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DAILY BRIEF

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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.



PSIR OPTIONAL BY
Amit Pratap Singh
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ARTICLE

O1

**The geopolitics of the US
- Saudi nuclear pact :
ORF**

ARTICLE

O2

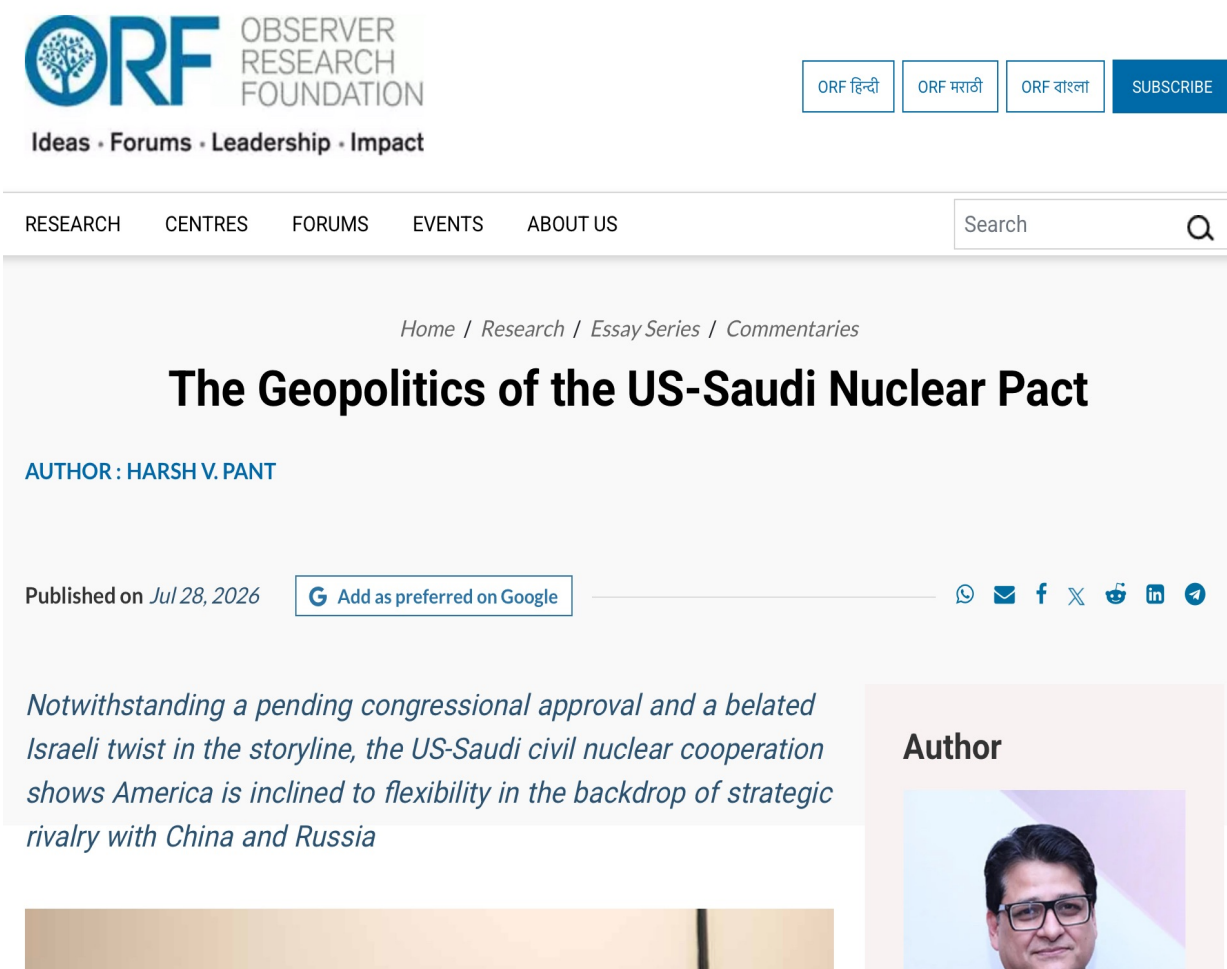
**India among the powers -
forever rising, never
risen : Indian Express**

ARTICLE

O3

**India at the inflection
point-from power to
consequence : VIF**

The geopolitics of the US - Saudi nuclear pact



Context US-Saudi civil nuclear agreement is a sign that US is willing to bend its own non-proliferation rules to keep a key partner out of the Russian & Chinese orbit.

Facts

■ "123 Agreement" under the US Atomic Energy act : 30 year framework, 90-day congressional review pending.

