganga. The primary beneficiaries were medical students, among other youngsters. Under Operation Devi Shakti in 2021, post the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, India evacuated over 800 nationals to ensure their safe passage into India. India also bought back the Guru Granth Sahib from Afghanistan's gurudwaras, which shows PM Modi's bond with the unique traditions of Sikhism. Operation Sankat Mochan in 2016 showcased Indian soft power in the African continent, where India airlifted 155 Indian and Nepali students, who were



stranded in Juba, post the outbreak of the Sudanese civil war. Operation Rahat in 2015 was perhaps the biggest success story for Indian diplomacy in the last 20 years, where India successfully airlifted a staggering 4000 Indian nationals and a few other foreign nationals stranded in Yemen, which showcased PM Modi's concern towards the safety and well-being of NRIS.

Apart from rescue operations in war-torn countries for our NRI community, PM Modi has also undertaken a special scheme to include NRIS in India's process of nation-building. Some schemes for NRI investment are the Non-Resident Ordinary Account, Non-Resident External Account and Foreign Currency Non-Resident, which have actually spurred investments in various sunrise sectors in the country today. Some more programs specifically targeting the NRIS are the Know India Program, NRI Bima Yojana, among others.

The third cornerstone of India's successful diplomatic policy under PM Narendra Modi's leadership is undoubtedly the focus on building strategic ties with countries that were once unimportant in the geopolitical landscape. In his last 11 years, PM Modi has perhaps visited more countries as a prime minister than anyone else. For years, India focused its bulk of relations only on the P-5 countries and the neighbourhood; that policy never allowed India to grow its influence outside the South Asian region of the world. From engaging actively with all Middle Eastern countries like UAE, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iran, Qatar to building relations in the Black Sea region with countries like Greece, Cyprus, Israel, Jordan and Armenia has given a significant flip to India's geopolitical manoeuvring, one example of this has been of India supplying high quality Brahmos missiles to Armenia during the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict.

During his tenure, PM Modi has shattered the old norms of international relations conventions by focusing on countries overlooked for decades by the previous ruling dispensations, for reasons best known to them. PM Modi became the first Indian head of government to visit countries like Austria, Denmark, Switzerland, Rwanda, Mexico, Palestine, Mozambique, Mongolia, Seychelles, Caribbean Islands, Papua New Guinea, Laos, Brunei,

Madagascar, Egypt, Spain in his 11 year tenure after decades, which showcases the level of engagement India has had over the years with the world in general. India today also stands as one of Asia's few countries that enjoys cordial trade and cultural ties with the countries of South America. The ties with South American countries like Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Peru, Suriname have seen a significant uptick during the impactful tenures of PM Modi in the world, primarily due to these state-level visits by Narendra Modi. All these visits have significantly improved India's relations with European, African, Asian and South American countries, which shows the deftness of Narendra Modi's understanding of geopolitics and geoeconomics.

PM Narendra Modi has also set an enviable record of addressing the USA Senate thrice, which no global leader has ever done since the 17th century. He is the lone global leader today, whose approval ratings are constantly above 60% in the context of a prime minister completing 3 successful tenures, possibly no one else has ever achieved. He is also one of the lone global leaders today and the only Indian head of state or government who has won a staggering 22 highest civilian awards in countries spanning across continents and economic size. All these achievements can be seen, even in the context of India's multilateral engagements, India is the only major economic-military power in the world today, which is a member of BRICS, SCO, G-20, QUAD at the same time, which no other country has achieved in the 21st century with the world being visibly divided into multiple power centres today.

To conclude, India's prodigal and affable son, Narendra Modi, has redefined and rediscovered Indian diplomacy in more than one way, which very few people would have imagined when the CM of Gujarat transitioned to become the PM of Independent India. PM Modi has set multiple firsts in the world of diplomacy in his legendary tenure as the prime minister of India by using both unconventional and conventional methods of diplomacy, which, without a doubt, makes him the "Boss" of geopolitics as described by Aussie PM Anthony Albanese.

# Assertive, Agile, Aligned: Foreign Policy Under Modi

**Adv Ankita Ganga Deb**

State co-ordinator at BJYM  
Odisha for Legal cell, RTI and  
Petition wing



Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's foreign policy has been a subject of significant interest and debate in the contemporary global world. Since assuming office in 2014, Modi has pursued a proactive and pragmatic approach to international relations, seeking to leverage India's growing economic and strategic influence to shape its role in the global world. This article will explore the key contours of Modi's foreign policy, examining its core principles, initiatives, and implications for India's position in the global arena.

## Neighbourhood First Policy

One of the cornerstone initiatives of Modi's foreign policy has been the "Neighbourhood First" policy, which prioritises strengthening ties with India's neighboring countries. This approach recognizes the importance of regional stability and prosperity for India's own development and security. Under this policy, India has sought to enhance economic cooperation, cultural exchanges, and security collaboration with its neighbours.

For instance, India has been actively engaged in regional initiatives such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). These efforts aim to promote regional integration,

facilitate trade and investment, and address common challenges such as terrorism, climate change, and natural disasters.

## Act East Policy

Another key initiative of Modi's foreign policy has been the "Act East" policy, which seeks to deepen India's engagement with Southeast Asian nations. This policy recognizes the region's growing economic and strategic importance and aims to counterbalance China's influence in Southeast Asia.

Under the Act East policy, India has sought to enhance economic ties, cultural exchanges, and security cooperation with Southeast Asian countries. For example, India has actively participated in regional initiatives such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the East Asia Summit (EAS). These efforts aim to promote regional stability, facilitate trade and investment, and address common challenges such as terrorism, piracy, and maritime security.

## Indo-Pacific Strategy

Modi's administration has also emphasised India's role in shaping the strategic contours of the Indo-Pacific region. This region, which spans the Indian and Pacific Oceans, is increasingly important for global trade, security, and governance.

India's Indo-Pacific strategy recognizes the need to promote a free, open, and inclusive region where all countries can thrive. To achieve this goal, India has sought to enhance its maritime security capabilities, promote economic cooperation, and engage with regional partners such as the United States, Japan, and Australia.

### **Global Governance**

Modi's foreign policy has also sought to position India as a responsible stakeholder in global governance. India has been actively engaged in international institutions such as the United Nations, the G20, and the BRICS grouping, where it has sought to promote its interests and values.

For example, India has strongly advocated for reforming the United Nations Security Council, where it seeks to gain permanent membership. India has also been actively engaged in global initiatives such as the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where it has sought to promote sustainable development and cooperation.

### **Balancing Relationships**

One of the key challenges facing Modi's foreign policy has been balancing India's relationships with major powers such as the United States, China, and Russia. India has sought to maintain robust ties with the West while sustaining its partnership with Russia, which has been a longstanding strategic partner.

At the same time, India has sought to manage its tensions with China, a major competitor in the region. Modi's administration has sought to promote economic cooperation and dialogue with China while maintaining a strong military posture

along the disputed border.

### **Proactive Diplomacy**

Modi's direct involvement in external relations has been a hallmark of his foreign policy. He has travelled extensively abroad, engaging with world leaders and promoting India's interests and values.

For example, Modi's visits to the United States, China, and Japan have strengthened India's relationships with these key partners. Modi's diplomacy has also helped to promote India's cultural and economic ties with other countries, showcasing India's rich heritage and growing economic opportunities.

### **Strategic Partnerships: A Cornerstone of Modi's Foreign Policy**

One of the key hallmarks of Modi's foreign policy has been the forging of strategic partnerships with like-minded democracies. India's ties with the United States, Japan, Australia, and Israel have deepened significantly, enhancing both economic collaboration and national security.

Through the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)—with the U.S., Japan, and Australia—India has taken a leadership role in promoting a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific, ensuring maritime security and upholding the international rules-based order. This engagement is not only about regional stability, but also about resisting hegemonic aggression in the Indo-Pacific, especially from China.

### **India's Response to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**

The Modi government has maintained a clear and consistent position on China's Belt and Road



Initiative (BRI), refusing to participate in any arrangement that compromises India's sovereignty. In particular, India's objection to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which passes through Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, is a principled stand rooted in national interest and territorial integrity.

### **India's Relations with the U.S. and Russia: A Fine Balance**

Modi's foreign policy showcases an astute understanding of great power dynamics. India has expanded its defence and technology cooperation with the United States, even as it has sustained strong historical ties with Russia, particularly in the areas of energy, defence equipment, and strategic autonomy. India's increased purchase of discounted Russian oil during global sanctions is an example of how Modi's government prioritizes pragmatism over pressure.

### **Diaspora Diplomacy: A Global Force**

The Indian diaspora—spread across more than 100 countries—has become a strategic asset under Modi's outreach. From the iconic speeches at Madison Square Garden to Sydney's Qudos Bank Arena, the diaspora has been engaged as ambassadors of India's values, economy, and aspirations. Initiatives like Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, the OCI scheme, and Mission Ganga have deepened emotional and strategic bonds with Indians abroad.

