

CURRENTLY - FROM NEWS TO NOTES

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

**The Hindu & The Indian express**

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Headline	Source
India, Fiji call for open Indo-Pacific region, agree to deepen defence ties	The Hindu, Page 4
Stealth frigates Udaygiri, Himgiri to join Navy today	The Hindu, Page 6



Headline	Source
India-Japan ties — old partners, new priorities	The Hindu, Page 8
Could We Soon Have Space-Based Solar Panels? Not Really	The Indian Express, Page 13
Friends and foes	The Hindu, Page 8





## India, Fiji call for open Indo-Pacific region, agree to deepen defence ties

As per a joint statement, both the sides emphasise the importance of their 'shared interests in advancing regional peace, stability, and prosperity'; both the countries agree to work together on UN peacekeeping operations, military medicine

Kallol Bhattacharjee  
NEW DELHI

India will provide training and equipment to upgrade Fiji's maritime security, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday.

Welcoming visiting Fijian Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka, Mr. Modi said India and Fiji "strongly support a free, open" Indo-Pacific region as both sides declared that India would work to build capacity for the armed forces of Fiji.

"In our cooperation with the Pacific island nations, we see Fiji as a hub. Both our countries strongly support a free, open, inclusive, secure, and prosperous Indo-Pacific. We warmly welcome India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative," Mr. Modi said, announcing the collaboration between India and the Fijian military forces.

A joint statement issued at the end of consultation



**Strategic meeting:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Fiji Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Monday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

said the two sides emphasised the importance of their "shared interests in advancing regional peace, stability, and prosperity".

"Prime Minister Modi reaffirmed India's commitment to advancing the priority areas of cooperation outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding [MoU] on Defence Cooperation signed in 2017, and to

supporting Fiji's strategic priorities in these areas," the joint statement said.

**Welcomes India's aid**

The two sides agreed to work together on UN peacekeeping operations, military medicine, the White Shipping Information Exchange, and capacity-building for Fijian military forces.

During the talks at Hyderabad House here, India and Fiji signed seven MoUs that included an agreement on building a super-specialty hospital in Fiji, and one on migration and mobility. Both the leaders agreed to strengthen cooperation against terrorism, and reiterated condemnation for the terror attack in Pahalagam. Mr. Modi announced the gifting of two ambulances to Fiji's military forces, and the opening of the defence wing in the High Commission of India in Fijian capital Suva. The countries agreed to enhance cooperation in cybersecurity, and welcomed the setting up of a cybersecurity training cell in Fiji.

Mr. Rabuka had in July opposed China's reported plans to establish a naval base in the Pacific islands. As a signal to the Chinese side, the statement also called for a "free, open Indo-Pacific region".

India, Fiji call for open Indo-Pacific region, agree to deepen defence ties

Source: The Hindu, Page Number: 4

GS2 International Relations (IR) Division

### Context of the Article

The article is set against the backdrop of growing India-Fiji relations, highlighting their collaborative efforts in defence, regional peace, and shared concerns over Indo-Pacific stability. Both sides met in New Delhi, underscoring their commitment to a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific at a time when strategic competition—particularly China's increasing presence—is shaping regional security debates.

