

International Relations & Global Events

CDS Current Affairs · CFCO2

CDS Level : High Priority

International Relations in CDS tests India's foreign policy architecture – bilateral deals, multilateral summits, geopolitical stances, and international organisations. Questions are highly factual but require understanding of *why* India takes a position. Key skill: linking a deal (e.g., S-400) to a strategic context (Russia dependence vs US pressure).

✦ CDS Pattern – International Relations (2022–2025 trend):

- Bilateral deals: which country, what was agreed, why significant | • Summits: host, theme, key outcome
- India's voting at UN (abstain/yes/no) | • International organisations: HQ, head, India's role
- Geopolitical conflicts: India's stated position

1. Key Bilateral Relations

us India – USA

- ▶ **Foundational Defence Agreements (all 4 signed):** GSOMIA (2002) – intelligence sharing; LEMOA (2016) – logistics exchange; COMCASA (2018) – encrypted communications; BECA (2020) – geospatial intelligence sharing.
- ▶ **iCET (Initiative on Critical & Emerging Technology, 2023):** India-US initiative covering AI, quantum computing, 5G/6G, semiconductors, advanced telecom, space. Operationalised through NSA-level dialogue.
- ▶ **QUAD:** India, USA, Japan, Australia. Not a formal treaty alliance. Focuses on Indo-Pacific security, vaccine distribution (QUAD Vaccine Initiative), climate, tech (IPMDA – Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness). Cancer Moonshot initiative launched 2023.

- ▶ **GE-F414 Engine Deal (2023):** USA agreed to co-produce GE-F414 jet engines in India (for Tejas Mk2). First such technology transfer by USA; signifies trust milestone in defence ties.
- ▶ **MQ-9B Drone Deal (2023):** India approved procurement of 31 MQ-9B High Altitude Long Endurance (HALE) drones. 16 for Navy, 8 for Army, 7 for Air Force. Rs 35,000 crore approx.

RU India – Russia

- ▶ **S-400 Triumf Air Defence System:** Rs 35,000 crore deal (2018). Delivery underway (3 of 5 squadrons received by 2024). USA threatened CAATSA sanctions but waived India. Capability: track & intercept 80 targets simultaneously; range 400 km.
- ▶ **AK-203 Rifles (Amethi, UP):** Joint venture — Indo-Russian Rifles Private Ltd (IRRPL). 6+ lakh rifles for Indian Army. World's most modern AK variant. Make in India defence flagship.
- ▶ **Kudankulam Nuclear Plant:** Units 3&4 under construction (Russian Rosatom VVER reactors). Units 1&2 operational. 5&6 being negotiated. Russia = India's largest nuclear energy partner.
- ▶ **Post-Ukraine Oil Imports:** India's Russian crude oil imports jumped from 0.5% (Feb 2022) to ~40% of India's total crude imports (2023–24). India buys at discounted rates, pays in Dirham/Yuan/Rupee. Strategic autonomy: India refuses to join Western sanctions.
- ▶ **PM Modi's Moscow Visit (Jul 2024):** 22nd India-Russia Annual Summit. Modi called for "dialogue not war" on Ukraine. First India-Russia summit since COVID. High symbolic value amid Ukraine war.

CN India – China

- ▶ **Galwan Valley Clash (June 2020):** 20 Indian soldiers killed; China suffered casualties (not officially disclosed). LAC standoff began. Multiple disengagement talks held.
- ▶ **Disengagement Agreement (Oct 2024):** India and China agreed to resume patrolling rights at Depsang Plains and Demchok (last two friction points). Verified by ground-level verification. Relations cautiously normalising; bilateral trade still ~USD 120 billion.
- ▶ **India's China Policy:** "Three Mutuals" framework — mutual respect, mutual sensitivity, mutual interests. India maintains: normalisation requires complete disengagement on all LAC points.

- ▶ **BRI (Belt and Road Initiative):** India does not participate. Reason: CPEC (China–Pakistan Economic Corridor) passes through Pakistan–Occupied Kashmir (PoK) – violates India’s sovereignty.

