

# EDITORIAL HIGHLIGHTS

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## GS 2: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THE HINDU

PAGE: 01

### *Revolution to resurgence — Iran's strategic moment*

**T**he gloves are off and the ceasefire is in trouble as the United States and Iran traded strikes, once again, on July 8, over the safe passage of commercial ships across the Strait of Hormuz.

However, looking beyond this flareup, the recent visuals coming out of Iran are extraordinary. After more than 40 days of sustained attacks by the combined military power of the U.S. and Israel, the country is projecting an image of pride, defiance, and resilience. The funeral of its slain Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, drew millions of mourners and high-level representatives from Russia, China, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Türkiye, Egypt, Iraq, Pakistan, Armenia, and several other countries. Even the Taliban government in Afghanistan was represented. Notably absent were the entire Western bloc, much of Africa, and some regional countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Kuwait, which bore the brunt of Iran's retaliation during the war.

Did the scenes witnessed reflect the image of a nation defeated? Did the millions of people on the streets, eager to catch a final glimpse of their assassinated leader, appear coerced or forced to mourn? Did the visuals coming out of Tehran and other parts of Iran reflect a nation that is economically bankrupt? The answer to all these questions is a bold 'no'. What was on display was a nation eager to use this opportunity to tell the world that it is still standing on its own – and may be more powerful, confident and resilient than ever before.

The regime has not only survived the war but has emerged stronger than before, with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in full control. Its nuclear programme still remains off the table and there is no mention of its ballistic missile programme in the 14-point Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. The windfall gains from removal of sanctions, sale of crude oil and natural gas, a defreezing of its money and assets and the monetisation of the Strait of Hormuz promise an economic revival for Iran, although some of it may now be under question after the rapidly escalating situation. This resurrection of Iran almost feels like a revolution, and is a reminder of how a new nation, the 'Islamic Republic of Iran' emerged from the Iranian Revolution of 1979, overcoming the threats and challenges from a monarchy supported and abetted by the West.

#### The first revolution

The 1979 revolution was the culmination of a year-long protests against the Iranian regime, ignited by multiple factors, mainly political repression and economic hardships. There was also a strong undercurrent to reclaim Iran's cultural and religious legacy which had been



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suppressed by the pro-western Shah regime. The combined effect created an unprecedented popular movement led by Ayatollah Khomeini, the exiled cleric and former philosophy professor from Qom, who had been banished in 1964 for opposing the Shah's reform programme. The movement ultimately overthrew Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

The Shah and his family fled Iran in January 1979 and Ayatollah Khomeini returned on February 1 to a jubilant welcome. 10 days later, Iran's armed forces declared their neutrality, effectively ending the Shah's rule. On April 1, following a successful referendum, Khomeini proclaimed Iran as the Islamic Republic. The new republic drew its legitimacy from three pillars: restoring Iran's national pride, establishing theological discourse and Islamic governance, and promising economic progress and social justice. However, the 1979 hostage crisis, the eight-year Iran-Iraq war, prolonged nuclear programme-related sanctions, and support for regional militia proxies severely tested the country's economic and political resilience.

#### Revolution 2.0

Why is the current post-war situation akin to a second revolution? Like in 1979, this war too has led to the emergence of a stronger and a nationalist regime. However, unlike 1979, when an earlier regime had to be overthrown, this time, the regime, despite being hit badly and its Supreme Leader assassinated, has emerged stronger as it has survived. Once again, key issues such as national pride, dignity, strength and unity are being made the central pillars. And the millions of people on the street now mirror the visuals of millions on the streets of Iran in February 1979 when they welcomed Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini after his return from exile. And, like in 1979, this revolution too promises to bring in long-lasting changes in Iran and the region.

The most prominent change is obviously the security architecture. Soon after the 1979 revolution, the nations in the Gulf had formed the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 1981, to forge a common platform to fight the threat from a revolutionary Iran. The region turned to the U.S. which then carried out its most extensive and permanent military deployment after the Second World War – it stationed thousands of troops and hundreds of military assets across multiple bases, promising a security umbrella against Iran (and Iraq).

