



EDITORIAL: THE HINDU

GENERAL STUDIES 2: INTERNATIONAL RELATION
TOPIC: INDIA & NEIGHBOUR'S

DATE: 28.03.2025

Should the free movement regime between India and Myanmar remain?

Free Movement Regime (FMR) along the India-Myanmar Border

- The FMR allows unrestricted movement for ethnic communities across the India-Myanmar border.
- Its proposed revocation raises concerns about security, economy, and culture, causing regional opposition.

Arguments in Favor of FMR

- **Ethnic and Cultural Ties:** Communities on both sides share familial, linguistic, and cultural connections, making free movement important for social cohesion.
- **Economic Benefits:** Cross-border trade supports local economies, providing jobs and livelihoods, particularly in Mizoram and Nagaland.
- **Humanitarian Concerns:** Myanmar's political crisis has caused many to flee, and removing the FMR could worsen the humanitarian situation.
- **Diplomatic Relations:** Restricting movement could harm India-Myanmar relations and push Myanmar closer to China, reducing India's regional influence.
- **Act East Policy:** FMR supports India's Act East Policy by promoting regional connectivity and trade with Southeast Asia.
- **Security Through Cooperation:** Instead of building fences, working together with Myanmar on security can reduce illegal activities like smuggling.

Arguments Against FMR

- **Security Threats:** Uncontrolled movement can lead to drug trafficking, illegal arms trade, and insurgent infiltration, destabilizing Northeast India.
- **Ethnic Conflicts:** Foreign nationals influencing ethnic tensions in places like Manipur pose risks with an open border policy.
- **Illegal Migration:** Unchecked migration could lead to demographic shifts and political instability.
- **Strategic Vulnerability:** China's growing influence in Myanmar requires stronger border controls to prevent espionage and security threats.



PL RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

MAKING YOU SERVE THE NATION

- **Economic Exploitation:** Smuggling of goods like gold, drugs, and wildlife harms India's economy and public health.
- **Border Management Challenges:** A porous border makes it difficult to enforce customs, taxation, and legal trade regulations.

Conclusion

- A balanced approach is needed to limit unregulated movement while maintaining cultural and economic connections.
- Strengthening border monitoring, promoting legal trade, and involving local communities can address security concerns without alienating border populations.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/should-the-free-movement-regime-between-india-and-myanmar-remain/article69383147.ece>