NO India – Japan | FR India – France | AU India – Australia

- ▶ **India – Japan:** Mumbai–Ahmedabad Bullet Train project (MAHSR); Rs 1.08 lakh crore; Japan financing 81% via ODA at 0.1% interest for 50 years; Shinkansen E5 technology. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue (Foreign + Defence). Act East Forum co–chair.
- ▶ **India – France:** Strategic Partner since 1998 (oldest). Rafale–IAF (36 jets delivered; Rafale–M 26 jets for Navy ordered). Scorpene submarines (INS Kalvari class, 6 built). P–75I programme shortlisted. GARUDA air exercise.
- ▶ **India – Australia:** Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2020). ECTA (Economic Cooperation & Trade Agreement, 2022) – significant tariff reductions. AUSINDEX naval exercise. Australia key source of uranium for India’s nuclear energy.
- ▶ **India – UAE:** CEPA (Feb 2022; effective May 2022). Trade in INR and AED. India’s largest Arab trading partner. UAE 3rd largest source of FDI to India. Indian diaspora 3.4 million (largest).
- ▶ **India – UK:** 2030 Roadmap. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations – close but not concluded (stalled over visa, Scotch whisky, EV tariff issues). Living Bridge initiative (diaspora, education).

2. Multilateral Summits & Organisations

G20 India Presidency (Dec 2022 – Nov 2023)

- ▶ **Theme:** “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam – One Earth, One Family, One Future” (from Maha Upanishad).
- ▶ **Key Outcomes (New Delhi Declaration, Sep 2023):** African Union (AU) admitted as permanent G20 member (India lobbied; PM Modi announced). New Delhi Declaration adopted by consensus (rare feat amid Russia–Ukraine divide). USD 100 billion/year climate finance reaffirmed. Global Biofuels Alliance launched. New Digital Public Infrastructure framework.
- ▶ **Voice of Global South Summits:** India hosted 2 VoGS summits (Jan 2023 and Nov 2023)

– 125+ developing nations invited; India positioned as “Voice of the Global South.”

- ▶ **Significance:** India first developing nation to host a G20 where a developing-country bloc (AU) was admitted. Leveraged G20 presidency to advance South–South cooperation agenda.

BRICS & SCO

- ▶ **BRICS Expansion (Johannesburg Summit, Aug 2023):** 6 new members invited: Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iran, Ethiopia, Egypt, Argentina. Argentina declined under new President Milei. Effective Jan 2024: BRICS became 10-member group (sometimes called BRICS+). India’s stance: endorsed expansion while calling for “reformed, effective BRICS” rather than just larger BRICS.
- ▶ **SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation):** India joined as full member (2017). India hosted SCO Summit 2023 (virtual format; as Chair). Iran joined as full SCO member (2023). Belarus joining process underway. SCO = largest regional organisation (land area + population). Focus: security, counter-terror, connectivity, energy. India’s participation = engagement without endorsing China-led agenda.
- ▶ **BRICS New Development Bank (NDB):** Headquartered in Shanghai. India’s K.V. Kamath was first President. Egypt, UAE, Bangladesh, Uruguay have joined NDB as new members.

Key International Organisations — India’s Role

- ▶ **UNSC:** India is not a permanent member (P5 = USA, UK, France, Russia, China). India was elected non-permanent member for 2021–22 term. Strongly advocates for UNSC reform and permanent membership (G4: India, Germany, Japan, Brazil). India’s UN Peacekeeping contribution: 2nd largest contributor of troops historically.
- ▶ **WTO:** India’s stance: protection of food security (supports public stockholding), opposes fisheries subsidies curbing (as it would hurt small Indian fishermen). India–USA dispute on solar cells (India won). WTO Director-General: Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (Nigeria).
- ▶ **IMF:** India’s quota to be increased under 16th General Review (world’s 3rd largest economy by PPP, but IMF quota not proportional). IMF MD: Kristalina Georgieva.
- ▶ **WHO:** Director-General: Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (Ethiopia). India’s Vaccine Maitri: supplied 95+ million COVID vaccines to 36 countries; largest vaccine donor globally.
- ▶ **FATF (Financial Action Task Force):** India in regular member status (not grey-listed). Pakistan was grey-listed (2018) and removed (2022).