### **India's G20 Presidency: Championing the Global South**

In 2023, India's G20 Presidency was a defining chapter in its foreign policy. Not only did it manage a deeply polarized global order, but it also amplified the voice of developing nations, especially from Africa, Latin America, and Asia. India led the successful effort to include the African Union as a permanent member of the G20, aligning with its vision of democratic global governance.

### **Bold Diplomacy: From West Asia to Indo-Pacific**

India's diplomacy under Modi has been confident and bold. Engagements such as the Abraham Accords, participation in the I2U2 grouping (India, Israel, UAE, and USA), and dialogues with ASEAN under the Act East Policy have opened up new

strategic frontiers. The Wuhan Summit and Chennai Connect with China signalled India's willingness to manage complex relationships on equal terms.

### **Economic Diplomacy and Investment Outreach**

Modi's foreign visits are often hybrid missions—combining strategic signalling with economic diplomacy. Whether it's seeking investment in smart cities and digital infrastructure, or positioning India as a manufacturing hub under Make in India, Modi has made economic priorities central to his global engagements. Major bilateral forums now include discussions on semiconductors, critical minerals, fintech, and green energy.

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

As India rises, it faces complex foreign policy challenges:

- **Managing Great Power Rivalries:** Balancing relations with the U.S., China, and Russia amid shifting global alignments.
- **Regional Security:** Tackling terrorism, border tensions, and maritime threats in the Indian Ocean.
- **Global Governance:** Securing a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, reforming global institutions to reflect the 21st-century reality.
- **Climate and Tech Leadership:** Leveraging platforms like the International Solar Alliance and Global Biofuels Alliance to shape the sustainability agenda.

### **Conclusion: A Confident Civilisational Power**

India today is no longer a cautious observer in global affairs. Under Modi's foreign policy vision, it is a confident civilisational power—rooted in values, driven by national interest, and guided by a commitment to global peace and progress. Neighbourhood First, Act East, Indo-Pacific Vision, and Viksit Bharat Mission are all integral components of this new global approach. As the world transitions into multipolarity, India is not just adapting—it is helping lead the transition. PM Modi's foreign policy legacy will be remembered for one key shift: from strategic hesitation to strategic assertion.



# India First, Bharat Forever: The Modi Doctrine in a Divided World

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**Bharat Sharma**

Advocate at the  
Supreme Court

Modi's 2014 victory was seen as a mandate for internal change—yet it also heralded a quiet revolution in India's global ambitions. Few foresaw that he would rewrite the foreign policy grammar of the Republic. Fewer still understood that the man who once sold tea on railway platforms would sit across from presidents and premiers, not to seek favour, but to strike terms. A decade later, it's clear: India's rise isn't an accident of demography or a gift of global economics — it's a civilisational return. And at its helm is a leader who carries both the confidence of Kurukshetra and the calm of Kailasa.

For decades, India's foreign policy had been timid and postcolonial—all caution and no clarity. Too proud to beg, too weak to lead, it spoke in academic riddles, outsourced morality to the West, and called it 'non-alignment.' But with Modi came coherence. With coherence came confidence. And with confidence came consequences—for the world now speaks to Bharat differently.

## **National Interest with Civilizational Spine**

PM Narendra Modi didn't invent the idea of national interest. He simply stopped being defensive about it. For long, India confused internationalism with self-erasure. But under Modi, foreign policy is rooted in "India First" — not as a jingoist slogan, but as a solemn dharma. And yet, in the same breath, it evokes "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" — because in this civilisational republic, nationalism and universalism are not contradictions but cousins.

Modi's India doesn't chase validation. It charts its own course. On Ukraine, it didn't cave to Western pressure. On oil from Russia, it didn't moralise — it strategised. And for that, the world took note. India, once expected to obey, now compels respect.

### **Strategic Autonomy 2.0**

Gone is the meaningless neutrality of Nehruvian nostalgia. What replaced it is not Cold War fence-sitting, but strategic autonomy with steel in its spine. India can do joint naval patrols with the US and yet purchase S-400 missiles from Russia. It can strengthen QUAD without abandoning BRICS. It signs logistics agreements with France, holds dialogues with Iran, and trains Afghan forces while hosting Buddhist monks from Mongolia.

This isn't confusion. This is maturity. This is what a civilisational state does — balance, not bend. And Modi has made India the world's most unpredictable, yet dependable, partner

### **In Every Crisis, India Rises**

When COVID-19 ravaged the world, the so-called leaders of the "Free World" hoarded masks and vaccines like insecure hoarders. Bharat, battered but unbowed, launched Vaccine Maitri, shipping over 200 million doses to nations who had neither currency nor clout.

When Kabul fell, when Khartoum burned, when Kyiv exploded — India didn't tweet. It acted. Operation Ganga airlifted 22,000 Indians from war-torn Ukraine. Operation Kaveri pulled citizens out of Sudan as gunfire echoed in the streets.

No nation rescues like Bharat because no nation believes like Bharat. Not in charity, but in dharma — the old-fashioned kind that doesn't need an audience.

### **Diaspora Power Play: Modi's Global Advantage**

Previous governments saw the Indian diaspora as either remittance machines or nostalgia projects. Modi saw them as ambassadors of Bharat—extensions of the motherland who could shape opinion, influence policy, and amplify their voices.

The visuals said it all: "Howdy Modi", "Namaste Trump", "Bharat ko Salaam" in Abu Dhabi — stadiums packed, alliances cemented, and soft

power flexed.

Today, Indian-Americans swing elections. Indian-Britons run the UK. Indian-origin CEOs run global boardrooms. And none of them apologise for their roots — because their Prime Minister never does.

### **Civilizational Diplomacy is Not Soft Power. It's Real Power**

Modi brought religion back into diplomacy — not to divide, but to dignify.

India is the only country whose diplomatic calendar now includes International Yoga Day and Ramayan Diplomacy. Buddhist linkages with Southeast Asia, shared Vedic heritage with Nepal, and Tamil cultural ties with Sri Lanka are all now front and centre in foreign outreach.

Even Ayurveda, long mocked by Westernised elites, now finds shelves in Europe. Modi didn't invent the greatness of our culture. He just stopped hiding it behind Oxford accents.

### **Boldness Redefined: From Balakot to Galwan**

Post-1947, India's foreign policy was allergic to confrontation. If China took land, we filed notes. If Pakistan killed soldiers, we offered dossiers. Modi changed that.

Uri happened. Balakot followed. Pulwama happened. Airstrikes followed. Galwan happened. And for once, the Chinese bled. The message was clear: India talks peace, but it prepares for war. And when the line is crossed, it doesn't blink — it bites.

Global powers took note. India was no longer a punching bag in South Asia. It had become the bouncer of the Global South.

### **The Pahalgam Massacre: Modi's Doctrine Faces Its Next Test**

On April 22, 2025, the serene meadows of Pahalgam turned crimson. Twenty-six civilians, mostly tourists, were gunned down in cold blood by terrorists linked to the Resistance Front — a proxy of Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba. The attack, the deadliest on civilians in Kashmir in decades, was designed to shatter the illusion of peace and provoke a response.



Modi didn't flinch. He cut short his Saudi visit, convened an emergency Cabinet Committee on Security, and gave the armed forces "full operational freedom" to decide the mode, timing, and targets of India's response. The message was unambiguous: "We are resolved to crush terrorism."

Diplomatically, India went on the offensive. The Indus Waters Treaty was suspended — a move unprecedented even during wars. Pakistani diplomats were expelled, visas revoked, and the Wagah border shut. At the United Nations, India's envoy labelled Pakistan a "rogue state fueling global terrorism", exposing Islamabad's duplicity with surgical precision.

Internationally, the world stood with Bharat. From Washington to Riyadh, from Moscow to London, leaders condemned the attack and expressed solidarity. Even the Taliban, briefed by Indian diplomats, acknowledged the gravity of the situation.

Modi's doctrine of swift, decisive, and multi-dimensional response was in full display when India struck the terror factories inside Pakistan.

### **Redrawing the Map: Indo-Pacific, I2U2, and Beyond**

The Indo-Pacific is the world's new theatre of power — and India is no longer a side act. It is co-writing the script. Through QUAD, I2U2, and now deeper

defence pacts with Australia and Japan, Bharat has become an Indo-Pacific anchor. Not as America's pawn, but as Asia's conscience.

China knows it. ASEAN feels it. Africa notices it. This is no longer the era of non-alignment. It is the era of multi-alignment with moral clarity.

### **Bharat Leads — Not By Accident, But By Design**

What we're witnessing is not an accident of GDP or a quirk of demographics. It is a civilisational return — slow, steady, spectacular. India is not the next China. It is not the old USSR. It is not the new America. It is Bharat — unique, unyielding, unborrowed. And Modi's foreign policy isn't an imitation of Kissinger or Churchill. It is rooted in something older than all of them: Itihasa. Dharma. Sankalpa.

