



EDITORIAL: THE HINDU

GENERAL STUDIES 2: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

TOPIC: BILATERAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL GROUPINGS AND AGREEMENTS INVOLVING INDIA AND/OR AFFECTING INDIA'S INTERESTS.

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THE OUTLOOK FOR INDIA IN THE YEAR AHEAD

Economic and Political Stability

- India continues to assert its position as a global leader in economic growth and political stability. Despite global turbulence, the country has managed to maintain internal peace and stability. It is actively engaging with new economic and political groupings while navigating complex global dynamics, ensuring that its domestic progress remains unaffected by external uncertainties.

Global Unrest in 2024

The year 2024 witnessed significant global political and economic instability. Concurrent conflicts in Europe and West Asia posed serious challenges to global peace.

- **Gaza Conflict:** One of the most severe humanitarian crises in recent memory, destabilizing West Asia and impacting global diplomacy.
- **Ukraine Conflict:** Continued aggression has raised fears of escalation into a broader conflict, threatening European stability. Amidst this, India demonstrated adept geopolitical maneuvering, maintaining a balanced stance to safeguard its interests.

Challenges Ahead in 2025

- The upcoming year is poised to test India's strategic resilience with multifaceted challenges that demand proactive policy responses. These include navigating rising tensions with neighboring China, addressing regional instability in South and West Asia, and countering emerging digital threats.

India-China Relations

While recent border negotiations and disengagement at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) have signaled progress, the border conflict with China remains unresolved.



- **Strategic Moves:** China's increasing security cooperation with the Global South, particularly through initiatives like the Global Security Initiative (GSI), poses challenges for India's influence.
- **Muted Influence in Multilateral Forums:** China's strategic actions during global summits, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), have overshadowed India's diplomatic presence. India must remain vigilant to counterbalance China's growing assertiveness.

Churn in South and West Asia

South Asia

India faces increasing isolation in its immediate neighborhood:

- **Bangladesh:** Potential leadership changes could strain India's traditionally strong ties.
- **Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan:** Relations remain uneasy, influenced by China's growing footprint in the region.
- **Maldives:** Uncertainty over its political alignment adds to regional instability.
- **Pakistan and Afghanistan:** Persisting challenges include cross-border terrorism and instability due to Taliban influence.

West Asia

West Asia is undergoing dramatic geopolitical changes:

- **Syria:** The fall of the Assad regime signals a regional power shift, with Sunni-led groups like Hayat Tahir al-Shams (HTS) gaining prominence.
- **Iran:** Waning influence threatens Shia groups such as Hezbollah and the pro-Palestine movement.
- **Emerging Powers:** Israel and Türkiye stand to benefit strategically, while Russia's declining influence reshapes the regional power dynamics. These shifts demand India's close monitoring, given its energy and trade dependencies in the region.

Rising Digital Threats

Cybersecurity has emerged as a critical concern, with the frequency and sophistication of cyberattacks increasing alarmingly:

- **Critical Infrastructure at Risk:** National infrastructure faces threats from ransomware and denial-of-service attacks.



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- **2024 Trends:** A marked rise in cyberattacks during the year has set the stage for heightened challenges in 2025.
- **Future Risks:** The exponential escalation of digital threats requires India to invest heavily in cybersecurity measures, ensuring the protection of its digital assets and infrastructure.

Conclusion

- India stands at a crossroads, facing an increasingly volatile geopolitical and digital landscape. To maintain its stability and global influence, the nation must adopt a multipronged approach—strengthening its cybersecurity framework, fostering regional cooperation, and leveraging its economic and political stability to navigate the challenges of 2025. Strategic vigilance and proactive policymaking will be indispensable for safeguarding India's interests in the coming years.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-outlook-for-india-in-the-year-ahead/article69065160.ece>