Well, this war has shattered this myth with the punishment and huge losses that American bases and the countries in the region had to suffer from Iranian strikes. Countries in the region are not only frustrated with the failed U.S. security assurances but are looking at alternatives to

secure themselves in the future, including maybe, making peace with Iran.

The second issue is the regime's survival which had been at its weakest in the past few years due to economic sanctions and growing frustration within over its enforcement of Islamic laws, especially against women. The most recent protests in December 2025, ignited over severe inflation and job losses and massive devaluation of its national currency Rial (1.54 million Rials traded for one U.S. dollar) posed one of the most severe threats to the regime, one which the U.S. too attempted to support and ignite. However, it failed as it was suppressed by a brutal crackdown by the regime. Even the slain Supreme Leader's advanced age and declining health had raised questions about the regime's ability to retain control after his death. However, those doubts have now been consigned to history, with the regime emerging stronger and more firmly in control.

The third important factor is identity. If the first revolution gave the nation a 'Religion First' ideological identity, this war has brought national pride to the fore and made it the primary agent of resilience and defiance. Iran's ability to absorb the punishment of military strikes, endure the pain and then strike back effectively, have brought people and nation together.

The fourth factor has to relate to the economy. A nation which has survived and sustained under severe economic sanctions for almost three decades, now faces a pleasant possibility of huge influx of money into its coffers thanks to a possible easing of sanctions, defreezing of assets and sale of petroleum products. The monetisation of the Strait of Hormuz is obviously a bonus and now a powerful negotiating instrument with Iran.

#### A balancing act for India

India clearly has a decision to make. The war marked India's definite and noticeable tilt toward the Israel-U.S.-United Arab Emirates bloc, with several decisions that many analysts have found difficult to explain or defend. By sending a Minister-led delegation to the funeral, India may have walked a diplomatic tightrope. Going forward, however, it will have to make a strategic choice on how to balance its ties with Iran and the wider Gulf region, which itself appears deeply divided after the war.

Iran is resurgent and is unlikely to let go of the opportunity that this war has provided it. The scale of the irreversible changes unfolding in Iran and the region may become clearer over time. However, one thing is certain – the security and economic landscape of the region has changed forever. How Iran uses this opportunity, and how the region responds, will shape the destiny of its people and the region for decades to come.

A resurgent Iran signals a dramatic shift in West Asian geopolitics

## The Indian diaspora as Australia's identity, its future

The Indian diaspora is now officially Australia's largest overseas-born community, overtaking the England-born population for the first time. This is not a small demographic footnote. Australia's population has, for two centuries, been anchored by a British-derived majority. An Indian-origin community now outnumbering it marks a genuine inflection point in how the country understands itself. It is against this backdrop that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Australia – his third visit Down Under – will be a trip in which the diaspora is expected to command the spotlight.

The Australia-India relationship has come a long way, from being defined by the simplistic 'three Cs' – Cricket, Curry and Commonwealth – to a more meaningful 'four Ds': Democracy, Defence, Diaspora and *Dosti*. This shift reflects a decade of institution-building, including India's participation alongside Australia, the United States and Japan in the Quad, the informal security grouping that has become the backbone of the Indo-Pacific strategy of India and Australia. Mr. Modi's visit will touch on all four pillars, but it is the diaspora event – a large public gathering billed as 'Melbourne Meets Modi' – that is drawing the most attention, precisely because of what this community has come to represent for both nations.

### A new migration era

The settlement trajectory of the Australian-Indian community is very different from its counterparts in the U.S. or the United Kingdom. The first significant wave of Indian professional migration to Australia dates only to the 1960s and 1970s,



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The diaspora must be valued not merely as a symbol of partnership, but as a community whose voices matter

climbing after the dismantling of the White Australia Policy – an explicitly racist immigration regime that excluded all but European migrants.

