

EDITORIAL HIGHLIGHTS

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GS 2: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THE HINDU PAGE: 06

The Gulf is calling and New Delhi must listen

For decades, India's relationship with West Asia operated under a doctrine of deliberate ambiguity and even of some strategic distance. Delhi treated the "Middle East" primarily as an economic hinterland: a critical source of crude oil, a reliable destination for outbound labour, and a vital conduit for remittances. When regional crises flared, Indian foreign policy defaulted to hedging, balancing relations between competing power centres such as Riyadh, Tehran, Tel Aviv, and Abu Dhabi without tying itself to the security obligations of any single capital. Of late, we called that approach "multi-alignment".

What worked until now

But while India was careful to be friendly to all, it was not too friendly to any, in an effort not to offend any of the various capitals in the mix. The logic was clear: there was much to be gained from all parties in what was widely seen to be a likely West Asian economic renaissance. The region was seen through a macroeconomic vision that highlighted its convenient geographic features, its immense natural resources of oil and gas, massive capital accumulation, and its receptivity to imported labour and skills, of which India has a surplus. In this framing, the global economic centre of gravity was seen as inexorably shifting away from an aging, debt-burdened West toward a highly dynamic Asia, positioning West Asia as the ultimate maritime and terrestrial bridge between a declining West and a rising East.

This defensive and essentially transactional posture served India well in an era when the United States stood as the undisputed guarantor of West Asian security, keeping sea lines of communication open and maintaining regional stability. However, the geopolitical bedrock of West Asia is undergoing a violent structural shift. As Washington recalibrates its global commitments and retreats into an unpredictable "selective engagement" posture, a profound security vacuum has emerged, sparking a scramble among regional states for durable security guarantees. Here, has India been caught napping, continuing a business-as-usual approach that risks early obsolescence?

West Asian capitals no longer view distancing, whether called non-alignment or multi-alignment, as a virtue. They are actively seeking alternative, dependable security partners who can offer more than diplomatic platitudes and routine economic cooperation. This structural reality was highlighted by the signing of the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement, bringing together Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan into a collective defence arrangement. While framed as a defensive effort to manage shared



Shashi Tharoor

Fourth-term Member of Parliament (Congress) for Thiruvananthapuram, who served nearly three decades at the United Nations, where he rose to the position of Under Secretary-General. He has also been a Minister of State for External Affairs in the Government of India and is the bestselling author, of 29 books, including 'Pax Indica: India and the World of the 21st century'. He currently chairs the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs.

A changing West Asia requires a more assertive Indian role in pursuing real, hard-power security partnerships

vulnerabilities, the pact signals a broader security realignment. By linking Gulf capital with Turkish defence technology and Pakistani military manpower and skill, the agreement creates a powerful new security architecture right at India's western maritime doorstep.

A clear signal of change

For New Delhi, the Mecca Agreement is not an isolated diplomatic transaction; it is a clear structural signal that West Asia's security framework is being fundamentally rewritten, often by actors whose strategic interests directly run counter to India's own long-term objectives. While India's strategic silence on this development is understandable, it still begs the question: what next? The growing influence of external powers and hostile regional pacts directly threatens India's trade routes, energy security, and the welfare of millions of Indian citizens living in the Gulf. Is India going to build its own partnerships, or become irrelevant to the region's security?

If India continues to rely on legacy diplomatic processes and transactional commerce, it risks being marginalised in a region essential to its national survival. The challenges are formidable. The eruption of hostilities involving Iran demonstrated that modern, highly integrated economic infrastructure remains profoundly fragile when subjected to grey-zone, asymmetric warfare. State-of-the-art port facilities, energy networks, and logistics corridors proved highly vulnerable to low-cost drones, showing that capital-intensive infrastructure cannot fully compensate for localised security vacuums. Hyper-secure economic enclaves will remain perpetually exposed to the spillover effects of surrounding instability in the region. Since the modern Gulf model relies heavily on foreign corporations and expatriate labour, regional stability is intimately tied to global perception. If security risks cross a certain psychological threshold, the talent and capital that flowed in seamlessly can exit just as rapidly. And when narrow naval chokepoints or overland trade routes face active disruption, global supply chains inevitably stall, revealing that these ambitious trade corridors are only as strong as their most unstable geographic link.