Under Modi, the world doesn't just see India. It listens. And increasingly, it follows. As the West fumbles with identity and the East chokes on authoritarianism, Bharat walks tall — with the wisdom of ancient rishis, the steel of modern resolve, and a vision too vast to be boxed into ideology. The 21st century doesn't belong to nations that shout the loudest. It belongs to those who know who they are.

And Bharat, at last, does.

# Dehyphenating Pakistan, Managing China: Reimagining of Indian Diplomacy

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## Raghav Awasthi

Advocate and member of the  
BJP campaign committee for  
the MCD Elections 2022

## Simran Brar

Advocate practising before  
Supreme Court

At the time of writing, tension between our country and our neighbour to the West is increasing in the wake of the brutal attack on unarmed tourists at Pahalgam. This is not the first time such incidents wherein civilians have been targeted have taken place. Those who have been following this region for a while would know that such incidents, one of which took place in Kaluchak in 2002, used to take place with greater impunity. Having said that, the difference between then and now is that while in the 1990s, pro-Pakistan officials in the US State Department like Robin Raphel could establish some sort of parity between India and Pakistan by terming the now Union Territory of Kashmir as a 'disputed territory', the same is unthinkable today. In this respect, the Prime Minister Modi's fiercest detractors, like Dr Shashi Tharoor, do not refrain from giving him credit.



India and Pakistan were partitioned in 1947, for the most part in the Punjab region, by a British lawyer called Cyril Radcliffe, who had never been to India in the first place. Since then, the two countries have gone to war four times, and even Pakistani observers like Najam Sethi have admitted that all four conflicts were, for the most part, provoked by Pakistan. However, the biggest difference between now and the UPA era is while during the latter period, refraining from the use of force owing to vote-bank considerations was sold as some sort of Bismarckesque Realpolitik and packaged as strategic restraint, today we not only have the capability but also the resolve to strike at the terrorists and their handlers deep inside Pakistani territory. The exact death toll of Balakot might be uncertain, but two other things that are certain are as follows:

1. Between Balakot and now, there was no major terrorist incident till the most recent one; and
2. Today, even the Pakistani side does not raise the nuclear bogey because they know fully well that when the gauntlet was thrown at them in 2016 (Post Uri) as well as 2019, they blinked. Although it can arguably be said that they had the better of the aerial skirmish that followed, they did return Captain Abhinandan promptly knowing fully well that if the skirmish were to degenerate into a full-fledged conflict not only would they not be prepared for the same but they would also not be supported by major

powers of the world who frankly do not seem to be too invested in their future.

In other words, today the Pakistani nuclear bogey is dead and buried. Even though there might be terrorist incidents here and there, despite the decrease in frequency, nobody seriously hyphenates India with Pakistan anymore. That, to our mind, is one of PM Modi's greater achievements in terms of foreign policy. In this respect, he reminds one of a German statesman Otto von Bismarck. While Bismarck was of German 'Junker' or Zamindar stock, he elevated the relatively small principality of Prussia to the Apex of all German-speaking states. On the other hand, despite relatively humble origins, PM Modi's deft diplomacy, combined with the use of force when required, has elevated India well and truly to the status of a world power and not a regional one as Panikker had envisaged and Rajiv Gandhi had tried to implement. Furthermore, while Bismarck had to fight three wars in Austria, Schleswig Holstein (Denmark) and France to achieve his goal of reunification, the best part is that PM Modi has managed to avoid even a single major military conflict over the last eleven years. Resolutions were found post Doklam as well as Galwan, where the Chinese side did blink, perhaps noting our superior resolve. His dictum seems to be quite Rooseveltian in this regard in as much as under his leadership our country 'speaks softly but carries a big stick'.





Two more aspects need to be highlighted. India officially remains a non-aligned country. Now, non-alignment as envisaged by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru is a rehash of Swiss neutrality, unsuitable to the Indian context. The reason for that is that the geographical situation of the small alpine federation is that it is almost invulnerable to invasion. On the other hand, we are surrounded by hostile neighbours to the East and West. The other problem with non-alignment/neutrality is that when push comes to shove, one stands fully alone, something that we realised during the course of our military conflicts with Pakistan and China in the 1960s. On the other hand, our policy over the last decade or so is defined by dynamic positive alignment that is consonant with our national interest without getting committed to any one power bloc and pursuing our own ambition, which is to be a Great Power in our own right.

During the Ukraine War, despite pressure from elements in India who wanted to ingratiate themselves with the Biden Administration, we stopped well short of condemning Russia. Not only that, there was also pressure put on us to join the conflict on the Ukrainian side. Nonetheless, we refused to budge just as Atal Bihari Vajpayee managed to resist pressure from George W. Bush to join the war in Iraq. Perhaps that had something

to do with the recent revelations that USAID was funding a regime change in India in the run-up to the 2024 General Election. It needs to be noted here that despite all that we are told about Russia and its interests, it is still a major supplier of military hardware to India.

What is most interesting is the equivocation that we have now developed in balancing the two countries that still constitute the duumvirate of superpowers of our era, the US and China. The Americans expect us to look out for their interests in the Indian Ocean, Australia, and Japan. Nonetheless, and perhaps given the fact that the Democratic vote-bank in the United States is anti-Israel as well as anti-India, there has been a significant cosying up to China in recent months. The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra that had been in abeyance since 2020 has been restarted, which means perhaps that both sides are now re-examining their priorities. Simultaneously, we also seek to profit from the trade war that has erupted between China and the US and are actively and successfully courting mobile phone companies that seek to shift their production lines to India. It is this dynamism when it comes to our Foreign Policy that distinguishes the Modi era from the days gone by.

# The Modi Effect: India's Rise as a Global Partner

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**Snehali Jena**

Pursuing a Master's in Economics

The onset of the BJP-led central government in India introduced the idea of the Modi effect in world politics and bilateral relations. India, being heavily impacted by geopolitics surrounding it, needed an inward-to-outward approach to its ties with the Global economy.

A country that has been historically considered to be dogmatic in its approach towards politics and economics needed a leader who would change the perceptions and ideas to facilitate relations. Economic theories have always advocated for a more globalised and well-connected world to reap the maximum benefits of natural resources and human opportunities. Under PM Narendra Modi, India has been able to steer itself towards that direction. It has been recognised by world leaders as a potential superpower, creating a psychological tale of a developing country that could have a

significant opinion in matters related to the world economy.

PM Modi has had 89 foreign trips in 11 years, which is the most by any PM in India. He has shown his presence and dedication to making strong relations with country leaders of economically strong countries and smaller nations, with his first ever trip after becoming PM in 2014 being to Bhutan. PM Modi has always vouched for reducing political tensions, even with nations with whom India has not been on good terms historically. India has objectively become the voice of the Global South under his leadership, where he has reiterated on 'Act East' policy, bringing attention to the Southeast countries.

India has maintained peaceful and friendly relations with all the major blocs on the map, the USA, Russia, and the European Union. Diplomacy is



the key, and PM Modi knows how to use it well. There is an emergence of strategic autonomy of India. In the war between Russia and Ukraine in 2021, the diplomacy of the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaishankar, on the issue avoided any conflict with Russia and helped India import oil and other resources from the country. Multi-alignment has been the core competency of PM Modi's government.

The push of soft power by PM Modi has been commendable. His diplomacy influenced the UN to recognise 21st June as the International Day of Yoga in 2014. Modi has also been the flag-bearer of the inclusion of Indian languages by international bodies, recognition of Indian scriptures by Regulatory Institutes, and spreading the teachings of the culture at global platforms. Soft power is the future of a strong global foothold. The Indian government is also actively involved with the Indian diaspora, keeping in mind their role in enhancing India's image and fostering bilateral ties. Evacuation missions like Operation Ganga (From Ukraine, 2022) and Operation Indravati (From Haiti, 2024) have been performed to build trust and faith in the Government's role in ensuring safety for all. PM Modi has put a lot of emphasis on the 'Make in India' program, and has extensively promoted it to attract foreign investment, fostering domestic manufacturing and technological advancements. The Production Linked Incentive-based schemes have not only attracted domestic finance, but also foreign direct investments. India has actively pursued trade agreements with multiple countries and country groups. This will help India to develop its export sector and integrate deeply into global supply chains. The expansionary trade policy will affect the countries involved economically and create strong bilateral relations.

The enhanced bilateral relations with countries like the USA, Russia have further strengthened India's position as a trustworthy counterparty and associate. PM Modi has had 10 visits to the USA since taking charge as the Prime Minister of India. Trump's Reciprocal Tariffs of 2025 seem to be less harsh on India than on other countries, owing to his relations with Modi. India has maintained cordial relations with Russia since its independence, which

has strengthened under the dynamic leadership of Narendra Modi. The import of oil and assistance in defence are crucial requirements of India from Russia. Modi has also developed ties with countries in the Middle East (Saudi Arabia, Iran, Israel), expanding India's diplomatic footprint in that region.