By diaspora standards, this makes the Australian-Indian community still young. A large share of recent arrivals left India during the 'New India' years since 2014, a period of rapid outward migration driven by a mix of economic ambition and, for some, disillusionment with the state of democratic institutions at home. Whatever the reasons for leaving, this cohort tends to be more recently and more tightly bound to India – through family, business, remittances and a resurgent nationalist identity. That is what makes Australia's Indian community distinct beyond just numbers.

### The rise of political backlash

As the anti-immigration wave rises across the globe, in Australia this wave has found a specific target in the Indian community. Nationalist street rallies under banners such as 'March for Australia' have gathered pace over the past year, and the right-wing populist One Nation party is emerging as the main opponent to the left-of-centre Labor party currently in power. Mr. Modi's high-visibility diaspora event lands squarely within this tense landscape. By showcasing the scale, accomplishments and mobilisation of the Indian community, it will reiterate the statement – increasingly co-opted by conservative movements – that this community has grown too large, too fast, and too visible.

For Australia, the Indian diaspora is an economic asset and a force multiplier for the country's multicultural fabric. But a fracturing domestic political landscape means that this asset

can just as easily be recast as a liability in public discourse. Mr. Modi's visit should be a reminder to policymakers that failing to invest in better understanding this growing and dynamic community carries real stakes for the future of this strategic partnership.

### Beyond numbers and narratives

For India, the diaspora has long been framed as a source of pride and a connecting tissue of cultural links to Australia as a strategic partner. But pride and sentiment are not the same as understanding. What is missing – on both sides of the relationship – is a serious, evidence-based picture of how this diaspora actually lives, trusts and participates in Australian civic life, beyond the headline statistics on income, education and trade that has long been the mainstay of government discourse. If both countries are serious about treating the diaspora as a genuine pillar of their partnership rather than a talking point, that requires concerted efforts to capture their experiences of settlement which are far from monolithic.

Australia's demographic transformation is not a passing trend. It will permanently reshape its national identity from an antipodean one to one that is far more entangled with India and the wider Indo-Pacific. That means sustained research, stronger engagement with civil society, and policies that build social cohesion rather than taking it for granted. If democracy, defence, diaspora and *dosti* are to remain the four pillars of the partnership, then the diaspora must be treated not merely as a symbol of the relationship, but as a constituency whose experiences and trust deserve to be understood.

# What is the 'Hummus trail' and why is it under scrutiny?

Can India arrest foreign nationals accused of grave breaches under the Geneva Conventions?

Nivedita S.

## The story so far:

In June 2, 2026, the Hind Rajab Foundation (HRF), a Palestinian rights organisation based in Brussels, filed a complaint with the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, the Bureau of Immigration and the police to arrest Eitan Gilboa, an Israeli soldier, who was found to be vacationing in Himachal Pradesh. Gilboa, a member of the 271st Combat Engineering Battalion, was accused by the organisation of committing "war crimes in Gaza" in 2024. The organisation submitted evidence that involves specific instances in which he participated in the destruction of residential buildings and civilian infrastructure in Khan Yunis and Rafah. He filmed videos of himself celebrating the execution of these activities, which were later posted on social media by his mother. The HRF provided geo-located videos, social media videos and chain-of-command documentation along with the complaint.

## How does Indian law apply to alleged war crimes?

The HRF alleged that these activities by Gilboa were in violation of the **Fourth Geneva Convention**, to which India is a signatory. Under this convention, any intentional launch of an attack which is known to cause loss of life or injury to civilians, along with severe damage to civilian objects, is considered to be a war crime and a grave breach of the convention.

Though India does not have its own law criminalising war crimes, it has passed the **Geneva Conventions Act, 1960**. Under this law, any act which constitutes a 'grave breach' under four sections of the Geneva Convention is criminalised. India can arrest any person, irrespective of nationality, if found to have committed an offence under the convention, regardless of the geographical location of the offence.

If an arrest is not possible, the Home Ministry and the Bureau of Immigration can facilitate the deportation of the accused from Indian territory. However,

the Union government did not issue a statement regarding the allegations by HRF, nor initiated a probe.