■ Russia's Rosatom & China's expanding nuclear industry : competitors marketing across developing world.

■ "Black box" arrangement : joint studies on domestic uranium enrichment and the sensitive technology stays under American control.

Analytical Crux

For years US held the UAE to a "gold standard" that ruled out enrichment; with Riyadh it is now willing to blur that line because losing Saudi Arabia to Rosatom or China's nuclear industry would cost more than the doctrine is worth. Expediency today can weaken the non-proliferation norms that took decades to build. A tightly watched Saudi enrichment programme is a political signal in the Gulf, feeding the Saudi-Iran rivalry and handing Tehran a ready "double standards" argument for its own program. Therefore, in a competitive, multipolar world, non-proliferation is increasingly bent to serve geopolitics rather than the other way round.

Verbatim Quotes

"Strategic competition with China & Russia increasingly demands greater flexibility toward partners, even when such accommodation complicates traditional non-proliferation norms."

- Hanish V. Pant

India among the powers - forever rising, never risen

India among the powers: Forever rising, never risen?



RAJA MANDALA
By C RAJA MOHAN

SINCE CANADIAN Prime Minister Mark Carney called on the world's "middle powers" to collaborate amid growing turbulence in the international order, the idea has animated India's strategic debate. Official Delhi, however, has been less than enthusiastic.

Asked about Carney's formulation, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar argued that it may be more relevant to America's treaty allies in coping with President Donald Trump's unpredictable policies than to India. The middle-power label, he implied, understates India's geopolitical weight and its potential to emerge as a great power.

Yet scepticism about India's great-power prospects is growing. In his new book, *The Return of the Great Powers*, the Cambridge historian Brendan Simms places India in the category of "almost great powers", alongside France, Germany and Japan. They possess several great-power attributes, but not enough of them to be the world's system-shapers.

Whether or not one accepts Simms's classification, his larger argument deserves attention. He reminds us that international politics has always been driven by the interaction among great powers — through rivalry as much as cooperation. The post-Cold War hope that globalisation, markets and international institutions would tame geo-

politics has proved to be short-lived. The wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, the sharpening US-China rivalry, and the weaponisation of trade, finance and technology all point to the return of hard power as the organising principle of world politics.

What, then, defines a great power? Simms offers an unapologetically material answer. Industrial strength, technological leadership, military capability, including nuclear weapons, the capacity to project force beyond one's borders, and the ability to influence war and peace in multiple theatres remain the essential attributes of great-power status.

Measured against these standards, India is clearly a power in transition rather than a completed one. It has continental scale, the world's largest population, nuclear weapons and one of the world's largest economies. Yet it still trails the US and China by a wide margin in per capita income, technological capability, manufacturing depth, military-industrial capacity and global military reach. India's economy, at around \$4 trillion, is impressive, but it remains far behind those of the US and China (at \$31 and \$20 trillion respectively).

Even if India overtakes Britain, Japan and Germany in aggregate GDP over the next decade, it will still be a distant third to America and China. Its per capita income remains below \$3,000, it continues to depend heavily on imported military technologies, and its investment in research and development remains modest compared to the world's technological leaders.

Simms is not alone in questioning whether that transition will happen. Michael Beckley of Tufts University advances an even more

sobering argument in a recent *Foreign Affairs* essay, "The Stagnant Order". He suggests that China may well be the last country to have made the leap into the front rank of global powers. Demographic ageing, slowing productivity and the concentration of economic power and advanced technologies in the US and China are making it progressively harder for latecomers from the Global South to catch up. India will remain an important global actor in world politics, Beckley argues, but is unlikely to become a true great power given its many domestic weaknesses, including a lack of necessary skills among its young demographic.

India's aspiration to great-power status, however, is hardly new. Long before Independence, Indian nationalists, including Jawaharlal Nehru, imagined India reclaiming a special place in world affairs. At Independence, despite widespread poverty, India was among the world's largest economies and possessed political institutions and human capital that suggested considerable promise. But India slowed as the East Asian tigers and China surged ahead. India's geopolitical drift in the second half of the 20th century towards the Soviet Union put Delhi on the losing side of the Cold War.

The reforms launched by P V Narasimha Rao and Manmohan Singh 35 years ago reversed that trajectory. Rapid economic growth and a diversification of India's great-power relations transformed international perceptions of India. Washington began to see Delhi not merely as a developing country but as a rising power capable of contributing to the Asian balance and the wider international order.