Against this critical background, the assumption that trade ties and diaspora diplomacy alone can preserve Indian influence is rapidly unravelling. A region grappling with maritime threats in the Red Sea, drone strikes on critical infrastructure, involvement in conflicts in Iran, Yemen, Sudan, the Strait of Hormuz and now the Bab el-Mandab, requires partners capable of providing tangible security assets.

West Asian powers are hungry for hard-power options such as naval patrols, intelligence sharing, defence-industrial collaboration, and credible counter-terrorism capabilities. If India Delhi dallies over stepping into such a role, others will fill the void, as Türkiye has already demonstrated in Mecca.

The hard moves India must make

To protect its strategic space, New Delhi must contemplate a decisive doctrine change, evolving from a passive beneficiary of regional stability into an active guarantor of it. This requires moving beyond high-level bilateral visits and economic summits to actively project hard power into the western Indian Ocean and the broader West Asian region. India's immediate focus must be the rapid expansion of naval and maritime security partnerships across key choke points, including the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf of Oman and the Gulf of Aden, the waters off the Somali coast and the Bab-el-Mandeb. By embedding its naval footprint more deeply through joint maritime patrols, permanent logistics access arrangements, and interoperable surveillance networks with friendly Gulf states, India can establish itself as a, if not the, premier net security provider in its immediate neighbourhood.

Furthermore, India must leverage its growing defence manufacturing ecosystem to offer West Asian states a reliable alternative for hardware and technology. Collaborative defence ventures, joint military exercises with real operational teeth, and deep intelligence-sharing mechanisms must replace mere procurement discussions. Developing robust bilateral and "multilateral" security frameworks with partners such as the United Arab Emirates or Israel, and separately even with Saudi Arabia, will allow Delhi to build a counterweight against hostile axes without succumbing to rigid Cold-War style alliances. The goal is not to entangle India in foreign quagmires, but to build a strategic deterrence web that safeguards Indian interests and reassures regional allies.

The era of passive presence in West Asia has reached its natural end. The Mecca Agreement serves as a stark reminder that regional security arrangements will coalesce with or without Indian participation. If Delhi wishes to secure its economic destiny, safeguard its energy arteries, and claim its rightful place as a leading global power, it must act with urgency and ambition. Moving decisively beyond routine diplomatic engagement to construct real, hard-power security partnerships in West Asia is no longer just a strategic choice for India. It is an imperative for its national security.

GS 3: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE: 01 & 02

GSLV sheds 'naughty boy' tag with India's first geo-imaging satellite

Amitabh Sinha
& Anonna Dutt

New Delhi, September 4

IN ITS first launch since January, the Indian Space Research Organisation sent an earth observation satellite, EOS-05, to space early Friday morning, using a GSLV rocket.

The EOS-05 is India's first dedicated imaging satellite to be placed in the geosynchronous orbit, about 36,000 km from Earth, from where it can keep constant watch over the

country and provide real-time imaging service.

With a 10-year mission life, the satellite is designed to image large areas of interest at frequent intervals for purposes such as monitoring natural disasters or keeping track of agriculture or forestry. It will also have defence uses.

India has several other active earth observation satellites in the lower-earth orbits which circle Earth and periodically capture imagery over India.

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

E. EXPLAINED

ISRO success after string of setbacks

For ISRO, the successful launch comes after one of its most difficult phases in the last two years. Three of its six missions launched in 2025 and 2026 were unsuccessful, with the satellites unable to reach their intended orbits.

GSLV

In the geosynchronous orbit, the satellite remains stationary relative to Earth, and is able to watch the same region continuously, without gaps.

The GSLV-F17 rocket deposited the EOS-05 satellite in a transfer orbit, at an altitude of more than 190 km from Earth, about 18 minutes after the launch. From there, the satellite will perform a series of orbit-raising manoeuvres over the next few days to travel to the geosynchronous orbit, its final destination.

