

# PSIR & GS-2 Daily Brief

**About this initiative :** Briefs, scans the best academic platforms, national newspapers & leading think tanks to pick the most relevant articles & research. It converts them into crisp, high-impact points you can directly use in your mains answers.

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The crumbling pillars of global peace : Foreign Affairs

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Rethinking India-Africa solidarity in an era of disputed global order:ORF

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Ladakh seeks belonging through representation : The Hindu

# Article - 1 : The crumbling pillars of global peace

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## The Crumbling Pillars of Global Peace

*War, Empire, and the Forgotten Power of the United Nations*

THANT MYINT-U

May 21, 2026



THANT MYINT-U is a Senior Fellow at the United Nations Foundation and the author of *Peacemaker: U Thant and the Forgotten Quest for a Just World*.

[More by Thant Myint-U →](#)

**Context** The post-1945 world peace is weakening because the world is forgetting two basic ideas: no aggressive war and no return of empire.

### Facts

- The UN charter signed in San Francisco in June 1945.
- UN's principle of non-intervention : foundation of peace and prosperity for past 80 years.

## Analytical Crux

Peace is not created by institutions ; it is created by the moral ideas behind them. The UN worked when the ideas of "no war" and "no empire" were politically alive. Today's crisis is not about a weak UN or weak rules-based order ; it is about the loss of memory of war, empire and decolonisation. Thus, UN reform must begin with restoring political conviction, not only changing institutional design.

## Verbatim Quotes

"The twin convictions of no war and no empire, the load-bearing walls of the long peace, are fast buckling."

-Thant Myint-U

"What's important is not multilateralism, which is value-free and can serve any agenda, but the ideas served by global cooperation."

-Thant Myint-U

# Article - 2: Rethinking India-Africa solidarity in an era of disputed global order

## Rethinking India-Africa Solidarity in an Era of Disrupted Global Order

AUTHOR : KAYODE FAYEMI

Expert Speak Raisina Debates

Published on May 21, 2026

*In an era of geopolitical disruption, India and Africa can leverage shared histories and complementary strengths to reimagine global governance*



Author



**Context** India & Africa should move beyond old solidarity and build a Global South framework for reforming world governance.

## Facts

Jawaharlal Nehru called Africa India's "sister continent", together account for 1/3 rd of humanity.

UNSC, Bretton woods institutions & WTO - facing legitimacy deficits.

India - Africa framework has three pillars : DPI as global public good, South-South security cooperation, and climate justice with green industrialisation.

## Analytical Crux

India - Africa relations must move beyond emotion and history. There should be shift from Old NAM language to autonomy, multi-alignment and institution-building. Both countries to work together for reform of global governance. India and Africa can bring reforms in representation, digital sovereignty, security cooperation and climate justice.

## Verbatim Quotes

“The Non-Aligned movement must move beyond Cold War binaries towards strategic autonomy & multi-alignment. The ability to imagine alternative futures is itself a form of power.”  
- Kayode Fayemi

“The global order is no longer in transition but in a state of contestation. Great-power involves China, the US and Russia.”  
- Kayode Fayemi

# Article - 3 : Ladakh seeks belonging through representation

## Ladakh seeks belonging through representation

It is both sad and ironic that the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India argues that Ladakh needs more districts rather than a legislature or stronger constitutional safeguards under the Sixth Schedule. It contends that Ladakh's sparse population, strategic sensitivity and financial dependence on the Centre make a legislature unnecessary, and instead offers administrative decentralisation through additional districts as a practical alternative.

This argument is fundamentally flawed and reflects an impoverished understanding of democracy. Not long ago, the British Empire claimed that Indians lacked the maturity and institutional capacity for self-rule – that Indians were too poor, illiterate and divided to govern themselves. It was against such paternalism that Sri Aurobindo championed the idea of Purna Swaraj, or absolute self-governance, as a matter of dignity and national selfhood. History proved the British wrong.

Yet, close to 80 years after Independence, the argument that Ladakh should be content with districts instead of a legislature echoes the same colonial logic in the language of nationalism. Must Ladakhis still prove they are sufficiently populous, profitable and capable enough to deserve political representation? Does being geographically vast, sparsely populated and strategically sensitive disqualify a region from having a legislature?