### Context of Article

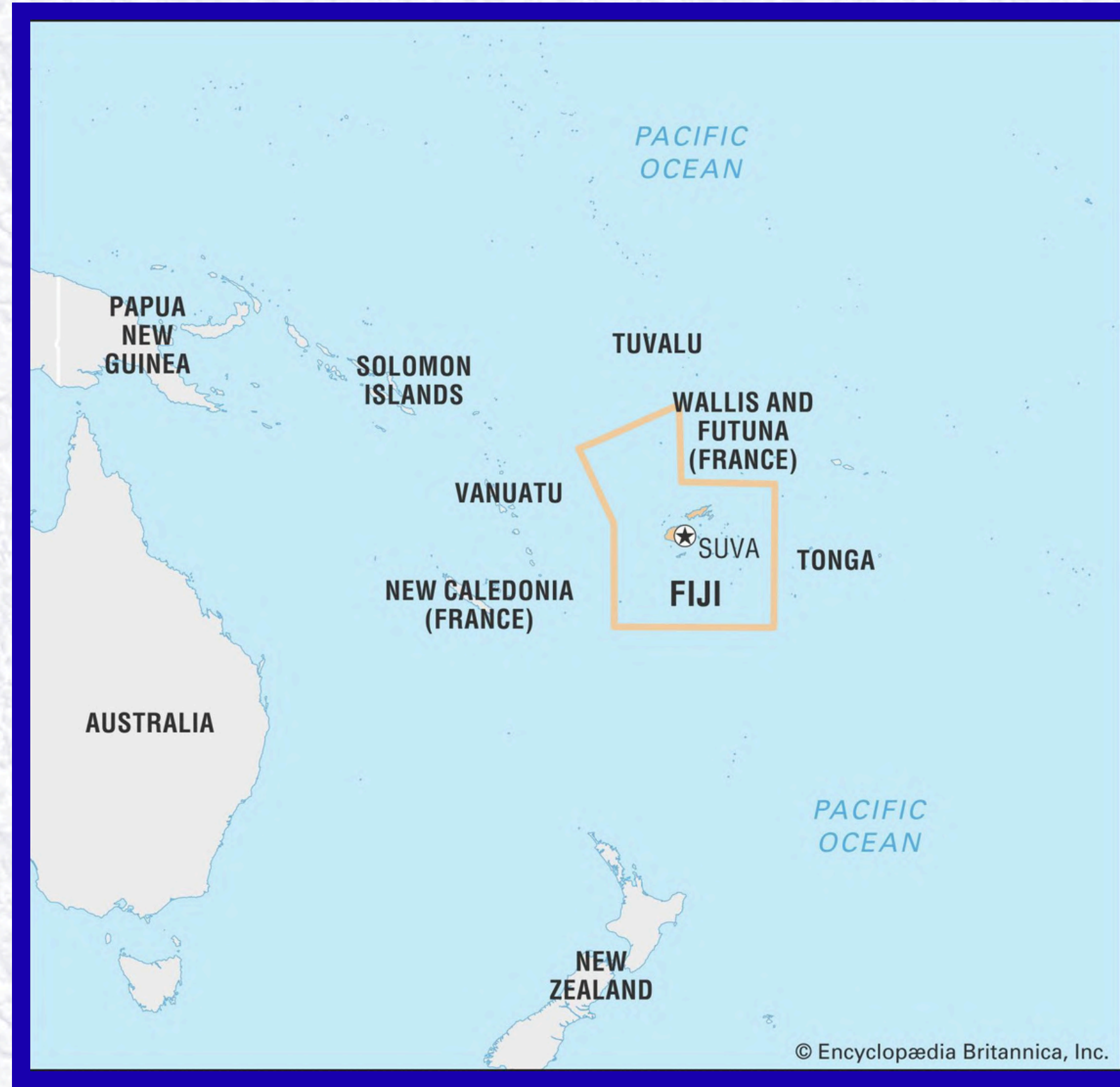
- India will provide training and equipment to upgrade Fiji's maritime security, and work to build capacity for the Fijian armed forces.
- Seven MoUs were signed, including agreements for a super-specialty hospital in Fiji and on migration and mobility.
- Both nations emphasized their shared interest in promoting regional peace, stability, and prosperity, and agreed to collaborate on UN peacekeeping, military medicine, and cybersecurity.







- Indian Prime Minister Modi reaffirmed India's support for Fiji in strategic, economic, and security domains, while Fijian Prime Minister Rabuka welcomed India's security assurances and opposed China's attempts to expand influence in the Pacific.
- The meeting signals strong support for a free, open Indo-Pacific and deepening strategic partnership between India and Fiji, with a clear focus on balancing regional dynamics in response to China's activities.