In a message congratulating ISRO, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "Yet another outstanding achievement by ISRO and a proud moment for our nation. The successful launch of GSLV-F17 carrying EOS-05, India's first-ever imaging satellite from geosynchronous orbit is a reflection of the excellence, innovation and growing capabilities that define India's space sector. The growing partnership between ISRO and Indian industry is adding new strength and scale to our space

programme and expanding India's capabilities across the entire space ecosystem."

Weighing more than 2,360-kg, the EOS-05 was the heaviest satellite to be carried by the GSLV rocket until now.

The successful launch is a big relief for ISRO which has gone through one of its most difficult phases in the last two years. Three of the six missions launched in 2025 and 2026 turned out to be unsuccessful with the satellites unable to reach their intended orbits due to anomalies in the launch vehicle or the spacecraft engine. Because of this, subsequent missions went through extended reviews and checks to avoid another failure.

The launch that took place Friday was ready in February itself, but had been put on hold to enable additional rounds of checks and tests. The GSLV rocket has had its own share of problems in the past, mainly with the cryogenic engine that powers the third and final stage of the flight.

It had suffered four failures and was called 'naughty boy' because of the difficulties it posed to scientists in mastering

the cryogenic technology. But that description no longer holds valid. After a successful launch in 2024, ISRO scientists, including the then chairman S Somanath, had said 'naughty boy' had become 'disciplined' and a 'smart boy'.

After the satellite was deposited in orbit Friday, ISRO chairman V Narayanan said, "This is a great achievement in our country's space programme, because this is the first earth observation satellite to be placed in geo-platform for national activities. This success is the culmination of team work of ISRO, its industrial partners and also the academia which has provided a lot of support."

"Also, this success is because of the open work culture and vibrant review mechanism of ISRO," he said. "All the satellite systems are working fine and are normal. The solar panel has been deployed. The health of the satellite is perfectly alright. In the coming days we will raise the orbit of the satellite and place it in the geosynchronous orbit," Narayanan said.

Lt General A K Bhatt (ret'd), Director General of Indian

Space Association, an industry body, said, "The geosynchronous imaging capabilities of EOS-05 satellite will enable persistent, high-frequency observation of large regions rather than relying only on periodic satellite revisits, which is increasingly critical for India. This can be strategically valuable for tracking rapidly evolving weather systems, floods and forest fires, monitoring agriculture and natural resources, and strengthening situational awareness across India's land and maritime domains. The real opportunity now lies in translating this rich, frequent satellite data into actionable intelligence through India's private space and geospatial ecosystem."

"This mission also reaffirms the deepening partnership between ISRO and India's private space industry, whose components and expertise increasingly power such national systems. As India's ecosystem matures under robust policy frameworks and with support from ISRO, milestones like this will build the confidence needed to scale commercial participation further," he said.

GS 2: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE: 07

India in touch with Ukraine, Russia to help end war: EAM

Express News Service
New Delhi, September 4

INDIA HAS been in continuous touch with both Ukraine and Russia and is trying to see if there are ideas and suggestions that will contribute to the mitigation or the cessation of the conflict, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar said on Friday.

Jaishankar, who is in Poland after visiting Ukraine, said that he discussed with his Poland counterpart Radoslaw Sikorski the complex global challenges, including supply chain resilience, and food, fuel and fertiliser security.

"The Deputy Prime Minister and I also understandably discussed some major global and regional issues, notable among them is the war in Ukraine, now in its fifth year... I myself have just come here from Kyiv," he said, referring to his visit to Ukraine a day earlier.

Replying to a question, he said India has been in continuous touch with both the Ukrainian and Russian sides. "What we are trying to do is to see if there are ideas and suggestions which can be developed in some way in which they will contribute to the mitigation, ideally, the cessation of



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meets Poland Deputy PM Radoslaw Sikorski in Warsaw on Friday. ANI

the conflict," he added.