3. Geopolitical Developments & India's Position

◆ Key Conflicts — India's Official Stance

- ▶ **Russia-Ukraine War (Feb 2022–present):** India abstained on UN resolutions condemning Russia (UNSC: Russia vetoed; UNGA: India abstained). Stated position: "dialogue and diplomacy." India imports Russian oil at discounts. PM Modi visited Moscow (Jul 2024) and Kyiv (Aug 2023) — delivered "this is not the era of war" message directly to Putin.
- ▶ **Israel-Hamas War (Oct 2023–present):** India initially expressed solidarity with Israel. Later UNGA resolutions for humanitarian ceasefire: India *abstained*. India called for "two-state solution," humanitarian access, condemned civilian casualties. Consistent support for Palestinian statehood as a general policy principle.
- ▶ **South China Sea:** India does not recognise China's nine-dash line claim. Supports UNCLOS (freedom of navigation). No direct military involvement. Conducts HADR exercises; supports ASEAN centrality.
- ▶ **Afghanistan:** Taliban took over Aug 2021. India closed consulates; embassy in Kabul manned by "technical team." India sends humanitarian aid (wheat, medicines). Strategic concern: Pakistan-sponsored terrorism using Afghan territory. India does not formally recognise Taliban government.

📖 TOPIC-WISE
PYQ

International Relations — CDS Pattern Questions with Detailed Explanations

Q1. Which new member was admitted to the G20 as a permanent member during India's G20 presidency in 2023? (CDS I 2024 direct question)

(a) African Development Bank (b) African Union (c) South African Union (d) Arab League

Answer: (b) African Union (AU)

The AU, representing all 55 African nations, was admitted as the 21st permanent G20 member at New Delhi Summit (Sep 9–10, 2023). PM Modi announced this at the Summit's opening. India had championed AU's entry as part of its "Voice of Global South" positioning. G20 now has 20 member nations + EU + AU. This is factually exact: "African Union" not "Africa" or "African nations" as a collective.

Q2. Which of the following are the four foundational defence agreements between India and USA? (CDS II 2023)

(a) GSOMIA, LEMOA, COMCASA, BECA (b) LEMOA, BECA, CISMOA, DTTI (c) COMCASA, BECA, ICET, QUAD (d) LEMOA, COMCASA, BECA, MQ-9B

Answer: (a) GSOMIA, LEMOA, COMCASA, BECA

GSOMIA (General Security of Military Information Agreement, 2002): Classified military information sharing. LEMOA (Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement, 2016): Use of each other's military bases for refuelling/replenishment. COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement, 2018): Encrypted military communications. BECA (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement, 2020): Geospatial and satellite intelligence data sharing. These 4 are called "foundational agreements" – CDS asks this combination frequently.

Q3. India's purchase of S-400 missile defence system from Russia was controversial because USA threatened sanctions under which act? (CDS I 2025 pattern)

(a) Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (b) Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) (c) Patriot Act (d) Defense Production Act

Answer: (b) CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act)

CAATSA (2017) prohibits countries from making significant defence transactions with Russia, Iran, or North Korea. USA threatened CAATSA sanctions on India for S-400 purchase. India argued strategic autonomy; USA eventually waived the sanctions (as they did for Turkey initially, though Turkey was later suspended from F-35 programme). The S-400 has been delivered (3 of 5 squadrons by 2024). Key: CAATSA is the act; waiver = USA accepted India's defence partnership over punishing Russia trade.

Q4. India abstained on UNGA resolutions regarding the Russia-Ukraine war. What is the constitutional/policy basis for India's "abstain" position? (CDS analytical pattern)

(a) Non-alignment policy under Article 51 of UN Charter (b) India's strategic autonomy doctrine and historical non-alignment (c) India-Russia friendship treaty obligations (d) India lacks veto power so abstention = de facto opposition

Answer: (b) India's strategic autonomy doctrine and historical non-alignment

India's foreign policy is guided by "strategic autonomy" – not joining any bloc, maintaining independent judgment. India abstained citing: (i) respect for UN Charter including territorial integrity, (ii) need for dialogue over military solutions, (iii) ongoing dependency on Russian military hardware (60%+ of equipment is Russian-origin), (iv) not wanting to jeopardise Russian oil imports. This is consistent with India's Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) legacy, though India has not formally invoked NAM since Cold War. CDS links India's abstentions to strategic interests, not indifference.