## Stealth frigates *Udaygiri*, *Himgiri* to join Navy today

The vessels are follow-on variants of Shivalik-class frigates; they have advanced weaponry, modern sensor systems designed to execute full spectrum of maritime operations in blue-water conditions

Saurabh Trivedi  
NEW DELHI

**T**he Indian Navy is set to commission the state-of-the-art Project 17A stealth frigates *Udaygiri* and *Himgiri* at the Naval Base in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will preside over the event, which will mark the first-ever simultaneous commissioning of two frontline warships built at different shipyards.

### Enhanced capability

Mr. Singh said that both vessels were follow-on variants of the Shivalik-class frigates. They featured enhanced stealth capabilities, advanced weaponry, and modern sensor systems designed to execute the full spectrum of maritime operations in blue-water conditions. *Udaygiri*, built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd. in Mumbai, and *Himgiri*, constructed by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers



Ready to serve: INS Udaygiri during its launch at Mazgaon Docks Limited in Mumbai in May 2022. PTI

(GRSE) in Kolkata, showcase India's growing shipbuilding expertise and inter-yard collaboration. Notably, *Udaygiri* was the fastest of her class to be delivered after launch, owing to the adoption of modular construction techniques.

Designed in-house by the Navy's Warship Design Bureau (WDB), *Udaygiri* is

the 100th vessel to be designed, marking a milestone in five decades of indigenous warship design. Both frigates are fitted with combined diesel or gas (CODOG) propulsion, an integrated platform management system, and advanced Indian-made weapons and sensors. With nearly 75% indigenous con-

tent – supported by several MSMEs – the ships embody the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat, the Ministry added.

Reviving the heritage of earlier warships that bore these names, the new frigates will now join the Eastern Fleet, substantially enhancing the Navy's reach in the Indian Ocean.

Stealth frigates *Udaygiri*, *Himgiri* to join Navy today

Source: The Hindu | Page 6

### Prelims Context

### Context of the Article

- Defence Minister to commission two Project 17A stealth frigates - INS Udaygiri and INS Himgiri - at Visakhapatnam Naval Base.
- First simultaneous commissioning of two frontline warships from different shipyards.
- Reflects India's indigenous shipbuilding capability and support for Atmanirbhar Bharat.

### About Stealth Frigates

- Frigates → Medium warships, versatile for anti-submarine, anti-aircraft, and surface warfare.
- Stealth design → Minimizes radar, infrared, and acoustic signatures, making them harder to detect.
- Equipped with modern sensors, advanced weaponry, and propulsion systems for blue-water operations.
- Enhance survivability, combat capability, and endurance in naval warfare.



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### Project 17

- Launched by Indian Navy to build indigenous stealth frigates.
- Resulted in Shivalik-class frigates (India's first stealth warships).
- Built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd. (MDL), Mumbai.
- Focus: Stealth features, survivability, and enhanced combat power.

### Project 17A

- Follow-on to Project 17 with advanced technologies.
- 7 frigates planned, being built by MDL (Mumbai) and GRSE (Kolkata).
- **Features:**
  - Better stealth shaping & reduced signatures.
  - CODOG propulsion (Combined Diesel or Gas).
  - Modular construction → faster delivery.

- Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS).
- ~75% indigenous content, aligning with Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- INS Udaygiri & INS Himgiri are part of this series.



## India-Japan ties — old partners, new priorities

**P** rime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Japan and China, that begins from August 29, comes at a time of flux in global geopolitics. While there is a tentative easing of tensions between India and China after years of strain, there is also growing uncertainty about New Delhi's ties with Washington as the Trump administration seems to be doing everything in its power to push India away. Thus, Mr. Modi's engagement in Tokyo carries weight well beyond the bilateral.

**Japan's major investment plan**  
At the heart of the visit lies Japan's announcement of a ¥10 trillion (about \$68 billion) investment plan in India to be spread over the next decade. This pledge, among the most ambitious Tokyo has ever made to New Delhi, is designed to boost the infrastructure, manufacturing, clean energy, and technology partnership. It signals Japan's long-term stake in India's growth story at a time when many global investors remain cautious about China. The fact that Japan is also investing in the next-generation E10 series Shinkansen for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed rail corridor reflects economic collaboration alongside Tokyo's willingness to transfer cutting-edge technology to India.