A day earlier, Jaishankar had said in Ukraine that India is ready to extend "help in any manner" to end the Ukraine-Russia war. He had met President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his Ukrainian counterpart Andrii Sybiha in Kyiv on Thursday.

On Friday, Jaishankar reiterated that India believes that endless war must give way to an end to war. "These are wars without winners. Every additional day means more death, more destruction, more loss to the parties themselves, and more cost to the rest of the world," he said in Warsaw.

"Our efforts must therefore focus on promoting dialogue and diplomacy. We must each

do what we can in whichever way we believe could be most effective and support the efforts of others to bring this conflict to an end. This is India's strong conviction, and we are acting on it," he added.

On India's purchases of Russian oil, the minister said the issue is a conflict, and its solution lies in negotiations, not in trade.

"This war is not going to end... not because somebody chose to buy or not buy oil or alumina or fertilisers or metals and minerals. It will end when there is diplomacy, when there is dialogue and when there is negotiation. So, I think let's diagnose the problem right," he said while replying to another question.

In his talks with Sikorski, the EAM reviewed the progress of the Joint Action Plan 2024-28, which focuses on, among other things, trade and investment, defence, culture and multilateral cooperation.

"Value Poland's support for deeper India-EU cooperation. Confident that the entry into force of the FTA will lead to even closer bilateral cooperation," Jaishankar said, adding that India and Poland have a longstanding cordial relationship that was elevated to a Strategic Partnership in 2024.

"The world is today grappling not only with multiple wars but also serious challenges of food, fuel and fertiliser availability. Supply chain resilience is an independent but added concern. As political democracies, market economies and open societies, India and Poland can cooperate to shape the direction of many important global debates. Our tradition of working closely in the United Nations and multilateral forums is an important expression of that convergence," he said.

Later, Jaishankar called on Polish President Karol Nawrocki and discussed the bilateral Strategic Partnership and views on the Ukraine conflict and the West Asia situation.

GS 2: POLITY INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE: 11

• LEGAL

CJP cases scrapped: Supreme Court's much-debated powers under Article 142

Apurva Vishwanath
New Delhi, September 4

THIS WEEK, the Supreme Court used its special powers under Article 142 of the Constitution to quash FIRs filed against those who took part in the nationwide exam protests led by the Cockerroach, Santa Party (CJP).

This order, giving legal force to the government's assurance to CJP members, puts fresh focus on Article 142, a provision legal scholars have argued over since the Constitution came into force.

What is the origin of Article 142?

Article 142 lets the Supreme Court pass such "decree or order as it is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it". Unlike most Constitutional provisions, it does not define "complete justice" or specify when it may be used.

The origins of this provision can be

traced back to Section 210 of the Government of India Act, 1935, and beyond that, to the colonial-era practice of deciding disputes on "justice, equity and good conscience" where written law was silent. In the Draft Constitution, it appeared as Article 118 and was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on May 27, 1949, without a debate. Two amendments to it were moved and then withdrawn.

The closest the Assembly came to discussing its spirit was almost incidental: during an earlier debate on a related Article granting this court special leave to hear appeals, the member Krishna Chandra Sharma compared the court's proposed powers to the old Privy Council's own power to step in wherever justice demanded it, appeal or no appeal. Beyond that, the scope of what would become the court's single most expansive power was left for the court itself to work out, case after case, over the next seven decades.

How has the court used this power?

The open-ended nature of Article 142 has made it one of the court's most used tools. The provision, giving it extraordinary powers, has been invoked in a wide range of consequential cases.

• The Bhopal gas tragedy settlement to secure a \$470 million payout from Union Carbide and quashing the criminal cases against the company.

• The Ayodhya title dispute to settle the "preponderance of probability" and give five acres of land to the Muslim side.

• To order the release of Rajiv Gandhi assassination case convict A G Perarivalan.

The court can also use the provision to grant divorce if it finds the marriage has irretrievably broken down and in public interest litigations, among other cases.