## What is the 'Hummus trail'?

Though Gilboa has now fled India, he was traced by pro-Palestinian activists and the HRF in Old Manali and Gondla Village of Himachal Pradesh, which are popular spots among Israelis along the 'Hummus trail'.

Every year, around 80,000 Israelis visit India, a large number of them young veterans who have been discharged from the mandatory Israeli army service. This trip, known as the **Tiul Gadol**, could last up to 6 months or a year and is mainly funded by the bonus they receive after serving in the army. In February 2026, the Israeli government allocated four million NIS to boost tourism collaboration with India.

From the north to the south of the country, there are several areas which are frequented by Israelis, and this is colloquially known as the 'Hummus trail in India'. This includes Kasol (also known

as mini-Israel), Kodaikanal, Kerala, Goa, Hampi, Gokarna, Rishikesh, Varanasi, Pushkar, Almora, Dharamkot, and, more recently, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

In these places frequented by Israelis, one can observe several changes to the cultural landscape. It is common to see signs in Hebrew, posters promoting the Israeli Defence Forces, along with cafes, stores and hostels run by Israelis. In 2015, an Israeli-run cafe in Himachal Pradesh faced backlash for allegedly denying entry to Indians with a 'whites only' sign.

According to a 2020 study published in the Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, **drug abuse and rave parties are common along the Hummus trail, with drug peddling cases on the rise in these regions.**

The study found that to cope with mental health challenges faced by these veterans during their service in the army, they resort to high drug consumption. Mental health workers from Israel have also been sent to India to aid these reservists.

## Why is the issue drawing global attention?

"India-Israel tourism is not merely about routine holidays and cultural exchange. It is part of a broader normalisation process that seeks to deepen social and economic ties between the two countries," Azad Essa, author of *Hostile Homelands: The New Alliance Between India and Israel*, told *The Hindu*. He added that Israel has thanked India multiple times for being

one of the few countries that have provided political and moral support to Israel, when much of the world has turned its back on it, at least publicly.

As Israel has killed over 73,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip since the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack, and is currently facing a case filed by South Africa in the International Court of Justice over allegations of genocide, allowing unrestricted entry of Israeli soldiers to India after their service in Gaza demands scrutiny.

The UN Commission of Inquiry, in its report, has said that the Israeli military "deliberately carried out acts inflicting death and severe bodily and mental harm on hundreds of thousands of Palestinian children."

Five-year-old Hind Rajab is among the thousands of children killed by the Israeli forces in Gaza.

The HRF's legal action in other countries against Israeli soldiers travelling there has resulted in successful outcomes in Brazil, Romania, Peru, Belgium, and Canada, according to its website. A court in Chile is the latest to recognise universal jurisdiction over war crimes in Gaza while hearing HRF's complaint against Rom Kovtun, an Israeli-Ukrainian citizen accused of war crimes during the siege of Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza.

"The 'Hummus Trail' – or these extended trips that IDF soldiers take to decompress after military duties – cannot become a route for impunity," Natacha Bracq, Head of Litigation at the HRF, said in a statement.

# GS 3: ECONOMY

## INDINA EXPRESS PAGE: 09

• INFRASTRUCTURE

### Indira Point: Inside the plan to protect lighthouse, develop tourism hub

**Nikhil Ghanekar**  
New Delhi, July 8

THE UNION Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has proposed protection and development works at Indira Point and the famous lighthouse at the site in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Through the Directorate of Lighthouses and Lightships, Sri Vijaya Puram (formerly Port Blair), an agency under the ministry, the Centre has sought coastal regulation zone clearance to carry out the proposed work.

Indira Point is India's southernmost tip, located on the Great Nicobar Island (GNI) in the Union Territory (UT) of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It is an important maritime landmark, and lies to the south of the Galathea Bay, where a transshipment port has been proposed under the GNI mega infrastructure project.

**The government proposal**

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, through the Directorate Gen-

eral of Lighthouses and Lightships, wants to structurally repair and eventually develop tourism infrastructure and facilities around the lighthouse.