On the strategic front, the two countries are expected to revise the 2008 Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation, reorienting their security and defence partnership in accordance with contemporary realities. The proposed Economic Security Initiative — it covers semiconductors, critical minerals, pharmaceuticals, and clean energy — anchors Japan more firmly within India's quest for diversified supply chains. Also significant is the upgrade of their digital partnership, which is now expected to cover artificial intelligence and startup ecosystems. These initiatives place India-Japan ties at the forefront of technological and security



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The Prime Minister's Japan visit highlights India's steady strategic intent, with signals to China and the U.S.

cooperation in Asia, reinforcing their shared commitment to a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific.

### The U.S. factor, a case of strategic balancing

The timing of the visit is important. After the Tokyo meeting, Mr. Modi is scheduled to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Tianjin, China. Bilateral ties, though scarred by the 2020 Galwan clash, are demonstrating tentative signs of stabilisation with the resumption of direct flights, visa relaxations, and trade facilitation efforts. The visit, from Tokyo to Beijing in a single week, reflects a strategic balancing in many ways. First, it underscores India's ability to engage with a trusted strategic partner and a neighbouring competitor without allowing one relationship to dictate the other. Second, it signals that India can compartmentalise. With Tokyo, the focus is on advancing economic security, defence cooperation, and Indo-Pacific stability. With Beijing, the emphasis will likely be on managing tensions, exploring limited confidence-building measures, and keeping communication lines open.

The balancing becomes even more consequential against the backdrop of Mr. Trump's unpredictability, which has cast a shadow on the reliability of the United States as a steady partner. Mr. Trump stands to unravel years of careful effort invested in building the New Delhi-Washington partnership. Successive administrations on both sides, from George W. Bush to Joe Biden, worked to transform a once-fractious relationship into a cornerstone of Indo-Pacific strategy, anchored in defence cooperation, technology sharing, and growing people-to-people ties. So far, Trump 2.0 risks eroding this progress. The Quad (India, Australia, Japan, the U.S.) too, remains essential to India's Indo-Pacific vision, but its trajectory appears rocky as U.S. engagement turns episodic. The

grouping was conceived as a platform to pool capacities among like-minded democracies, yet its momentum has always depended on Washington's willingness to commit consistently. Under Mr. Trump's second term, signals of disengagement and a narrower view of alliances risk diluting the Quad's strategic coherence. For India, Japan and Australia, this raises pressing questions about sustaining the initiative's credibility and operational depth.

Beyond economics and defence, there is a broader political signal embedded in the visit. By stepping up its engagement with India, Japan is not just diversifying its economic footprint but is also reinforcing the idea that dedicated long-term cooperation can deliver tangible outcomes.

### The message

The Tokyo visit is thus less about short-term diplomatic outcomes and more about signalling steady strategic intent — that India is willing to keep channels with Beijing open, prepared to navigate U.S. unpredictability, and determined to deepen enduring partnerships with like-minded powers in the region. Japan's commitments also reinforce India as one of its most reliable partners in navigating the challenges of the Indo-Pacific, from economic resilience to maritime security.

The visit will highlight one of the most enduring features of Indian diplomacy in recent years: flexibility without losing strategic clarity. In a phase of protracted geopolitical uncertainty, it is Japan that emerges as India's anchor partner. Washington's commitment is wavering under Trump's short-sightedness, while Beijing remains a competitor whose gestures of normalisation cannot yet ease underlying mistrust. Tokyo offers consistency, resources and a shared strategic outlook rooted in democratic values and a free and open Indo-Pacific. Therefore, the visit to Japan is not just about consolidating an old partnership. It is about recognising where India's most dependable ballast lies.