An empirical study by researchers at Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, examined every case between 1950 and 2023 that cited "Article 142" or "com-

plete justice". The study found 1,579 references and 791 direct invocations, mostly in civil matters.

Has SC tried to limit its own power?

A description often invoked for the Supreme Court is that it is one of the most powerful Constitutional courts in the world, and much of that power can be traced to how it wields its powers under Article 142. The effect of the discretion multiplies in a polyvocal court where 38 judges sit mostly in benches of two judges.

The top court itself has also tried to fence this provision to not allow undue discretion to judges. In *Prem Chand Garg versus State of Uttar Pradesh* (1962), it held that orders under Article 142 must still be consistent with fundamental rights and the law. In *Supreme Court Bar Association versus Union of India* (1998), it held that Article 142 can supplement a statute, filling a gap the law leaves open, but cannot supplant it or over-

ride an existing statutory scheme. But the SC has also often ignored its own caution.

How does CJP order test that limit?

An FIR is ordinarily examined on its own facts before being quashed under Section 528 of the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita. A court is supposed to ask whether an offence is even made out or if the cases are plainly malicious.

In the CJP order, thousands of FIRs across several states were clubbed together without scrutiny as part of a negotiated settlement between the Centre and a protest group. This order, for the sake of convenience, circumvents the statutory scheme for dealing with quashing and supplants the court's wisdom under Article 142 on how the law ought to operate. The court also uses its discretion under Article 142 to decide who is left out of the relief.

Legal scholar Gautam Bhatia argues that criminal law provisions can't be over-

ridden through a blanket judicial decree.

Is this the first time Article 142 has drawn criticism?

When the court used the same provision last year to deem the long-withheld Tamil Nadu Bills as assented to, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar called it a "nuclear missile" against democratic institutions.

It is a criticism that K K Venugopal, former Attorney General of India, has made in the past. In 2017, he wrote that while the provision had done "tremendous good" for deprived sections of society, it was time to build in checks and balances.

The following year, after the Sabarimala judgment, he went further, unfavourably describing Article 142 as a "Kamdhenu from which unlimited powers flowed". He suggested that only Constitution benches of five judges should be allowed to invoke it, so that it could not turn on the reading of a single, smaller Bench.

GS 2: POLITY INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE: 12

Let's hold our teachers in the highest esteem. They help India learn and lead

TEACHERS SHAPE destinies. This Teachers' Day, on behalf of all Indians, I convey my gratitude to all teachers who instil knowledge, skills, values and motivation into the lives of crores of our students.

It is well known that Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the second President of India, wished that his birthday be observed as Teachers' Day. He was an intellectual of international repute, a renowned author and esteemed statesman, yet he regarded his role as a teacher as the most important of all. Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, one of India's most beloved former presidents, was once asked whether he thought people would remember him more as a scientist or as a president. Dr Kalam replied that he would like to be remembered as a teacher.

The teachers whose competence and character make them venerable, and the students devoted to such teachers, have always been our ideal. Our ancient texts prescribe that teachers should love their students as their own children, they should treat them all equally and fairly, they should not lose their temper at students, they should remain patient, keep the well-being of their students foremost, and teach them according to their ability to learn. It is in the spirit of deep respect for such teachers that the Shikshavalli in the Taittiriya Upanishad gave the timeless message, "Acharyadevo Bhava", nearly three millennia ago.

It has been my greatest fortune to have been guided by many wise and affectionate teachers. Sometimes, our teachers would teach us in their homes even beyond school hours, and would look after us with great care. After completing Class VII, I was the first girl to venture out of the village to pursue further studies. Later, while studying in Bhubaneswar too, I was blessed to receive abundant love and encouragement from my teachers. I mention my teachers here with humility, because their story illustrates a pro-

found truth: A loving and dedicated teacher can awaken limitless potential and inspiration within a student. Strengthened by that encouragement, students develop the courage to face life's toughest challenges and the confidence to pursue the loftiest of goals. Teachers do far more than teach a curriculum. Through their own conduct and example, they also instruct their students in the art and skills needed to live a fruitful life. Besides being a mentor, a teacher is also a well-wisher, a friend and a fellow-traveller in the students' quest for learning.