The Centre wants to strengthen the structure, the immediate site around it and along with it, it has proposed a string of development activities. After the visit of Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal in late November 2023, the project was approved by the Central Advisory Committee of Aids to Navigation to "preserve and protect the lighthouse for its functional requirement for safety of mariners, rich legacy of region, for historic and cultural significant for future generations", as per the project's environmental impact assessment study.

As per a detailed project report by IIT Madras for the proposed development works, structural reinforcements will include repair and strengthening of the lighthouse tower's foundation, an all-weather approach road, shore protection works with breakwaters around the tower, power-

**Maritime landmark**

● The lighthouse at Indira Point is an important landmark on the Singapore-Colombo international maritime route and is used as a navigational aid.

● It also holds importance for safe navigation towards the Galathea Bay in the coming times, where a transshipment port has been proposed.

house, inspection and staff quarters, compound wall and internal pathways.

Separately, development activities for tourism promotion have been proposed. These include eco-tourism, convention centre, cafeteria, viewing tower, cycle tracks, and an international standard museum building as well as a memorial structure.

**The need for protection**

The works proposed fall in sensitive coastal habitats, which are protected under the Island Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, 2019. So, it needs prior approval from the UT's Coastal Zone Management Authority and the Environment Ministry. The notification provides a regulatory framework for protection of coastal stretches, marine habitats and livelihoods of fisher and other coastal communities across the group of islands.

The lighthouse structure has faced weathering. The structural issues it faces can also be attributed to the changes it faced during the December 2004 earth-

quake and tsunami. The 2004 natural calamity had a huge impact on the entire island group, causing uplift in some areas and land sinking in others.

The site where Indira Point is situated, specifically, faced permanent land-sub-sidence at the time. Originally, the site of the lighthouse and associated structures was at a height of 3.5 m above mean sea level. When the earthquake and tsunami struck the island, the land sinking and the inland ingress of the sea engulfed the lighthouse tower while destroying quarters and huts around it. Scientists and authorities have estimated that the Nicobar islands sunk 2.04 m, thus submerging the lighthouse base and foundation in sea.

The geological and shoreline changes have exposed the foundation to seawater since 2004, extreme wave conditions during high tide, as per the IIT Madras assessment. The lighthouse also shows a 3.86° inclination or tilt, which was, however, not considered as a risk to its structural stability or safety.

# Deepening India-Japan partnership offers a powerful, constructive model



**THAROORTHINK**  
BY SHASHI THAROOR

**W**HEN JAPANESE Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi was in Delhi last week, I was in Japan. There was no connection between the two trips, but we both had a common message: A stronger India-Japan relationship is imperative for both countries at this time of global turbulence.

The first official three-day visit of PM Takaichi for the 16th India-Japan Annual Summit (July 1 to 3) marked a major turning point for Indo-Pacific diplomacy, injecting a massive \$12.5 billion in fresh Japanese investment into infrastructure and manufacturing sectors, effectively transforming the alliance into an economic powerhouse. Takaichi's milestone visit yielded 129 MoUs, primarily driven by the India-Japan Joint Economic Forum, which hosted over 150 leading Japanese corporations looking to anchor their capital in India's expanding ecosystem. By establishing a comprehensive roadmap for resilient supply chains in critical technology sectors, including semiconductors, telecommunications, and critical minerals, the partnership actively seeks to reduce vulnerability to single-source global networks and external market disruptions.

The summit solidified deep defence cooperation by committing to joint manufacturing of advanced military hardware, introducing the first military hardware co-development project focussing on cutting-edge naval technology like the Unified Complex Radio Antenna masts, alongside advanced bilateral deliberations regarding the future co-production of Mogami-class stealth frigates. Coupled with wide-ranging agreements on high-level AI safety standards, digital development frameworks, and a clean energy initiative spanning proposals for large-scale green ammonia and a rollout plan for 1,000 regional biogas plants, the summit positioned the partnership as a significant, multifaceted geopolitical counterweight in the region.