With the G20 Presidency in 2023, PM Modi created an example of Global leadership, integrating cultural heritage and indigenous ideas. It also marked the historical inclusion of the African Union and the launch of the Global Biofuel Alliance, showing India's commitment to inclusive global governance. India participated actively in BRICS and QUAD, and its full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation reflects its involvement in worldly matters and decision-making.

Along with a global diplomatic footprint, India has also steered the way to more sustainable growth. India is committed to net-zero carbon emissions by 2070, showing its strong hold towards climate leadership. The International Solar Alliance was set up in 2015 by Narendra Modi and President of France Francois Hollande, headquartered in Gurugram, to mobilize more than USD 1000 billion of investment needed by 2030 for the massive deployment of solar energy.

India has changed from a regional force to a self-assured world leader under Prime Minister Modi, aggressively influencing discussions on the economy, security, climate change, and health. India's growing role as a representation and advocate for the Global South is reflected in its leadership in elevating developing countries' voices. India has increased its goodwill around the world by using soft power strategy, like yoga, digital innovation, outreach to its diaspora, and cultural diplomacy. India is well-positioned to further solidify its status as a "Vishwa Mitra" (a friend of the world) in the upcoming ten years due to its expanding economic might, modernising military, digital innovation, and cultural outreach. The Modi era has established diplomacy as a strong policy stance in world politics, positioning India as a proactive participant in the 21st-century global order.



## Reclaiming the Global Stage: India Under Modi

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**Tirthankar Jana**  
an IT Engineer

India's foreign policy has evolved significantly—from the cautious steps of a newly independent nation to the confident strides of a rising global power. A nation's external outlook is ultimately shaped by the stature it commands on the world stage, and India's growing influence has transformed how it engages with the world.

This engagement, however, is not new. India's global interactions date back to ancient times, from the maritime trade of the Indus Valley Civilization to the vibrant exchanges of the medieval era. Even during the colonial period, India remained intellectually and culturally engaged with the world. Post-Independence, India's foreign policy passed through multiple phases, shaped by the ideals of its Prime Ministers—from Nehru's non-alignment to Vajpayee's nuclear realism and economic outreach. It is in this long arc of history that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership marks a distinct turning point. Drawing inspiration from India's civilisational heritage and rooted traditions, Modi has reimagined foreign policy with a renewed sense of purpose and confidence. His approach blends cultural diplomacy, strategic pragmatism, and assertive engagement, projecting India not just as a nation among many, but as a civilisational force with a global voice.

### **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam with India First: The Modi Doctrine in Action**

The ancient Indian maxim "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam"—the world is one family—forms the philosophical bedrock of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's foreign policy. Yet, embedded within this civilisational worldview is a bold and unapologetic assertion: "India First." This dual vision—of global cooperation grounded in national interest—has come to define India's strategic posture under Modi's leadership.

Walking the talk, India has nurtured cordial ties with nations across continents, barring a few known exceptions, without compromising on its core interests. The transformation in India's global standing is best exemplified by the personal journey of Prime Minister Modi himself. Once denied a visa by the United States during his tenure as Chief Minister of Gujarat, he is today welcomed with state honours and standing ovations—not only in Washington, but in capitals across the world. This dramatic reversal is as much a testament to his leadership as it is to India's growing global influence.

Even with periodic differences under the Biden administration, the India-U.S. relationship remains

robust, shaped by mutual respect and strategic convergence. During President Donald Trump's tenure, the partnership acquired a personal and ideological warmth that translated into greater cooperation on defence, technology, and the Indo-Pacific.

Under his leadership, India's ties with key Islamic nations have flourished. From being conferred the highest civilian honours by countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE, to witnessing the construction of Hindu temples for the diaspora in the Gulf—India's outreach reflects both respect and reciprocity. The deft handling of the recent diplomatic crisis in Qatar—successfully negotiating the release of eight Indian naval veterans sentenced to death—demonstrates India's rising leverage and quiet effectiveness.

Remarkably, India has managed to maintain its principled decades-old support for a sovereign Palestinian state while simultaneously deepening its strategic relationship with Israel. This ability to walk diplomatic tightropes with balance and consistency has become a hallmark of the Modi era. Likewise, India's response to the Russia-Ukraine war showcased rare clarity and confidence. While much of the West imposed sweeping sanctions on Moscow, India chose strategic autonomy, continuing energy and defence cooperation with Russia while voicing concern for Ukraine's sovereignty. In doing so, India reminded the world that it will not be dictated to, and that its foreign policy is governed by its own national calculus.

### **India's Global Rise: From First Responder to Future Vishwa Guru**

"A friend in need is a friend indeed." In times of crisis, friendship is measured not in words, but in action—and leadership is tested not in calm waters, but in the storms of global upheaval. Over the past decade, India has consistently risen to the occasion, not only protecting its own vast population but stepping up as a responsible global actor.

### **Leadership in Crisis: From Pandemic Response to Global Good**

As the COVID-19 pandemic gripped the world, India faced one of the greatest humanitarian challenges in modern history. Yet, despite the overwhelming

pressure of managing domestic needs for over a billion people, India chose compassion over insularity. Under the Vaccine Maitri initiative, India shipped millions of doses to over 100 countries, demonstrating its pharmaceutical prowess and commitment to human solidarity.

India's leadership extends well beyond health diplomacy. In moments of natural disaster—from earthquakes in Nepal to cyclones in the Indian Ocean and humanitarian crises in war-torn regions—India has responded swiftly and selflessly, including to nations with which it has complex relationships. This spirit of *seva* (service), rooted in India's civilisational values, now forms a key pillar of its foreign engagement.

### **Soft Power with Substance: Yoga, UPI, and Jan Dhan**

India's rise on the global stage is not just military or economic—it is also civilisational. Yoga, a gift of ancient India, has become a worldwide phenomenon. Thanks to India's sustained diplomacy, the United Nations declared June 21 as International Yoga Day, now celebrated across the globe.

At the same time, India's digital innovations are turning heads. The Unified Payments Interface (UPI), a homegrown fintech revolution, is being adopted or studied by countries in Asia, Africa, and even Europe. It's not just about technology—it's about exporting a model of accessible, inclusive innovation. Flagship schemes like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and Jan Dhan Yojana have also drawn global praise for their scale, impact, and effectiveness in delivering dignity and financial inclusion.

### **Green Diplomacy and Sports as Strategy**

India has committed itself to being a global leader in the fight against climate change. From co-founding the International Solar Alliance to taking ambitious climate pledges at COP summits, India demonstrates that development and environmental responsibility can go hand in hand. Even cricket—a game outside direct government policy—has become a subtle tool of diplomacy and national prestige. India's successful hosting of the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, alongside

consistent seasons of the IPL, has showcased its capacity to deliver large-scale global events. With a firm eye on the future, the government aims to bid for the 2036 Olympic Games, which would require—and likely receive—broad international support.

### **Diplomatic Strength in Turbulent Times**

India's rising global stature is also visible in the world's willingness to engage. Amidst the ongoing U.S.–China tariff wars, India has emerged as a preferred alternative for global investors. With companies like Apple Inc. shifting manufacturing operations to India, the Make in India campaign is entering a new phase of credibility and momentum. Simultaneously, India has used its diplomatic capital to respond forcefully to terrorist threats. In the wake of the recent Pahalgam tragedy, where terrorists brutally targeted innocent Hindu pilgrims, India reached out to its global partners with a clear and uncompromising message: terror will not be tolerated. The following global support reflects the moral clarity and strategic heft India now commands.

### **Conclusion: Reclaiming Our Place in the World**

The platform is set. India was once a global centre of learning, trade, and innovation—home to Nalanda, Takshashila, and thriving artisanal industries. There is no reason it cannot reclaim that role in the 21st century. With visionary leadership, a youthful population, and an ancient legacy of wisdom, India stands on the cusp of greatness. The world is watching. This time, India is not just performing on the stage—it is shaping the script.



# Strategic Purpose, Civilisational Soul: India's Foreign Policy Under Modi

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**Prathyusha Thatipelli**

Insights Specialist at Google

Imagine the world as a vast school playground. Children form teams, forge friendships, share toys, and sometimes clash, compete, or form rival groups. In much the same way, foreign policy is how nations choose their allies, manage rivalries, and navigate the complexities of global cooperation and conflict. It's about who you stand by, who you confront, and how you carve your place in a crowded, contested sandbox.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India's foreign policy has undergone a remarkable transformation—from cautious observation to confident engagement. While rooted in timeless ideals like Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the

world is one family), it now embraces a proactive, civilisational approach to diplomacy. This was evident right from the beginning. In 2014, Modi invited leaders of SAARC nations to his swearing-in ceremony—a symbolic act akin to inviting all the neighbourhood friends to your home to foster goodwill. By 2019, the invitation list shifted to BIMSTEC nations, signalling a strategic reorientation towards the Bay of Bengal and the Indo-Pacific region.

These gestures weren't mere photo opportunities. They were subtle yet firm signals of India's intent to be a regional stabiliser, a cultural bridge-builder, and a responsible global power.