## 1. India-Japan ties – old partners, new priorities

The Hindu | Page 8 | Editorial

## GS Paper 2 – International Relations

### Context

- PM Modi's visit to Japan (and China) in August highlights strategic balancing amid flux in global geopolitics.
- Japan's new investment plans and broader cooperation with India mark a renewed focus on economic, technological, and security ties.
- Visit underscores India's attempt to keep channels open with all powers while deepening trusted partnerships in the Indo-Pacific.



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## India-Japan Cooperation

### 1. Economic & Investment Partnership

- Japan pledges ¥10 trillion (~\$68 bn) investment in India over the next decade.
- Focus areas → infrastructure, manufacturing, clean energy, and technology.
- Collaboration in Mumbai-Ahmedabad high speed rail corridor (technology transfer)

### 2. Strategic & Security Cooperation

- Both nations expected to revise the 2008 Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation.
- Launch of Economic Security Initiative → covers semiconductors, rare earths, pharmaceuticals, clean energy.
- Defence cooperation within Indo-Pacific framework, strengthening Quad cohesion despite challenges.

### 3. Technology & Connectivity

- Joint work on critical technologies, supply chain resilience, and climate-friendly projects.
- Willingness to transfer cutting-edge technology to India.

### 4. Balancing Global Powers

- India's visit to Tokyo and Beijing in the same week shows its ability to maintain compartmentalized relations.
- Strategic balancing between the U.S., China, and Japan → avoiding over-dependence on any one.

### 2. India's Strategic Point of View

- Signal steady intent → keep relations with Beijing open while deepening Japan & U.S. partnerships.
- Indo-Pacific focus → rules-based order, maritime security, resilient supply chains.
- Atmanirbhar Bharat synergy → Japanese investments align with India's push for indigenous capacity building.
- Diplomatic message → India is positioning itself as a balancer in global geopolitics, navigating U.S. unpredictability, China's assertiveness, and Japan's reliability.





### EXPLAINED SCIENCE

## COULD WE SOON HAVE SPACE-BASED SOLAR PANELS? NOT REALLY

SOLAR POWER is the fastest-growing renewable energy technology in the world. Between 2024 and 2030, solar capacity added is expected to account for 80% of the growth in renewable power globally, the International Energy Agency's 'Renewables 2024' report stated.

But this power source has several limitations. It can only operate in the day, is sensitive to the vagaries of weather, and requires a lot more space per unit of electricity produced than most other technologies.

A silver bullet to solve these problems: space-based solar power (SBSP). This is not a novel idea. But recent technological advances have given it new wings. A latest study by researchers from King's College, London has estimated that SBSP could supply up to 80% of Europe's renewable energy needs by 2050.

#### Promise of SBSP

The study, published in the journal *oule* last week, says satellites in geostationary orbit could harvest continuous sunlight and beam it to Earth as microwaves, "delivering dispatchable, zero-carbon power that sidesteps the intermittency plaguing wind and solar" on the ground.

To make its assessment, researchers carried out multiple simulations of two concepts developed by NASA. One, "a nearly continuous heliostat swarm design and an intermittent planar array design", yielded positive results. This design uses mirror-like reflectors to collect sunlight in orbit, transmit this energy to stations on Earth, which then convert it to electricity.

Such a design effectively addresses all major problems with solar power on Earth. "In space, you potentially have the ability to position solar panels to always face the sun, which means power generation can be nearly continuous compared to the daily pattern on Earth," engineer Wei He, one of the authors of the study,

said in a statement.

"And, because it's in space, the solar radiation is higher than on the Earth's surface."

#### Reasons for scepticism

While SPSB is based on existing technological principles and known physics, making it economically viable remains a challenge — one which the study does not tackle.

The main issue is that such a system would require setting up very large structures on Earth and in space. "A single solar power satellite at geostationary orbit might extend more than a kilometre across, with the receiver station on the ground needing a footprint more than ten times larger," the European Space Agency's website says.

A enormous number of launches — possibly running into the hundreds — would be required to set up a single solar satellite which could produce the equivalent of a conventional nuclear power station, according to ESA's website. For context, the much smaller International Space Station was built with more than 40 assembly flights.