ILLUSTRATION: C R SASKUMAR

The structural alignment underscores that beyond trade and investment, the contemporary geopolitical reality demands that India and Japan build Asia's most trusted civilisational partnership, one rooted in shared history, values, and democratic systems. At a historical moment when democracies worldwide are under stress, India and Japan stand as unique anchors of stable democratic governance in Asia, collectively representing one-fifth of humanity living under the rule of law. The strategic alignment formalised via the Quad is not a military alliance but a civilisational commitment to a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific that respects national sovereignty and institutional resilience. By combining their voices, both nations are building an alternative blueprint for global governance, proving that technological progress, environmental sustainability, and commitment to human values can coexist within a fractured global order.

This civilisational cohesion finds an immediate practical application when addressing the stark demographic contrasts that define both societies. While their demographic trajectories appear diametrically opposed, they present an opportunity for complementarity. Japan faces an unprecedented demographic contraction, marked by a shrinking labour force and an ageing society that places severe stress on healthcare systems, hospitality, and technological management. Conversely, India continues to experience expansive demographic growth, with millions of young, technically literate citizens entering the workforce annually but facing unemployment. A hol-

The true measure of the India-Japan partnership will be its capacity to foster an inclusive economic paradigm that prioritises the expansion of a stable middle class

istic, long-term talent and mobility collaboration can transform this contrast into shared economic benefits. By pairing Japan's acute labour shortages with structured, multidisciplinary talent-acquisition frameworks, Indian professionals can contribute substantively to Japan's socio-economic security. This arrangement must transcend short-term, myopic migration; it demands an immigration policy framework that prioritises cultural orientation, and robust institutional support to protect workers while delivering highly specialised care and management to Japan's silver economy.

This demographic synergy forms the cornerstone of what must become a joint India-Japan care economy. As Japan navigates its post-industrial demographic transition, it has pioneered sophisticated models of eldercare, rehabilitative robotics, and age-appropriate infrastructure. In the coming decades, India will paradoxically house one of the world's largest elderly populations alongside its youthful workforce, rendering Japan's current domestic challenges an essential preview for our future. Through joint venture initiatives, research-based collaborations, and knowledge transfers, India can proactively draw inspiration from Japanese models to develop a sustainable care economy before ageing becomes an acute national crisis.

An equally transformative dimension of this partnership lies in expanding female labour force participation. By designing structured pathways for Indian women to access certified training and deployment in Japan (under guaranteed conditions of safe housing,

career progression, and harassment-free workplace protocols), both nations can simultaneously address Japan's care vacuum and advance female inclusion within India's domestic workforce.

The bridge between these demographic initiatives and industrial durability lies in the integration of Japanese hardware excellence with Indian digital innovation. Celebrated for its peerless precision engineering, robotics, and advanced manufacturing, Japan possesses the material solutions to the physical supply-chain problems of the 21st century. India, conversely, has demonstrated global leadership in developing expansive digital public infrastructure, scalable software architectures, and highly adaptable AI applications. The two nations can co-develop next-generation assistive technologies, smart medical devices, and automated logistics networks. This synthesis ensures that economic growth remains anchored in real-world productivity, creating resilient industrial clusters that can insulate both nations from external supply shocks.

The true measure of the India-Japan partnership will be its capacity to foster an inclusive economic paradigm that prioritises the expansion of a stable middle class. India's developmental vision cannot be measured solely by GDP; true prosperity requires an egalitarian framework where the benefits of growth are democratised. In this pursuit, Japan's post-war economic miracle serves as the ultimate inspiration, demonstrating that enduring national stability and prosperity emerge when economic policies strengthen ordinary citizens. By shifting the focus of economic cooperation towards manufacturing hubs, logistics networks, and technological infrastructure in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, India can replicate Japan's success in driving regional balance and upward social mobility.

As India and Japan step forward into an era defined by global uncertainty, my visit convinced me that our deepening alliance offers a powerful, constructive model for the world: Proof that two great civilisations can align their economic security, demographic strategies, and technological futures to build a more stable, equitable, and democratic Indo-Pacific.

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