## Fueling Friendships: India's Russian Oil Strategy

One of Modi's most talked-about impactful decisions was buying discounted oil from Russia during the Russia-Ukraine conflict. With global oil prices surging and India importing ~88% of its oil, cheap fuel wasn't just a bargain but a necessity. If India had hesitated, it might've faced spikes in inflation, fuel shortages, and economic crisis.

But India acted boldly. It became one of Russia's top oil customers, with over a third of its oil imports coming from Moscow. In fact, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman applauded Modi's "statesmanship" for circumventing inflation. These oil deals saved India close to \$3-4 per barrel and helped ease fuel prices domestically.

Strategically, this also reinforced India's historic friendship with Russia, a long-time defence and diplomatic partner. At a 2024 BRICS summit, Putin personally thanked Modi. Meanwhile, India's massive refineries converted Russian crude into fuel for global markets, especially Europe. When the



EU placed sanctions on direct Russian oil imports, it began buying refined fuels from India – essentially, Russian oil in disguise. India overtook Saudi Arabia as Europe's top fuel supplier in 2024.

Suppose India had heeded pressure and avoided Russian oil. It might have paid more for energy, lost a key strategic partner, and surrendered ground in global fuel trade. Instead, it helped its own economy, helped the global economy, propped up a partner, prevented a global surge in fuel prices, and became an unexpected fuel hub—all without violating sanctions.

## Buddha Bridges: India's Buddhist Diplomacy in Thailand

Beyond oil and geopolitics, Modi's foreign policy has used soft power—religion, culture, and heritage—to win influence. Buddhist diplomacy serves as a striking example. In 2024, sacred relics of the Buddha and his disciples were sent on a 25-day tour across Thailand. This extremely symbolic move reminded nations with a Buddhist majority of their spiritual roots in India.

What makes this significant? China also courts these countries by providing them with funds and infrastructure. However, India chose a different game based on common civilisational ties. Home to seven of Buddhism's eight holiest sites, India positions itself as Buddhism's homeland. The relic tour was not just a mere religious event; it was cultural diplomacy aimed at deepening trust and affection.

Modi has used a similar strategy by visiting Buddhist temples in Japan, Sri Lanka, and other places. These actions subtly counter China's regional dominance and promote goodwill with neighbours. If India remained mute or indifferent, it could lose this cultural edge to Beijing's growing assertiveness. Instead, it uses religion to create enduring bonds, not merely alliances but affinity.

**Strategic Allies:** Armenia and Greece as Outposts  
Modi's foreign outreach isn't just limited to Asia. Two surprising but strategic moves were made in India's attempt to strengthen ties with Armenia and Greece, both nations located near India's rivals.

Armenia, surrounded by hostile neighbours like

Azerbaijan (a nation backed by Turkey and Pakistan), turned to India for weapons and defence equipment. Since 2020, the country has purchased Indian equipment such as Akash missiles and Pinaka rockets. India, in turn, found a new partner in Armenia, a region where its rivals are active. Had India ignored Armenia, it might've allowed the Turkey-Azerbaijan-Pakistan trio to dominate the region uncurbed.

Meanwhile, Modi's 2023 visit to Greece — the first by an Indian PM in 40 years — transformed that relationship into a "strategic partnership." India and Greece face assertive neighbours (Pakistan and Turkey), and both share ancient cultural legacies. Cooperation expanded into trade, connectivity, and defense — including support for the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.

These moves build an arc of allies across the Mediterranean and the Caucasus region. Without this move, India would be absent in regions where its rivals actively shape influence. Now, it has strongholds near Europe and the Middle East, opening trade routes and geopolitical leverage.

### **Quiet Diplomacy: India's Approach to Taliban-led Afghanistan**

Afghanistan presented India with a tough choice. After the Taliban takeover in 2021, most countries withdrew. Historically, India has contributed over \$3 billion to Afghan development, such as roads, schools, and health care. Should it walk away?

Instead, India opted for a "quiet diplomacy." Though it hasn't formally recognised the Taliban government, it continues to provide humanitarian

aid, over 47,000 tons of wheat plus medical supplies. Indian diplomats met Taliban leaders in neutral venues like Dubai. India even invited a Taliban representative in the UAE to the Republic Day celebrations—a rare but strategic gesture.

This approach kept communication channels open without endorsing the Taliban government. And it paid off: after the recent terror attack on Indian pilgrims in Pahalgam, the Taliban publicly condemned the act. They expressed solidarity and consensus with India — an unusual move that reflected India's lingering influence.

Had India cut ties completely, it would've lost ground to other powers like China or Pakistan and forfeited decades of goodwill. Instead, India balanced principle with pragmatism — staying engaged without legitimising terrorism.

India's foreign policy under Modi blends an assertive strategy with a civilisational soul. It's not just about oil or arms; it's about shaping a world where India matters spiritually and strategically. As Palmerston once said, "We have no eternal allies and no perpetual enemies." Our interests are eternal. India now recalibrates relationships based on its evolving national interests.

Whether inviting neighbours like festival guests, sending relics to Buddhist cousins, or buying oil to shield its economy, Modi's India acts with a mix of pragmatism and purpose. It doesn't hesitate to make bold moves or challenge convention when the stakes demand it. And in doing so, it signals a confident, forward-looking nation — one that is ready to lead, not just follow, in the world order



# From Vaccine Maitri to Vishwabandhu: The Modi Foreign Policy Shift

**D. Jaganprabhu**

Secretary, Social Media Wing of BJP Tamil Nadu

During the last decade, Indian foreign policy has also undergone a radical transformation. With the visionary leadership of Honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, India has shifted from being a balancer to becoming a global leading voice. The "Modi Doctrine" represents a self-assertive, cultural self-pride, visionary, and people-oriented diplomacy. Today, India is seen as an emerging power and a responsible global leader.

## **India's Growing Global Stature:**

India today is no longer seen as a silent observer but as a determining player in international affairs. Prime Minister Modi has placed India as a bridge between the developed and developing world. His leadership has made India a member of powerful global platforms such as the G20, BRICS, QUAD, and SCO.

The fact that the G20 Summit of 2023 was hosted historically was a matter of pride, where India presided over debates on issues relevant to the time, like climate action, digitalisation, and global health. The Global South's voice was heard in India, creating the reality that India no longer represented

itself alone but numerous developing nations.

India's rise as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council with overwhelming support shows the world's growing trust in India's leadership.

## **Strengthening Strategic Partnerships:**

Strategic partnerships have been a major pillar of Modi Ji's foreign policy. India has deepened ties with major powers while maintaining its strategic autonomy.

**United States:** The relationship has evolved into a comprehensive global strategic partnership. Initiatives like the India-US 2+2 Dialogue, critical defence agreements (COMCASA, BECA), and joint military exercises like Yudh Abhyas underline the growing trust.

**Japan and Australia:** Relations have deepened, particularly through the Quad alliance, which operates towards a free and open Indo-Pacific region. Japan has increased defence cooperation with Australia and investment in Indian infrastructure.



France: Defence cooperation (Rafale aircraft), clean energy initiatives, and joint space missions characterise India and France's relationship.

**West Asia:** India's relations with the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Israel have experienced unprecedented growth. Strategic energy security, technology, and investment agreements have made India a key partner in West Asia.

PM Modi's ability to balance relations with diverse nations – the US, Russia, Israel, and the Arab world – without compromising India's core interests shows his diplomatic finesse.

#### **Reaching out to the Global Indian Diaspora:**

A hallmark of PM Modi's foreign policy is his personal outreach to the Indian diaspora. Recognising the strength of 30+ million Indians living abroad, he has turned them into India's ambassadors.

Massive diaspora events in New York, London, Sydney, and Abu Dhabi have strengthened emotional bonds and motivated investments, innovation, and goodwill for India.

In times of crises, be it the COVID-19 pandemic or the Russia-Ukraine war, the Modi administration initiated rapid evacuation operations such as Vande Bharat Mission and Operation Ganga to secure the Indians overseas, making it emphatically clear that an Indian life matters.

#### **Bold and Unconventional Diplomacy:**

PM Modi's foreign policy is marked by bold initiatives that challenge traditional diplomacy: With great audacity, PM Modi paid a visit to Pakistan in pursuit of peace diplomacy, highlighting India's eagerness to follow up on talks but with a show of strength. India's firm and mature management of the Doklam standoff and Galwan conflict showed the world that it would not back down from defending its sovereignty. During the Russia-Ukraine war, India maintained an independent position, calling for peace without blindly aligning with any side. PM Modi's powerful statement to President Putin – "This is not an era of war" – echoed globally and was even quoted by world leaders.

**Vaccine Maitri:** While the world struggled against

COVID-19, India emerged as a global savior by exporting vaccines to more than 90 nations. The humanitarian leadership of India was widely acclaimed, reaffirming India's position as a responsible power.