Despite progressively declining launch costs, the sheer scale of space infrastructure required is an impediment to SPSB being viable. According to a report in *The Guardian*, it is unlikely that the "potential cost-effectiveness of SBSP [could] be realised until 2050 because building, launching and maintaining it would be too expensive unless technological growth reduces its costs".

The researcher's modelling also does not take into account space-specific challenges such as "orbital congestion, transmission interruptions or beaming variability, which could influence SBSP reliability and operational performance," *The Guardian* report said.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

Could we soon have space-based solar panels? Not really

Source: The Indian Express, Page: 13

Relevant for: GS Paper 3 (Science & Technology, Energy Security, Renewable Energy)

### Context

Solar power is the fastest-growing renewable energy technology worldwide and is projected to account for 80% of renewable capacity addition between 2024–2030. However, it faces limitations such as dependence on daylight, weather vagaries, and the need for large land areas. To overcome these issues, the idea of Space-Based Solar Power (SBSP) has resurfaced with recent technological advances.

A study from King's College, London, suggests that SBSP could potentially supply up to 80% of Europe's renewable energy needs by 2050.

### Summary of the Article

#### Promise of SBSP:

- The concept involves satellites in geostationary orbit capturing sunlight continuously and beaming it to Earth as microwaves.
- This could provide dispatchable, zero-carbon energy, overcoming intermittency problems of solar and wind on Earth.
- NASA-developed concepts tested in simulations showed positive results using mirror-like reflectors to collect sunlight in space and transmit it to Earth.





- **Advantage:** In space, solar panels can face the sun continuously, ensuring higher radiation and uninterrupted energy supply.

#### Reasons for Scepticism:

- **Scale of Infrastructure:**
  - A single SBSP satellite at geostationary orbit could be over 1 km wide, requiring massive receiver stations on Earth (10x larger).
  - Hundreds of launches might be needed to match the output of a conventional nuclear power station (the ISS itself needed 40+ launches and is much smaller).
- **High Costs:** Even with declining launch costs, viable cost-effectiveness is unlikely before 2050 unless major technological breakthroughs reduce expenses.

**Space-Specific Challenges:** Issues like orbital congestion, transmission interruptions, and beaming variability could impact





### Friends and foes

**Pakistan is filling the void** created by the alienation of India from Bangladesh

In the first such visit in 13 years, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar travelled to Dhaka over the weekend to meet with members of the Bangladeshi interim government, headed by Muhammad Yunus, and hold talks with his counterpart, Touhid Hossain. Ties had been tense since 2009, when Sheikh Hasina came to power, and under strain over the prosecution of those who colluded with Pakistan during the 1971 liberation war – and the assassination of her father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of her family in 1975. In 2015, Bangladesh demanded the expulsion of a Pakistani diplomat over links to a terror group and recalled its High Commissioner to Islamabad after Pakistan protested the hanging in Bangladesh of those found guilty of collusion in 1971. Although the two nations subsequently restored envoys, they began to repair ties after Ms. Hasina's ouster last August. The process was also nudged by China, which convened a trilateral mechanism with Bangladesh and Pakistani officials in Kunming. In Dhaka, there was agreement to restore visa facilitation for diplomats, have direct flights, grant scholarships for Bangladeshi students and ways to enhance trade from current lows of less than a billion dollars. However, the Yunus government has refused to move on decades-old Bangladeshi demands for reparations from Pakistan. These include a formal apology for the genocide in 1971 perpetrated by Pakistani forces, financial compensations and the repatriation of thousands of "Stranded Pakistanis" or Urdu-speaking Muhajirs who had migrated there after Partition and still held allegiance to West Pakistan. While meeting Mr. Dar, Mr. Yunus also called for strengthening regional cooperation, including a revival of the SAARC process. India has eyed the thaw in Islamabad-Dhaka ties with some suspicion, given reports that Pakistani diplomats supported Jamaat-e-Islami student activists during the anti-Hasina protests last year. Of greater concern has been military and intelligence contacts.