That optimism is now under a cloud. Global headwinds have

played a role but so have domestic policy choices. India has not built on the momentum generated by the growth in the first decade of the 21st century. Productivity growth has slowed, manufacturing has underperformed, investment in science and technology remains inadequate, and the next wave of structural reforms has stalled. The gap between India's geopolitical ambitions and its economic foundations has therefore widened.

The challenge is larger than economics. Deepening political polarisation, the resurgence of feudal and pre-modern forces, and growing strains on democratic institutions at home will weaken India's ability to deal with a rapidly changing world marked by sharpening geopolitical rivalry, less open markets, and the rise of disruptive technologies.

Pessimists worry that India may have missed its moment of opportunity in the early 21st century and will remain forever an emerging power — at odds with itself politically and growing at a suboptimal pace. Optimists are not ready to give up. They believe India's natural advantages and its people's talents can still be mobilised to accelerate its rise on the world stage. Such an outcome will depend on whether India can return to the unfinished business of economic, technological and social modernisation and boosting national unity and political cohesion. Only then can India move from being an "almost great power" to becoming one.

The writer is a contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express. He is a distinguished professor at the Motwani Jadeja Institute of American Studies, Jindal Global University and holds the Korea Foundation Chair in Asian geopolitics at the Council on Strategic and Defence Research

Context

Whether India will ever become a genuine great power or stay an "almost great power", always rising but never arrived.

Facts

■ Brendan Simms, *The Return of the Great Powers*: India in the 'almost great powers' alongside France, Germany & Japan.

■ India's economy: around \$4 trillion, against the US at \$31 trillion & China at \$20 trillion. India's per-capita income remains below \$3000.

■ Michael Beckley's "The Stagnant Order": China may be last country to reach front rank & India is unlikely to become a power.

Analytical Crux

Simms with "almost great power", and Beckley with "the stagnant order" show that the global door for latecomers is closing as economic and technological power piles up in the US and China. The gap is due to stalled reforms, weak manufacturing, less research & development and per-capita income still under \$ 3000. To reframe the problem as political rather than economic polarisation & institutional strain are the deeper drag on India's rise. Whether India ends up "forever rising" or finally "risen" depends less on the balance of power abroad & more on the unfinished work of modernisation and national cohesion at home.

Verbatim Quotes

"Deepening political polarisation, the resurgence of feudal & pre-modern forces, will weaken India's ability to deal with a rapidly changing world marked by sharpening geopolitical rivalry."

- C. Raja Mohan

India at the inflection point-from power to consequence



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India at the Inflection Point: From Strategic Power to Strategic Consequence - Reimagining National Security in an Era of Technological and Geopolitical Transformation



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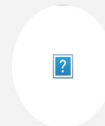
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India at the Inflection Point: From Strategic Power to Strat

Abstract The world

Context

India's security thinking is stuck in 20th century. The two new lenses "Western Strategic Continuum" & "Strategic Gravity" turn India's strategic potential into actual "strategic consequence".

Facts



Strategic Gravity : flows through technology, logistics, finance, innovation, information rather than through geography alone.



ASTRA : six-pillar National Security Innovation architecture includes strategic capital, tech transition, export competitiveness.

Analytical Crux

India's problem is no longer capability but architecture as the institutions still think in Cold War, territory & troops terms. There is a need of convergence between Western Strategic Continuum & strategic gravity. There is a need to tying it together as walls between military, economic & technological power have fallen. Security has to become a whole-of-government and whole-of-society job. ASTRA is meant to stitch the innovation pipeline from lab to deployment & close the "Strategic Innovation Gap". India already has strategic power but the way forward is institutional integration to convert it into lasting strategic consequence.

Verbatim Quotes

"The contest of the 21st century will not be won solely on the battlefield. It will be won by nations that can organise knowledge, capital, technology & institutions more effectively than their competitors."

- Sumeer Bhasin

PSIR 2025, Paper II: India continues to invoke its time-tested policy of strategic autonomy vis-à-vis both the United States of America and Russia by rejecting US' offer of mediation on Kashmir issue and by refusing to criticize Russia in its ongoing war against Ukraine.
Comment.

PSIR 2025, Paper II: Explain the non-traditional security threats in the context of food and environmental crises.

PSIR 2024, Paper II: Critically examine India's persistent refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) despite being recognized as a de facto nuclear power

PSIR 2023, Paper II: Critically examine the rise of People's Republic of China (PRC) as a great power and its implications on Asian Political order

PSIR 2023, Paper II: "India's Nuclear policy is deeply influenced by its cultural beliefs and the pragmatic approach of its foreign policy."
Discuss.



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