



## INDIA - US RELATIONS - GS II MAINS

Q. Critically examine the leverage of India and Indian diaspora for the U.S. amidst its increasing domestic challenges and changing global landscape. (15 marks, 250 words)

*News: Ram Madhav writes: A growing China and the India-US coming together*

### What's in the news?

- India and the United States of America have been close allies for more than two decades.
- India recently elected the Narendra Modi-led government for the third consecutive term.
- In the US, the presidential elections are scheduled for November and a new government led by Joe Biden or Donald Trump will be in place in January next year.

### Key takeaways:

- Indo-US relations have achieved momentum under PM Modi. Challenge in coming years is to sort out differences, especially on India's insistence for strategic autonomy.

### Changing Global Landscape:

#### 1. Rise of China:

- China has emerged as a dominant global player economically, technologically, and militarily. Its rapid growth has challenged the traditional dominance of the United States and other Western powers, leading to a reconfiguration of power dynamics.

#### 2. Shifting Alliances:

- Traditional alliances and partnerships have been reshaped, with countries seeking new alignments to adapt to the changing global order.
- For example - Russia and China have strengthened their strategic partnership, while the United States has sought to build closer ties with countries like India and strengthen existing alliances like NATO.

#### 3. Multilateralism under Strain:

- Multilateral institutions and frameworks have faced challenges as countries assert their own interests and pursue alternative approaches.
- The US has shown skepticism towards certain multilateral agreements, such as the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Iran nuclear deal, leading to a reevaluation of global governance structures.

#### 4. Regional Power Rivalries:

- Power rivalries have intensified in various regions, such as the Middle East, the South China Sea, and Eastern Europe.
- Competing interests and territorial disputes have created geopolitical tensions and triggered conflicts in these regions.



## 5. Technological Advancements:

- Technological advancements, particularly in areas like artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and space exploration, have transformed the global landscape.
- Countries are vying for technological leadership and developing strategies to harness emerging technologies for economic and strategic advantages.

## 6. Global Challenges:

- Shared global challenges, such as climate change, pandemics, terrorism, and migration, have necessitated greater international cooperation.
- These challenges have highlighted the interconnectedness of nations and the need for collective action to address them effectively.

## Domestic Challenges in the US:

### 1. Political Polarization:

- The country is deeply divided along political lines, with increasing polarization between the two major political parties.
- This polarization hampers effective governance, impedes policy-making, and creates social tensions.

### 2. Economic Inequality:

- Income and wealth inequality have been on the rise in the US, with a significant wealth gap between the rich and the poor.
- This inequality contributes to social unrest, limits economic mobility, and strains social cohesion.

### 3. Healthcare Crisis:

- The US healthcare system faces challenges in terms of access, affordability, and quality of care.
- Many Americans struggle with high healthcare costs, limited coverage, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure, leading to disparities in healthcare outcomes.

### 4. Gun Violence:

- The US grapples with high levels of gun violence, including mass shootings and urban violence.
- This issue has sparked debates on gun control measures and the balance between individual rights and public safety.

### 5. Opioid Epidemic:

- The country is dealing with an ongoing opioid epidemic, with a significant rise in opioid addiction, overdoses, and related deaths.
- Addressing this crisis requires a comprehensive approach encompassing healthcare, law enforcement, and social support systems.



## 6. Racial Inequality and Social Justice:

- The US continues to confront issues of systemic racism, social injustice, and disparities in various aspects of life, including education, criminal justice, and economic opportunities.
- These challenges have sparked nationwide protests and calls for reform.

## 7. Substance Abuse and Mental Health:

- Substance abuse and mental health issues are pervasive challenges in the US, with significant social and economic impacts.
- Access to effective treatment and support systems for individuals struggling with addiction and mental health disorders remains a concern.

## Significance of the Indian Diaspora:

### 1. Economic Contributions:

- The Indian diaspora plays a crucial role in the economic development of both their host countries and India.
- They are actively engaged in diverse sectors such as technology, finance, healthcare, and entrepreneurship, creating jobs, generating wealth, and fostering innovation.
- Remittances from the diaspora contribute significantly to India's foreign exchange reserves and promote economic growth.

### 2. Cultural Diplomacy:

- The Indian diaspora serves as a cultural bridge, promoting Indian culture, traditions, and values in their host countries.
- Through various cultural events, festivals, and community organizations, they strengthen people-to-people ties, enhance cross-cultural understanding, and promote India's soft power globally.

### 3. Academic and Intellectual Contributions:

- The Indian diaspora has made significant contributions to academia, research, and intellectual pursuits in their respective fields.
- Many Indian-origin individuals have achieved remarkable success in educational institutions, research organizations, and think tanks, enhancing India's intellectual capital and fostering knowledge exchange between countries.

### 4. Political Influence:

- The Indian diaspora has gained political prominence in many countries, particularly in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.
- Indian-origin politicians hold positions at various levels of government, contributing to policy-making, advocacy for Indian interests, and strengthening bilateral relations between India and their host countries.