#### **Leading Climate and Technology Programs:**

Under PM Modi's leadership, India is also leading on new-age global challenges. The International Solar Alliance (ISA) was launched jointly with France. ISA is a joint effort to fuel a global revolution in solar power. Over 120 countries are now members, underlining India's green leadership. India has championed the cause of building disaster-resilient infrastructure under the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). From selling the India Stack model to inking deals on digital economy collaborations, India's soft power extends into the technology and innovation domains under Digital Diplomacy.

#### **India's Vision for Amrit Kaal:**

In the future, the Modi Doctrine sees India not only as a great power but also as a Vishwaguru—a world teacher and mentor. The next few years of "Amrit Kaal" (the 25 years until India's 100th Independence Day) are about forging international partnerships based on peace, cooperation, and development.

PM Modi has a vision, and it is clear: India should approach the world not from fear or weakness, but from strength, culture, innovation, and leadership.

#### **Conclusion**

Within a few years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership has not only consolidated India's foreign relations but also redefined India's engagement with the world. Now, India addresses the world from a place of strength based on its values, but inclusive of opportunities from across the globe.

The Modi Doctrine has given India an assertive voice in global affairs, and every Indian feels proud. It has demonstrated that India's rightful place is at the high table of global decision-making.

The future is of a new India—robust, confident, and respected—and that process has already commenced under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's guidance.



# Modi's Foreign Policy Doctrine: Strength, Sovereignty, Soft Power

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**Venugopal Vemula**

Entrepreneur and a BJP Karyakarta in Hyderabad

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi took office in 2014, he made a clear promise: to not only strengthen India within its borders, but also elevate its voice and standing across the globe. A decade later, that vision has taken shape. India is no longer a quiet observer in international affairs—it is a confident, respected, and assertive global power.

## **A Global Platform of Prestige: G20 and Beyond**

India's successful hosting of the G20 Summit in 2023 marked a pivotal moment. In a world fraught with geopolitical tensions, India brought together the leaders of the world's largest economies and forged a consensus declaration—a diplomatic triumph. It was a clear signal that India's voice matters in shaping global conversations.

Prime Minister Modi also led a strong push for reform in global institutions, especially the United Nations. He has consistently asserted that a nation of over 1.4 billion people cannot remain absent from the UN Security Council's permanent membership. India's rising stature has brought credibility to this demand, reinforcing its position as a key stakeholder in global governance.

## **Shaping the Indo-Pacific: The Quad and Maritime Strategy**

India's presence in the Indo-Pacific has grown significantly through the Quad partnership with the United States, Japan, and Australia. This grouping promotes a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific, acting as a balance to the expanding influence of

China. Through maritime cooperation and regional dialogue, India is asserting itself as a pillar of stability and rule-based order in the region.

### **Strategic Balancing: Relations with the U.S., Russia, and the Gulf**

Under Modi's leadership, India has deepened its partnership with the United States, achieving new heights in defence, trade, and emerging technologies. Key agreements have enabled India to access advanced military technology, once considered out of reach. At the same time, India has preserved its time-tested friendship with Russia, navigating the Ukraine conflict with strategic autonomy, not succumbing to external pressure.

India's outreach to the Gulf region has also expanded dramatically. Strong ties with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Israel have translated into increased investments, energy cooperation, and new opportunities for Indian workers abroad. Simultaneously, Modi has actively engaged Africa and Latin America, offering partnerships in education, health, and technology, positioning India as a trusted development partner.

From Look East to Act East: Regional Priorities First Modi has revitalized India's regional approach. The "Look East Policy" evolved into a more ambitious "Act East Policy", reflecting India's deeper engagement with ASEAN countries and Southeast Asia. The "Neighbourhood First" policy has sought to strengthen connectivity, infrastructure, and people-to-people links with South Asian neighbours—creating a more integrated regional ecosystem.

### **Vaccine Maitri and Humanitarian Diplomacy**

India's Vaccine Maitri initiative during the COVID-19 pandemic was a defining act of leadership. At a time when many nations were hoarding vaccines, India sent millions of doses to countries across Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. It was a demonstration of compassionate diplomacy, reinforcing India's identity as a responsible global power.

### **A Global Voice on Climate and Culture**

India has also emerged as a leader in the global climate movement. Modi's co-founding of the International Solar Alliance with France has encouraged global cooperation on clean energy,

especially among developing countries. India's climate leadership has been defined by a balanced approach—asserting the right to development while committing to sustainability.

On the cultural front, India's soft power has seen a remarkable rise. Thanks to Modi's advocacy, June 21 was declared International Yoga Day by the United Nations, making yoga a universal cultural force. India's ancient traditions now find enthusiastic audiences in every corner of the globe.

### **Diaspora Engagement and Evacuation Diplomacy**

Modi's personal engagement with the Indian diaspora has redefined how Indians abroad connect with their homeland. From Madison Square Garden to Wembley Stadium, his public events have drawn massive crowds and rekindled patriotic pride among overseas Indians. The government has backed this emotional outreach with strong action—rescue missions from Yemen and Ukraine, and support during the pandemic, have shown that India stands by its citizens, no matter where they are.

### **India Walks Tall: A Nation Respected and Heard**

What makes Modi's foreign policy distinct is its clarity, confidence, and consistency. The surgical strikes after the Uri terror attack and the Balakot airstrike post-Pulwama were assertive actions that showcased India's readiness to defend its interests without hesitation. The world saw a new India—peaceful yet powerful, patient but prepared. Campaigns like Digital India, Make in India, and Startup India have been promoted globally, presenting India as a modern hub of innovation, entrepreneurship, and digital growth. Foreign investments have risen, and the world's attention is firmly focused on the India story.

### **Conclusion: India's Global Rise Has Just Begun**

In simple terms, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's foreign policy has reshaped India's image abroad—from a reactive nation to a proactive leader. India today is not just participating in the global conversation—it is helping lead it. For millions of ordinary Indians, this global respect is a source of pride. The journey continues, but under Modi's leadership, India now walks taller on the world stage than ever before.

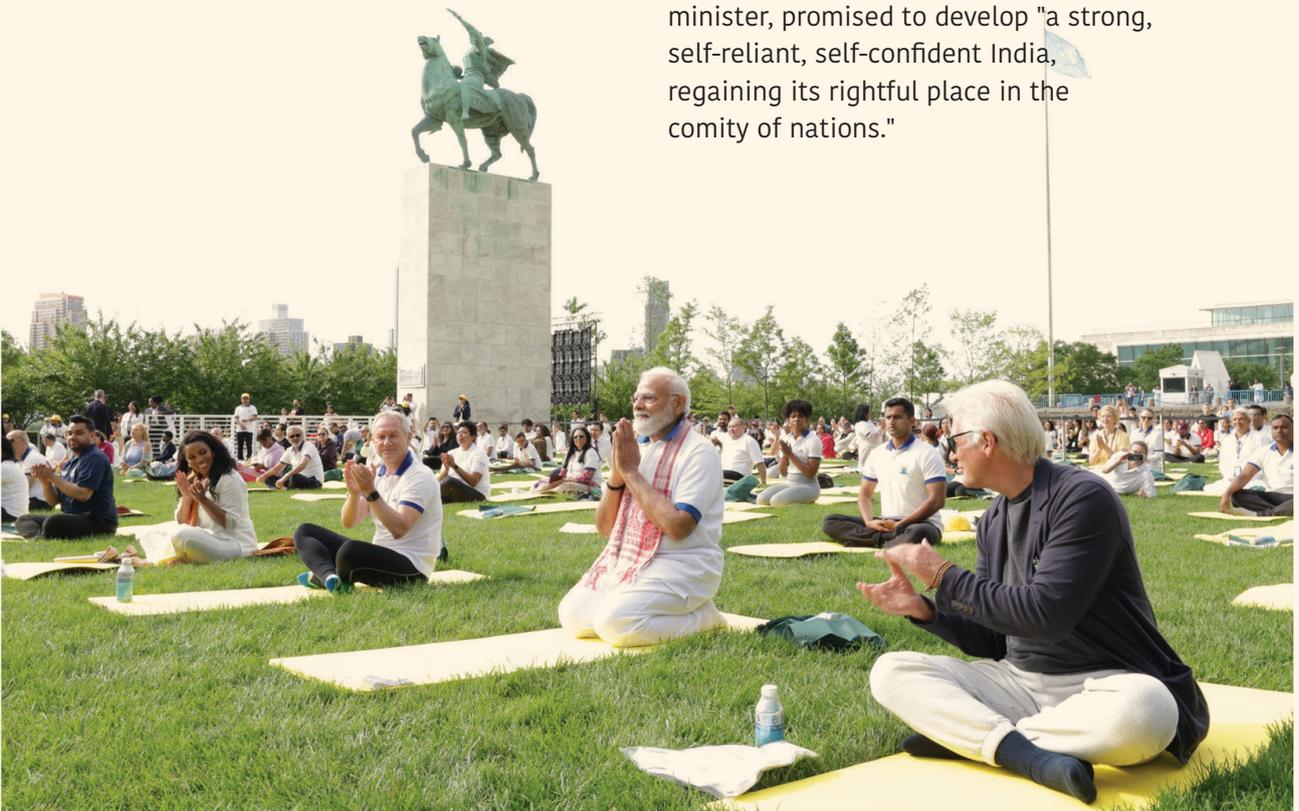
# Geopolitics with Roots: Deals, Dharma, and Decisiveness

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**Pankaj Jagannath  
Jayswal**

Researcher, Speaker  
and columnist

PM Modi's foreign policy is a hybrid of nationalist-driven geopolitics and pragmatic geoeconomics. India has followed a policy of "multi-alignment" rather than "non-alignment." This suggests that India is willing to unite with allies, but only on specific issues. Many foreign policy analysts say India has always done this, but it is simply more open and forthright about how it conducts foreign policy today. The idea of protecting and maintaining India's "strategic autonomy" is the top priority today, which was missing earlier. PM Modi has numerous reasons to capitalise on achievements and accelerate India's rise up the world power ladder. He has long stressed increasing India's global position. Fast forward to the present day, and the same countries and leaders who once chastised PM Modi in Gujarat now recognise his critical role in managing complicated global issues. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) election campaign in 2014, the year he became prime minister, promised to develop "a strong, self-reliant, self-confident India, regaining its rightful place in the comity of nations."