The recent announcement of five additional districts in Ladakh – Nubra, Changthang, Sham, Zaskar and Drass – has been celebrated as a major governance reform. Certainly, administrative accessibility matters in a region spread across nearly 59,000 square kilometres of high-altitude terrain. Villages separated by mountain passes and harsh winters do require local administrative presence.

But handing out districts is not democracy. Districts cannot legislate on land protection, demographic safeguards, ecological preservation, employment priorities, cultural autonomy, renewable energy negotiations, education policy or the long-term developmental vision of the region. Districts are instruments of administration. Legislatures are instruments of representation. A district magistrate implements policy. A legislature shapes the future of a people. A district reports upward to the bureaucracy. A legislature answers downward to citizens. No amount of administrative decentralisation and convenience can substitute for political agency.

**Expendable electoral promises**  
The most troubling aspect of the present discourse is that the Government of India itself repeatedly promised constitutional safeguards to Ladakh. After the abrogation of Article 370 and the creation of the Union Territory in 2019,



**Gitanjali J. Angmo**  
Founder of the Himalayan Institute of Alternatives, Ladakh, and an education reformer and public intellectual working to reimagine education, democracy, ecology and Himalayan futures through grassroots leadership and innovation

Ladakh's democratic aspirations cannot be reduced to the administrative convenience of districts

assurances regarding Sixth Schedule protections were publicly articulated by leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party and reflected in their election manifestoes for the MP and Hill Council elections in 2019 and 2020, respectively.

Yet, once the elections were over, and the party won based on these very manifestos, it went back on its commitments, raising ethical questions: Can promises made to frontier populations become expendable after elections?

### The case of the northeast

What of the objections themselves? Take the first one – that Ladakh is too strategic a border to be trusted with self-government. Arunachal Pradesh shares one of India's most sensitive borders with China. It is geographically vast, sparsely populated, strategically critical and financially dependent on the Centre. Yet, when it was granted full statehood in 1987, its strategic location was not viewed as a security risk, but as a strategic necessity. India understood that border populations cannot be held merely through bureaucratic administration or military presence. The people who feel politically enfranchised and constitutionally respected defend a nation more fiercely than people who merely live inside its lines. If strategic sensitivity was an argument for empowerment in one Himalayan frontier, by what logic does it become an argument against it in another?

The same applies to much of the Northeast. When Nagaland was granted statehood in 1963, its population was barely around 3.5 lakh. Mizoram became a State in 1987 with a population of roughly five lakh. Sikkim entered the Indian Union as a state in 1975 with a population of barely two lakh. Arunachal Pradesh itself had roughly six lakh people at the time of statehood. None of these States was financially self-sufficient. Many remain substantially dependent on central transfers even today. India did not tell them that they were too small, or too poor, or too remote for a legislature. It understood that you do not integrate a frontier through subsidy and garrison alone. You integrate it through belonging.

Which brings us to the fiscal objection – the weakest of the three. Ladakh, we are told, cannot generate enough revenue to sustain itself. But since when has fiscal solvency become the price of admission to Indian democracy? India's federal structure is built on redistribution; the Finance Commission exists precisely because some States earn more than others and the Union shares it out. Even large States depend heavily on central devolution.

Uttar Pradesh, the most populous State, draws enormous sums from the Centre through tax devolution, central schemes and grants-in-aid. Bihar, Assam and several Northeastern States also rely heavily on central transfers (between 70%

and 90% of their expenditure) to bridge developmental gaps.

In many of these States, mountainous terrain, sparse populations and strategic constraints limit conventional revenue generation. Yet, no one would argue that Uttar Pradesh should surrender its legislature because it depends on central funds. The suggestion would be absurd. Democracy in India has never been a reward for profitability – and if it were, much of the country would fail the test.

