

PrepAlpine

The Next-Generation UPSC Institution

Where Research Meets Mentorship & Precision



Preparation Meets Precision

A Next-Generation Learning Institution

Copyright © 2025 PrepAlpine

All Rights Reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means—whether photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods—without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law.

For permission requests, please write to:

PrepAlpine

Email: info@PrepAlpine.com

Website: PrepAlpine.com

Disclaimer

The information contained in this book has been prepared solely for educational purposes. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, PrepAlpine makes no representations or warranties of any kind and accepts no liability for any errors or omissions. The use of any content is solely at the reader's discretion and risk.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS DATED 17.03.2026

GS Paper II: International Relations

1. Neighbourhood Diplomacy and West Asia

a. Introduction

In contemporary international relations, geographical distance no longer determines strategic relevance. Developments in West Asia, often described as the Middle East, have immediate and far-reaching consequences for India and its neighbourhood. This is primarily because the region is deeply embedded in global energy flows, trade routes, and migration networks.

Thus, the relationship between West Asia and India's neighbourhood policy must be understood as an interconnected strategic continuum, rather than as separate domains of foreign policy.



b. West Asia as a Strategic Extension of India's Neighbourhood

West Asia today functions as an extended neighbourhood due to three structural linkages.

Energy Security Linkage

- The region serves as India's primary energy supplier.
- A substantial proportion of crude oil and natural gas imports originate from Gulf countries.
- Disruptions lead to inflation, fiscal stress, and macroeconomic instability.

Diaspora and Remittance Linkage

- A large Indian diaspora resides in Gulf countries.
- Remittances support household incomes and foreign exchange reserves.
- Safety of diaspora becomes a key diplomatic priority during crises.

Maritime and Trade Linkage

- Critical sea lanes such as the Strait of Hormuz are located here.

- A major share of India's trade and energy supplies passes through these routes.
- This makes the region central to India's maritime security framework.

c. The Regional Spillover: From West Asia to South Asia

West Asian developments create ripple effects across South Asia due to structural vulnerabilities.

Economic Vulnerability of Neighbours

- Countries like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Maldives depend heavily on imported fuel.
- Limited fiscal buffers make them vulnerable to global price shocks.
- Energy disruptions lead to inflation and economic instability.

Political and Social Consequences

- Economic crises trigger political instability and governance challenges.
- Social unrest may increase due to rising costs of living.

India as a Regional Stabiliser

- India is expected to act as a first responder during crises.
- Assistance includes fuel supply, financial aid, and humanitarian support.
- This enhances India's regional leadership role but also increases responsibilities.

d. India's Approach: Strategic Autonomy and Balanced Engagement

India follows a policy of strategic autonomy combined with multi-alignment.

Principle of Strategic Autonomy

- Independent decision-making without alignment to any single bloc.
- Flexibility in responding to changing geopolitical conditions.

Multi-Alignment Strategy

- Defence and technology cooperation with Israel.
- Energy and connectivity ties with Iran.
- Economic and diaspora relations with Gulf nations.
- Continued engagement with the United States.

Advantages and Limitations

- Maximises national interest without entanglement in rivalries.
- However, maintaining balance is becoming difficult in a polarised world.

e. Emerging Challenges in the Contemporary Context

Diplomatic Pressures in a Polarised World

- Conflicts create pressure to take sides.
- Supporting one actor may strain relations with others.

Expanding Neighbourhood Responsibilities

- Neighbourhood First policy raises expectations.
- India must provide timely support during crises.

Maritime Security Concerns

- Militarisation of sea routes threatens shipping.
- Risks to energy supplies and Indian seafarers.
- Challenges India's role as a net security provider.

Economic Fragility of Neighbours

- Rising energy prices lead to inflation and unemployment.
- Fiscal crises can destabilise governments.

Weak Regional Coordination Mechanisms

- Limited institutional cooperation in South Asia.
- Poor coordination reduces crisis response efficiency.

f. The Idea of Interconnected Regions

Modern geopolitics recognises the interdependence of regions.

Structural Interlinkages

- Energy flows from West Asia to South Asia.
- Labour migration connects economies.
- Maritime routes integrate trade networks.

Transregional Impact of Conflicts

- Events in one region affect others rapidly.
- Economic and security consequences spread across regions.

Policy Implication

- Foreign policy must be integrated and holistic.
- Compartmentalised approaches are no longer effective.

g. Institutional Mechanisms Supporting Regional Stability

Regional and Maritime Platforms

- Indian Ocean Rim Association promotes cooperation.
- Colombo Security Conclave focuses on maritime security.

Information and Security Cooperation

- Information Fusion Centre enhances maritime awareness.
- Facilitates information sharing on threats.

Global Strategic Platforms

- Quad and BRICS provide broader cooperation frameworks.

Limitations

- Effectiveness depends on political commitment.
- Coordination among members remains uneven.

h. Way Forward: Towards an Integrated Strategy

Strengthening Balanced Diplomacy

- Continue engagement with all major West Asian actors.
- Maintain credibility and neutrality.

Enhancing Neighbourhood Support

- Build resilience in neighbouring economies.
- Strengthen crisis response mechanisms.

Improving Maritime Preparedness

- Enhance naval capabilities and surveillance.
- Secure critical sea lanes through cooperation.

Economic and Energy Strategies

- Diversify energy sources.
- Develop strategic reserves.
- Strengthen supply chains.

Preserving Strategic Autonomy

- Retain independent decision-making.
- Navigate complex geopolitical dynamics effectively.

Conclusion

West Asia is not a distant geopolitical theatre for India; it is an integral component of its economic stability, energy security, and neighbourhood diplomacy. The growing interconnectedness of regions means that conflicts in one area rapidly acquire transregional dimensions.

India's challenge lies in maintaining a delicate balance, supporting its neighbours, and protecting its strategic interests in an increasingly uncertain world. This requires an approach that is pragmatic, flexible, and deeply integrated across diplomacy, security, and economics.

Reader's Note — About This Current Affairs Compilation

Dear Aspirant,

This document is part of the PrepAlpine Current Affairs Series — designed to bring clarity, structure, and precision to your daily UPSC learning.

While every effort has been made to balance depth with brevity, please keep the following in mind:

1. Orientation & Purpose

This compilation is curated primarily from the UPSC Mains perspective — with emphasis on conceptual clarity, analytical depth, and interlinkages across GS papers.

However, the PrepAlpine team is simultaneously developing a dedicated Prelims-focused Current Affairs Series, designed for:

- factual coverage
- data recall
- Prelims-style MCQs
- objective pattern analysis

This Prelims Edition will be released separately as a standalone publication.

2. Content Length

Some sections may feel shorter or longer depending on topic relevance and news density. To fit your personal preference, you may freely resize or summarize sections using any LLM tool (ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.) at your convenience.

3. Format Flexibility

The formatting combines:

- paragraphs
- lists
- tables
- visual cues

—all optimised for retention.

If you prefer a specific style (lists → paras, paras → tables, etc.), feel free to convert using any free LLM.

4. Monthly Current Affairs Release

The complete Monthly Current Affairs Module will be released soon, optimized to a compact 100–150 pages — comprehensive yet concise, exam-ready, and revision-efficient.

PrepAlpine