## 5. Strengthening Bilateral Relations:

- The Indian diaspora acts as a bridge between India and their host countries, fostering closer ties and enhancing bilateral relations.
- Their personal connections, cultural understanding, and business networks facilitate trade, investment, and collaborations in various sectors, contributing to the growth of bilateral relations.

## 6. Electoral Influence:

- The Indian diaspora, particularly in countries with significant populations, has the potential to influence electoral outcomes.
- They can mobilize support for candidates who are sympathetic to Indian interests and issues, thereby impacting political landscapes and policy priorities.

## Why Does the U.S. Need India?

### 1. Strategic Partnership:

- India's strategic location in the Indo-Pacific region makes it a crucial partner for the United States in maintaining regional stability and countering the influence of China.
- India's growing military capabilities, democratic values, and shared interests align with American strategic objectives.

### 2. Economic Opportunities:

- India's rapidly growing economy and large consumer market present significant economic opportunities for American businesses.
- Collaborations in trade, investment, and technology can benefit both countries and contribute to economic growth, job creation, and market access.

### 3. Security Cooperation:

- India's cooperation in security matters, including counterterrorism efforts, enhances global security and strengthens the United States' fight against transnational threats.
- Intelligence sharing, defense collaboration, and joint military exercises foster mutual security interests.

### 4. Shared Democratic Values:

- India, as the world's largest democracy, shares core democratic values with the United States.
- Collaboration with India strengthens the community of democratic nations and reinforces democratic norms globally.

### 5. Regional Stability:

- India's engagement in the South Asian region contributes to regional stability, economic development, and cooperation.
- Partnering with India supports the United States' efforts to promote a rules-based order, peace, and security in the Indo-Pacific region.



## Potential Challenges in India-US Relations:

### 1. Trade and Economic Issues:

- Despite efforts to enhance economic cooperation, trade disputes and market access barriers can strain India-US relations.
- Differences in intellectual property rights, tariffs, and regulatory frameworks can hinder trade relations and create tensions between the two countries.

### 2. Geopolitical Considerations:

- India's strategic autonomy and its relationships with other countries, such as Russia and Iran, could potentially create divergences with US interests.
- Balancing between various regional powers and managing conflicting geopolitical dynamics can present challenges in aligning strategies and priorities.

### 3. Differences in Foreign Policy Approaches:

- India and the US have different approaches to certain foreign policy issues.
- For example - India has historically pursued a policy of non-alignment, while the US emphasizes alliances and partnerships. Differing perspectives on specific regional issues, such as Afghanistan or the Middle East, could lead to divergent policy choices.

### 4. Climate Change and Environmental Priorities:

- While both countries acknowledge the importance of addressing climate change, differing priorities and strategies may impact cooperation in this area.
- The US's focus on global climate initiatives and commitments may differ from India's emphasis on developmental priorities and the need for technology transfers.

### 5. Visa and Immigration Policies:

- Changes in visa and immigration policies, such as restrictions on H-1B visas, can impact the movement of professionals and students between India and the US.
- This can affect people-to-people ties, educational collaborations, and business partnerships, thereby straining the bilateral relationship.

### 6. Domestic Political Factors:

- Domestic political considerations in both countries can influence the direction of India-US relations.
- Changes in leadership, shifts in domestic priorities, and partisan politics can shape policy choices and impact the overall relationship.

### 7. Perception Gaps and Cultural Differences:

- Differences in perception, cultural norms, and understanding of each other's societies can create challenges in communication and building mutual trust.
- Bridging these gaps requires sustained efforts to enhance people-to-people ties, cultural exchange, and educational collaborations.



## Way Forward:

### 1. Enhanced Economic Cooperation:

- Both countries can prioritize efforts to deepen economic ties, promote trade and investment, and address trade barriers.
- Exploring new sectors of collaboration, fostering innovation partnerships, and promoting business-to-business interactions can further enhance economic cooperation.

### 2. Strategic and Security Cooperation:

- Strengthening strategic and security cooperation is crucial in addressing shared challenges such as counterterrorism, maritime security, and regional stability. Regular dialogues, joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, and defense technology collaborations can bolster defense and security ties.

### 3. Climate Change and Clean Energy Cooperation:

- Given the urgency of addressing climate change, India and the US can collaborate on clean energy technologies, renewable energy adoption, and climate resilience efforts. Sharing best practices, facilitating technology transfers, and promoting joint research initiatives can contribute to global climate goals.

### 4. Science, Technology, and Innovation Partnerships:

- India and the US can leverage their strengths in science, technology, and innovation to foster collaborations in areas such as healthcare, space exploration, artificial intelligence, and advanced manufacturing.
- Joint research projects, technology transfer agreements, and innovation hubs can fuel innovation and economic growth in both countries.

### 5. Collaboration in Global Governance:

- India and the US can work together to promote multilateralism, reform international institutions, and address global challenges.
- Coordination in international forums such as the United Nations, G20, and regional organizations can amplify their collective voice and influence.

Amidst a changing global order, India must offer the US avenues beyond geopolitical balance, particularly in healthcare, digitalization, multilateral engagement, and collaboration in the Global South. By leveraging India's expertise and fostering collaboration, both nations can strengthen their partnership and address mutual challenges while capitalizing on emerging opportunities.