### Ladakh needs its own voice

And Ladakhis are worth hearing – especially when the same establishment that calls Ladakh economically negligible is planning some of India's largest energy infrastructure projects on its land. The renewable energy project in the Pang region of Changthang is expected to generate nearly 13 gigawatts of power, spread across acres of high-altitude pastureland. With investments of around ₹50,000 crore and a potential of ₹7,000 crore of annual income, this is hardly the arithmetic of an insignificant region. It is the arithmetic of a region that is central to India's energy future.

Ladakhis are increasingly watching decisions being made on solar parks, transmission corridors, mining, tourism expansion and land use. The real question, then, is who negotiates the terms of this transformation. Who decides land rights, grazing rights for Changpa herders, ecological limits, local jobs, royalties and inter-generational sustainability? A district officer cannot answer these questions. Nor was he ever meant to. That is the role of a legislature – made up of representatives accountable to the people whose lives are being shaped by these decisions.

This is what the argument ultimately comes down to. India's greatness was never administrative tidiness, but the constitutional imagination to hold staggering difference within one Union without flattening it. That same imagination produced the Sixth Schedule, recognising that fragile and distinct frontier regions need protections the plains do not. Uniformity is not equity. And Ladakh is not asking to belong to India less; it is asking to belong more fully – not as a territory administered from afar, but as a people shaping their own future. That distinction matters.

Sri Aurobindo wrote that freedom is the necessary atmosphere for a nation's soul to grow. India's spirit has often been strongest at its edges – in places that chose Bharat and defended it through hardship and sacrifice without asking what it cost. The strength of a republic is not measured by how tightly it controls its frontiers, but by how deeply even its farthest regions feel they belong. The voice rising from Ladakh today is not a demand for privilege, but a quiet appeal to be trusted with its own future.

**Context** Ladakh does not need more districts; it needs democratic representation, constitutional safeguards and a real voice in its future.

## Facts

Five new districts – Nubra, Changthang, Sham, Drass and Zaskar.

Sri Aurobindo – idea of Purna Swaraj, or absolute self-governance.

Ladakh became a Union Territory after the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019.

## Analytical Crux

The administration is not the same as representation. More districts can make governance easier, but they cannot give people the power to make laws or shape land, ecology, jobs and culture. Ladakh shows that frontier regions cannot be integrated through security & bureaucracy. The voice rising from Ladakh today is not a demand for privilege, but appeal to be trusted with its own future. A republic becomes stronger when its farthest regions feel trusted and represented.

## Verbatim Quotes

“Handing out districts is not democracy. Districts are instruments of administration. Legislatures are instruments of representation.”

- Gitanjali J. Angmo

**2025 PSIR Paper II** asked: “Collective security and responsibility to protect (R2P) are similar but different in scope, goals and methods. Explain.” It also asked: “Does the Non-Aligned Movement have any future in the wake of India’s growing indifference towards it?” and “Discuss some of the key drivers of India’s new interests in Africa which might help in developing long-term comparative advantage over China.”

**2025 GS Paper II** asked: “India-Africa digital partnership is achieving mutual respect, co-development and long-term institutional partnerships. Elaborate.” It also asked on UN reform: “The reform process in the United Nations remains unresolved...” and on Union Territory representation: “Discuss the nature of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly after the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019.”

**2024 PSIR Paper II** asked: “India must strive to become a semi-permanent member of the UNSC, rather than a permanent member without the right to veto.” It also asked: “Discuss the potential role that India could play as the leader of the Global South in realising the goal of establishing a new international economic order in the 21st century.”

**2024 GS Paper II** asked: “What changes has the Union Government recently introduced in the domain of Centre-State relations? Suggest measures to be adopted to build the trust between the Centre and the States and for strengthening federalism.”

**2023 PSIR Paper II** asked: “Discuss the structure and functions of UN Security Council.” It also asked: “During the Cold War, the Non-Aligned Movement tried to become a ‘Third force’ in World Politics...” and “Discuss the major drivers of India’s interests in Africa.”

**2023 GS Paper II** asked: “Explain the significance of the 101st Constitutional Amendment Act. To what extent does it reflect the accommodative spirit of federalism?” A direct Ladakh-specific question was not found in these papers, but the linked themes of federalism, UT legislature, representation and Centre-State relations have clearly appeared.

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