## **Balancing the equations**

Through his India-first strategy, PM Modi has attempted to handle a number of competing interests in favour of India. For example, formerly difficult relationships with Saudi Arabia, Israel, the UAE, and Iran have gained fresh momentum. Prime Minister Modi's alliance with West Asia for economic success exemplifies the concept that national interests come first. He has not only pushed for closer ties with the region's major Arab states, but also with Israel. Prime Minister Modi has successfully engaged with and visited major countries that have not seen an Indian Prime Minister in decades. Canada and the UAE are instances of this. Connecting with the diaspora in countries throughout the world has been a priority for the government. Engagements with the diaspora have not only elevated the status of the Indian diaspora in countries but also transformed them into a political force to be reckoned with. The most significant advance in India's foreign policy was an agreement with China on patrolling arrangements along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The Modi government's response to cross-border terrorism, illegal trade, and trafficking, as well as its forceful approach to national security, has affected India's foreign policy calculation in South Asia. The 2016 surgical strikes and the 2019 Balakot airstrikes demonstrated a more aggressive strategy for dealing with regional security problems. In 2015, the Modi government signed a Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) with Bangladesh to resolve a boundary issue that emerged during the 1947 partition. Under the policy toward the neighbours, PM Modi frequently visited Nepal and Bhutan and signed various developmental projects for regional stability and growth.

## **Focus on Bharatiya roots and culture**

This government has attempted to strengthen soft power by promoting tradition and Indian culture. Two notable examples are convincing the United Nations to designate an "International Day of Yoga" or garnering global recognition for an "International Year of Millets," a cereal crop with allegedly ancient origins in India.

S Jaishankar, the External Affairs Minister, praised PM Modi as a politician with "networking, standing, and respect." He is not mistaken: most governments are eager to interact with Modi's India. India hosted the G20 in 2023, and it mostly demonstrated this attitude. Modi's vigorous popularization of foreign policy in Indian public debate marks a significant break from the past, when foreign policy events were virtually unknown outside the corridors and chancelleries of New Delhi. PM Modi has managed to keep both his adversaries and supporters on edge by pursuing a pragmatic foreign policy with the 'India first' mantra at its centre. The international order has undergone several structural modifications. India has emerged as the focal point of modern world political discourse. The world, which has become accustomed to a pontificating India in the past, now hears an Indian voice in the global arena capable of articulating a narrative of a responsible stakeholder who, despite being deeply rooted in its own culture, is unwilling to shirk global obligations.

## **Strengthening Economy**

There is a clear indication of the close relationship between Indian foreign policy and home economic concerns. Despite domestic difficulties, foreign direct investment has not slowed. This integration may also be seen in projects such as Make in India, Digital India, Mudra loan, Startups, etc. Another important area in which India's foreign policy may shift is Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). FTAs help India increase exports, attract FDI, and secure vital technologies. Ongoing free trade agreements with Japan, Singapore, and Australia, among others, have proven extremely advantageous. Some free trade agreements, including those with the United Kingdom, the European Union, and ASEAN, will be negotiated. Countries are increasingly interested in trade agreements that address the digital economy and e-commerce.

Economic diplomacy and the development of strong trade partnerships have been fundamental to India's foreign policy under PM Modi. The Modi government has highlighted projects like 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' to boost local manufacturing and exports. Signing significant trade agreements, such as the Regional

Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the India-EU Free Trade Agreement discussions, demonstrates India's efforts to strengthen economic ties with its worldwide partners. Furthermore, Prime Minister Modi's emphasis on bilateral trade ties with countries such as the United States, Japan, and Australia has resulted in increased economic cooperation and investment flows. The strategic convergence of economic interests has boosted India's economic resilience while simultaneously increasing its diplomatic leverage on the global stage.

The India-US collaboration has previously worked effectively without India explicitly adopting an alliance. Every other year, both countries' international influence grows. Under Modi 3.0, this relationship will enter new phases. India has big economic and trade objectives, and an economic agreement with the United States will help it achieve them. To attain independence in the semiconductor business, India must prioritize increased investment and technology.

The Indian Navy's rescue of a commercial ship hijacked by pirates off Somalia's coast

demonstrates that Indian policymakers are now willing to shoulder operational responsibilities in order to ensure the safety of commercial shipping and freedom of navigation in strategically important waterways.

### Conclusion

For starters, PM Modi's election to a third term, followed by an invitation to the G-7 summit as an observer, demonstrates his transformation from a once-ignored "provincial leader" and "regional politician" to a statesman with a dominating presence on the international arena. The dimensions of the PM Modi government's nation-first policy have lifted the standard on the international stage, with every Indian appreciated and Indian culture recognized as developing individuals and society for a brighter future. If we as a community align ourselves with foreign policy, we can benefit ourselves and the world socially, economically, and culturally. Focusing on creating businesses, industries, and strengthening the service sector makes it easier to establish big footprints in the global market thanks to the Modi government's best foreign policy decisions.



# बिस्सटेक को प्रभावी बनाते नरेंद्र मोदी

अरविंद जयतिलक, स्तंभकार



गत दिवस पहले थाईलैंड की राजधानी बैंकॉक में दक्षिण पूर्व एशियाई देशों को एक मंच पर लाने वाला 'बंगाल की खाड़ी बहु-क्षेत्रीय तकनीकी और आर्थिक सहयोग पहल (बिस्सटेक) शिखर सम्मेलन संपन्न हो गया। प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने शिखर सम्मेलन के जरिए क्षेत्र में सहयोग और समन्वय बढ़ाने की पहल के साथ बैंकॉक विजन 2030 तक का रोडमैप खींच दिया। उन्होंने आर्थिक एकीकरण और कनेक्टिविटी पर जोर देते हुए व्यापार बाधाओं को कम करने, डिजिटल व्यापार एवं ई-कामर्स का विस्तार करने पर बल दिया। साथ ही उन्होंने सीमा पार लेन-देन को सुव्यवस्थित करने के लिए बिस्सटेक डिजिटल व्यापार मंच की सार्थकता को भी रेखांकित किया। इसे ध्यान में रखते हुए उन्होंने भारत के यूपीआई को बिस्सटेक सदस्य देशों की भुगतान सिस्टम से जोड़ने का आह्वान किया ताकि क्षेत्रीय अर्थव्यवस्था को नई ऊंचाई दी जा सके। अगर सदस्य देश इसमें दिलचस्पी दिखाते हैं तो निःसंदेह इस क्षेत्र में व्यापार, व्यवसाय और पर्यटन को पंख लगना तय है।

जिस तरह दुनिया भर में व्यापारिक तनाव बढ़ रहा है और टैरिफ वार चल रहा है उस परिप्रेक्ष्य में बिस्सटेक क्षेत्र में स्थानीय मुद्रा में व्यापार की संभावनाएं अर्थव्यवस्था को नई गति दे सकती है। इसीलिए प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने इसकी व्यवहारिकता को समझने-परखने के लिए एक अध्ययन का प्रस्ताव रखा। उन्होंने आतंकवाद पर नकेल और समुद्री सुरक्षा पर बल देते हुए मानव संसाधन अवसंरचना के संगठित विकास के लिए बिस्सटेक (बोधि) पहल का भी एलान किया। इसका उद्देश्य भारत में प्रत्येक वर्ष तीन सैकड़ा युवाओं को प्रशिक्षित करना है। शिखर सम्मेलन के दौरान प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने बांग्लादेश की अंतरिम सरकार के मुखिया मुहम्मद यूनूस के साथ बैठक कर बांग्लादेश में अल्पसंख्यकों की सुरक्षा का भी सवाल उठाया। देखना दिलचस्प होगा कि मुहम्मद यूनूस इसे कितनी गंभीरता से लेते हैं।