Q5. Which country did India sign CEPA with in 2022, and what is its key objective? (CDS II 2022 type)

(a) Saudi Arabia — oil supply security (b) UAE — boost bilateral trade to USD 100 billion in 5 years (c) Australia — uranium supply for nuclear energy (d) UK — reduce tariffs on Scotch whisky

Answer: (b) UAE — boost bilateral trade to USD 100 billion in 5 years

India-UAE CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement) signed Feb 18, 2022; effective May 1, 2022. Target: bilateral trade from USD 60 billion to USD 100 billion by 2027. Covers goods, services, investments. Notable: India's first CEPA in 12 years. Allows preferential tariff rates on 97% of tariff lines. Payments can be settled in INR-AED. CDS asked: year, partner nation, target, sectors covered.

ANALYTICAL QUESTIONS

International Relations — Multi-Layer Analysis

 **T1. India is a member of QUAD, SCO, BRICS, and the Non-Aligned Movement. Is there a contradiction? How does CDS frame India's "multi-alignment" strategy?**

No inherent contradiction — this is India's deliberate "multi-alignment" doctrine:

QUAD = security grouping with USA, Japan, Australia (US-leaning); SCO = China/Russia-led security organisation; BRICS = China/Russia-led economic bloc; NAM = non-alignment legacy.

India frames this as "strategic autonomy" — not joining any formal military alliance, but participating in multiple groupings to protect diverse interests simultaneously.

CDS angle: Questions often ask "India is a member of both QUAD and SCO; does this contradict India's foreign policy?" Answer: No — India's foreign policy is guided by national interest, not ideological alignment. This is a hallmark distinction from Cold War non-alignment.

 **T2. Why does India refuse to join China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) despite China being India's largest trading partner?**

Primary reason: CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) passes through Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK)

India considers PoK its sovereign territory. Participation in BRI would implicitly endorse Chinese infrastructure on contested land = compromise on sovereignty claim.

Secondary reasons: (1) Debt trap concerns — BRI creates debt dependency in recipient nations (Sri Lanka, Pakistan examples); (2) China's port strategy ("String of Pearls") surrounds India in Indian Ocean; (3) BRI lacks transparency in terms & conditions; (4) Projects by-pass India's connectivity interests in neighbourhood.

India's alternative: Push for Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) —



Rapid Revision Sheet – CFCo2 International

Relations

us India-USA

- ∴ 4 foundational pacts: GSOMIA, LEMOA, COMCASA, BECA
- ∴ iCET: AI, quantum, semiconductors, telecom
- ∴ QUAD: India, USA, Japan, Australia; IPMDA; Cancer Moonshot
- ∴ GE-F414 engine co-production deal (2023)
- ∴ MQ-9B drones: 31 approved; Rs 35,000 crore

RU India-Russia + CN India-China

- ∴ S-400: 3/5 squadrons delivered; CAATSA waived
- ∴ AK-203: Amethi; IRRPL joint venture
- ∴ Kudankulam: Units 3&4 under construction
- ∴ LAC: Depsang/Demchok disengagement (Oct 2024)
- ∴ BRI: India refuses; CPEC passes through PoK

Summits

- ∴ G20 2023 (New Delhi): AU admitted; IMEC; GBA
- ∴ BRICS (Johannesburg): 6 new; Argentina declined
- ∴ SCO 2023: India hosted (virtual); Iran joined
- ∴ COP28 (Dubai): fossil fuel transition; L&D Fund
- ∴ QUAD Summits: IPMDA; Cancer Moonshot; Tech initiative

India's UN Votes

- ∴ Russia-Ukraine: India abstained (multiple times)
- ∴ Gaza/Hamas: India abstained on ceasefire resolutions
- ∴ UNSC: India not P5; seeks permanent seat (G4)
- ∴ WTO DG: Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala
- ∴ UN Secretary General: Antonio Guterres (Portugal)



Quick Booster – CFCo2 International Relations

us USA Deals

- LEMOA (2016) = logistics bases
- COMCASA (2018) = encrypted comms
- BECA (2020) = geospatial intel
- GE-F414 = engine co-production
- MQ-9B = 31 HALE drones

Summits Quick

- G20 theme: Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam
- G20: AU became 21st member
- BRICS: 10 members from Jan 2024
- IMEC: India-ME-Europe corridor
- VoGS: India hosted 2 summits

Geopolitics

- India: abstained on Russia-Ukraine
- India: abstained on Gaza ceasefire
- BRI: No; CPEC through PoK
- Vaccine Maitri: 95M doses, 36 nations
- Strategic Autonomy = multi-alignment



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