While there is no question that New Delhi has cause to feel cut out and bruised by the new-found bonhomie between an erstwhile ally and a long-time foe, it is time that South Block adopts a more realistic prism. Pakistan is stepping into the breach caused by the strain in India-Bangladesh ties. Although Mr. Modi met Mr. Yunus in April and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met Mr. Hossain on the side-lines of other international events, neither has contemplated a visit, nor has Mr. Yunus been invited. With the announcement of elections in Bangladesh, in February, New Delhi must also broaden its political engagement with political parties there, even as it nudges the Yunus government to a more inclusive process. In the absence of a stronger regional South Asian grouping, New Delhi has a difficult task in holding sway over bilateral ties between any of its neighbours, especially Bangladesh and Pakistan.

CM

YK

**Friends and foes: Pakistan is filling the void created by the alienation of India from Bangladesh**

**Source: The Hindu, Page 8, Editorial**

**Relevant for: GS-II (International Relations)**

### Context

**After Sheikh Hasina's ouster in August 2024, Bangladesh's ties with India have weakened. This vacuum is being filled by Pakistan, with China's support, through renewed diplomatic outreach. The shifting equations in South Asia pose new challenges for India's foreign policy.**

### Summary of the Article

#### Pakistan-Bangladesh Re-engagement

**Pakistan's Foreign Minister visited Dhaka after 13 years to meet the interim government led by Muhammad Yunus.**

**Ties had soured since 2009 due to Hasina's prosecution of 1971 war collaborators and worsened in 2015 after Bangladesh expelled a Pakistani diplomat.**

**Relations are now cautiously improving post-Hasina.**

#### China's Role

**China has nudged the process via a trilateral mechanism with Bangladesh and Pakistan.**

**Recent agreements: restoring visas, direct flights, scholarships, and expanding trade (currently < \$1 billion).**



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### Pending Historical Issues

A formal apology for 1971 genocide.

Financial compensation.

Repatriation of “Stranded Pakistanis” (Urdu-speaking Muhajirs).

### India's Concerns

India views the thaw warily due to:

Past Pakistani support to anti-Hasina Islamist groups.

Risks of military and intelligence linkages.

So far, India has limited engagement with the interim Yunus government and no high-level visits.



## DAILY MCQs FOR PRACTICE

**Q1. Which of the following best describes India's 'Neighborhood First' policy?**

- A) Prioritizing economic and security ties with neighbouring countries
- B) Limiting diplomatic relations to South Asia only
- C) Rejecting multilateral forums in favour of bilateral ties
- D) Focusing exclusively on defence alliances

**Q2. Project 17A stealth frigates such as INS Udaygiri and INS Himgiri are significant because they:**

- A) Are the first Indian nuclear submarines
- B) Feature modular construction and over 70% indigenous components
- C) Are dedicated only to coastal security missions
- D) Are built wholly by foreign shipyards

**Q3. Japan's \$68 billion investment pledge to India aims primarily to:**

- A) Expand clean energy, infrastructure, manufacturing, and technology partnerships
- B) Support military modernization exclusively
- C) Fund cultural exchange programs
- D) Finance agricultural exports



# DAILY MCQs FOR PRACTICE

**Q4. India's recent foreign policy strategy emphasizes:**

- A) Balancing relations with major powers while maintaining strategic autonomy
- B) Alignment exclusively with the United States
- C) Pursuing isolationism in global affairs
- D) Relying solely on economic diplomacy

**Q5. Which challenge limits the viability of space-based solar power systems (SBSP) according to current studies?**

- A) The massive infrastructure and costs required for satellites and Earth-based receivers
- B) Lack of sunlight available in space
- C) Inefficiency of solar energy conversion on Earth
- D) Political opposition from space-faring nations

**Answers**

- A) Prioritizing economic and security ties with neighbouring countries
- B) Feature modular construction and over 70% indigenous components
- A) Expand clean energy, infrastructure, manufacturing, and technology partnerships
- A) Balancing relations with major powers while maintaining strategic autonomy
- A) The massive infrastructure and costs required for satellites