प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने पड़ोसी देश म्यांमार को भी आश्वस्त किया कि वहां आए भीषण भूकंप से निपटने में भारत का सहयोग जारी रहेगा। गौर करें तो इस शिखर सम्मेलन के जरिए प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने बिस्सटेक को

प्रभावी बनाने की हर संभव पहल की है। ध्यान देना होगा कि मौजूदा समय में वैश्विक परिस्थितियां तेजी से बदल रही हैं। ऐसे में बिस्मटेक को प्रभावी बनाना न सिर्फ दक्षिण व पूर्वी एशिया के हित में है बल्कि यह क्षेत्रीय मंच समूचे विश्व के लिए प्रेरणा का स्रोत भी बन सकता है। शिखर सम्मेलन में बनी सहमति के इन प्रभावी सुझावों को मूर्त रूप दिया जाता है तो निःसंदेह बिस्मटेक की उपादेयता बढ़ेगी। उल्लेखनीय है कि बिस्मटेक यानी बंगाल की खाड़ी बहु-क्षेत्रीय तकनीकी और आर्थिक सहयोग उपक्रम की स्थापना 1997 में हुई। यह बंगाल की खाड़ी से तटवर्ती या समीपी देशों का एक अंतर्राष्ट्रीय आर्थिक सहयोग संगठन है।

गौर करें तो बिस्मटेक क्षेत्र प्राकृतिक साधनों, जनशक्ति तथा प्रतिभा से भरपूर है। विश्व की 22 फीसद आबादी इस क्षेत्र में रहती है और इसका संयुक्त सकल घरेलू उत्पाद 2500 अरब डॉलर है। अगर सदस्य देश सामंजस्य बनाकर कार्य करते हैं तो इससे इस क्षेत्र में व्याप्त गरीबी, अशिक्षा और कुपोषण से लड़ने में मदद मिलेगी। अच्छी बात है कि बिस्मटेक ने अपने हर सम्मेलन में कई महत्वपूर्ण आर्थिक निर्णय लिए हैं। इन निर्णयों का ही प्रतिफल है कि आज बिस्मटेक देशों के बीच आर्थिक गतिविधियां तेज हुई हैं। आज बंगलादेश भारत की सबसे गतिशील मंडियों में से एक है। भारत ने बंगलादेश के हित के लिए कई सेक्टरों की वस्तुओं के आयात पर टैरिफ रियायतें दी हैं। इसी तरह भारत-नेपाल आर्थिक-तकनीकी संबंधों में भी प्रगाढ़ता आयी है। नेपाल के विकास कार्यों में सबसे अधिक धन भारत लगा रहा है। दोनों देश चीनी, कागज, सीमेंट जैसे औद्योगिक साझा उद्यम में मिलकर काम कर रहे हैं। आज नेपाल के कुल पूंजी निवेश में लगभग 36 फीसद पूंजी निवेश भारत करता है। भारत सरकार औसतन वार्षिक बजट का लगभग 60 से 75 करोड़ रुपए नेपाल को पर्याप्त सहायता पैकेज के रूप में देती है। बिस्मटेक के सदस्य देश भूटान की कृषि, सिंचाई, सड़क परियोजनाओं में भारत निरंतर सहयोग कर रहा है। भूटान की चुक्ख हाईडिल परियोजना एवं पेनडेना सीमेंट संयंत्र खोलने के लिए भारत ने बड़ी धनराशि मुहैया करायी है। भूटान के सचिवालय के निर्माण तथा पुराने मठों तथा विहारों के जीर्णोद्धार में भी भारत मदद कर रहा है। इसके अलावा भारत उसे केरोसिन और तेल की सब्सिडी भी देता है।

बिस्मटेक के अन्य सदस्य देश म्यांमार, श्रीलंका और थाइलैंड के साथ भी भारत के गहरे रिश्ते हैं। म्यांमार में लोकतंत्र के उदय में भारत की अहम भूमिका रही है। वह इन देशों के साथ कृषि, वानिकी, पर्यटन, होटल, दूरसंचार जैसे अनगिनत परियोजनाओं पर मिलकर काम कर रहा है। लेकिन इसके बावजूद भी बिस्मटेक क्षेत्र में रुकावटें और चुनौतियां बनी हुई हैं जिससे बिस्मटेक को अपना लक्ष्य साधने में कठिनाई हो रही है। बिस्मटेक क्षेत्र में आतंकवाद एक महत्वपूर्ण समस्या है। गोवा के शिखर सम्मेलन में भारतीय प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने कहा भी था कि आतंकवाद से निपटने के लिए सभी सदस्य देशों को मिलकर काम करने की जरूरत है।

31 जुलाई 2004 को बैंकाक में संपन्न बिस्मटेक की पहली शिखर बैठक और 19 दिसंबर 2005 को ढाका में संपन्न बिस्मटेक मंत्रिस्तरीय सम्मेलन में भी आतंकवाद का मुद्दा उठा था। सभी सदस्य देशों ने इस चुनौती से मिलकर मुकाबला करने का संकल्प व्यक्त

किया। लेकिन सच तो यह है कि इस दिशा में अभी तक ठोस सफलता नहीं मिली है। सच तो यह है कि बिस्मटेक क्षेत्र में आतंकी गतिविधियों पहले से भी सघन हुई हैं। भारत का कश्मीर और पूर्वोत्तर राज्य आतंकियों के निशाने पर है। इसी तरह बंगलादेश में हूजी, जमातुल मुजाहिदीन बंगलादेश, द जाग्रत मुस्लिम बंगलादेश, इस्लामी छात्र शिविर यानी आइसीएस जैसे आतंकी संगठन पहले से मजबूत हुए हैं। नेपाल के रास्ते पाकिस्तान प्रायोजित आतंकवाद भारत के लिए चुनौती बना हुआ है। बंगलादेश और नेपाल के रास्ते भारत में नशीले पदार्थों की तस्करी और नकली नोटों का प्रवाह जारी है। इसी तरह थाइलैंड, श्रीलंका और म्यांमार वाह्य और अंदरूनी आतंकवाद के अलावा जातीय संघर्षों से झुलस रहे हैं। जब तक इन अराजक गतिविधियों पर लगाम नहीं लगेगा बिस्मटेक क्षेत्र में शांति और अर्थव्यवस्था को मजबूती नहीं मिलने वाली।

बिस्मटेक के सदस्य देशों को उन आपसी मतभेदों को भी सुलझाना होगा जो आर्थिक प्रगति की राह में बाधा बना हुआ है। मसलन गंगा-ब्रह्मपुत्र नहर बनाने के मसले पर आज भी भारत और बंगलादेश के बीच विवाद ज्यों का त्यों बना हुआ है। बांग्लादेश इसके लिए नेपाल में बड़े-बड़े जलाशय के निर्माण पर बल देकर नेपाल को इस समस्या से जोड़ना चाहता है। हर वर्ष लाखों बांग्लादेशी गैर-कानूनी तरीके से भारत में प्रवेश करते हैं। ऐसा माना जाता है कि बांग्लादेशी घुसपैठ ही असम समस्या की जड़ हैं। इसे लेकर भारत बांग्लादेश से लगातार आपत्ति जताता है लेकिन बंगलादेश अपनी आंख बंद किए हुए है। बांग्लादेश में अल्पसंख्यकों की सुरक्षा भी अब बड़ी चुनौती बन गई है। इसमें श्रीलंका में चीन की बढ़ती भूमिका महत्वपूर्ण है। चीन की मंशा श्रीलंका को व्यस्त समुद्री मार्ग का हिस्सा बनाकर हिंद महासागर में अपना ठिकाना जमाना है। बिस्मटेक के सदस्य देशों को समझना होगा कि इस क्षेत्र में चीन की उपस्थिति शांति व सुरक्षा के लिए ठीक नहीं है। इससे बिमटेस्क के सदस्य देशों की संप्रभुता प्रभावित होगी। पूंजी प्रवाह में उतार-चढ़ाव और विकसित देशों की मौद्रिक नीतियों में बदलाव के इस दौर में बिस्मटेक के लिए आवश्यक है कि वह आपसी मतभेदों को भुलाकर अर्थव्यवस्था के विकास को उत्प्रेरित करने, निवेश आकर्षित करने, उच्च आर्थिक वृद्धि बनाए रखने तथा रोजगार के अवसर सृजित करने से जुड़ी नीतियों को अमलीजामा पहनाएं।

प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के नेतृत्व में भारत कई वैश्विक चुनौतियों के साथ उसके समाधान का मार्ग भी दिखा रहा है, अब बिमटेस्क के सदस्य देशों को नरेंद्र मोदी के सुझावों पर गंभीरता से विचार करते हुए आगे बढ़ने की जरूरत है ताकि सभी देश विभिन्न चुनौतियों से पार पाते हुए परस्पर सहयोग की भावना से आगे बढ़ सकें।





# BHARATIYA JANATA YUVA MORCHA