The insight about what makes a good teacher, handed down through our culture and tradition since ancient times, remains entirely relevant even today. Centuries ago, in his play *Malavikagnimitram*, Mahakavi Kalidas wrote that a good teacher is one who possesses profound knowledge and also has the ability to transmit this knowledge effectively.

A well-known Sanskrit maxim tells us: "Sarvatra vijayam icchet, shishtyat icchet parajayam" — one may wish for victory everywhere, except before one's own student, where one should wish to be defeated. To encourage independent thinking in students, to ignite their curiosity, to promote the tendency to ask questions, to sharpen their capacity for argument and judgement, and to help them grow into independent individuals — these are among the most useful and rewarding dimensions of teaching. It is only through such inspiring education that we will raise generations of successful entrepreneurs, brilliant scientists, creative artists and citizens capable of finding innovative solutions to emerging challenges.

Teaching is not merely a vocation; it is a vow. It is more than a career or a job; it is the sacred task of shaping humanity. It is the noble responsibility of illuminating the path for generations to come.



DROUPADI MURMU

I have also learnt much from the students I taught. I believe that teachers, too, learn a lot from the spontaneity and curiosity of children. I am always keen to meet students and understand their thoughts and ideas. What they share stays on with me

My memories associated with teaching give me a special sense of fulfilment. I taught children at the Sri Aurobindo Integral School in Rairangpur, Odisha. Apart from teaching them various subjects, I used to be fully involved in helping the children prepare for their musical performances, sports activities and plays. Even today, it is exhilarating for me to reminisce about our preparations for Independence Day and Republic Day celebrations and the joyful excitement of the children during the functions. I also found great satisfaction and meaning in taking students on picnics to beautiful natural surroundings and, through play and exploration, introducing them to the world of animals, birds, trees and plants.

Years after leaving school, my students still invite me to their family functions. I not only distinctly recall the names of many of my students but also the nicknames we would fondly address them by. I have also learnt much from the students I taught. I believe that teachers, too, learn a lot from the spontaneity and curiosity of children.

On the occasion of completing the second year of my term as president, I spent time with the students at the school located in the premises around Rashtrapati Bhavan and taught them about environmental conservation. I am always keen to meet students and understand their thoughts and ideas. What they share stays on with me.

About 11 years ago, I established a residential school at my village home. Students from disadvantaged families and children who have lost their parents study at that school. I have been visiting the school from time to time to meet the children. This year, on June 20, I was delighted to meet the children on my birthday. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji also visited the school with me and motivated the students. The extraordinary experience of meeting him will remain an

enduring source of inspiration for them. Watching those children thrive fills me with a special sense of meaningfulness.

The task of imparting education is not the responsibility of teachers alone. Those who become role models for children through their conduct and achievements are also a valuable source of learning and inspiration.

Parents and guardians repose the highest trust in teachers when they send their children to study. They believe that the teachers will treat the children as their own and take utmost care of the child's safety and development. It is the *dharma* of every teacher to uphold this sacred trust placed in them. A teacher's attitude, conduct and behaviour should not generate fear and anxiety in the children, break their morale or allow any sense of inferiority to develop. Good teachers help their students become the best versions of themselves.

It is the sacred duty of teachers to guide their students to be good human beings. Students who achieve prosperity and glory while remaining ethical in their thoughts and actions are living embodiments of a teacher's success.

Our country is moving steadily towards the goal of becoming a developed nation with social inclusion at the core. As we advance on this journey, I want our teachers to shape generations of students who value the richness of our cultural heritage and traditions; who develop a scientific outlook and work for the welfare of humanity; who uphold the ideal of *anyonya*; who protect the environment and all living creatures; who strive for individual and collective excellence, and who move forward with the spirit of "Nation First". To every citizen, I make an appeal: Always hold our committed and sincere teachers in the highest esteem. I ardently wish that with the contribution of our dedicated teachers, India continues to learn and goes on to lead.

The writer is President of India