DATE 19 september 2026

BRIEF ISSUE 152

PSIR & GS-2
DAILY BRIEF

PSIR OPTIONAL BY
Amit Pratap Singh
| ForumIAS |

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.

SOURCES SCANNED TODAY

ARTICLE 01

How the US-Saudi nuclear deal could ignite an arms race : ORF

ARTICLE 02

India-China eight-point agreement — a tactical thaw : SAM

ARTICLE 03

Deep-sea discovery, environmental responsibility : The Hindu

How the US-Saudi Nuclear Deal Could Ignite a Middle East Arms Race

ORF OBSERVER RESEARCH FOUNDATION
Ideas · Forums · Leadership · Impact

ORF हिन्दी | ORF मराठी | ORF বাংলা | SUBSCRIBE

RESEARCH CENTRES FORUMS EVENTS ABOUT US Search

Home / Research / Essay Series / Expert Speak

How the US-Saudi Nuclear Deal Could Ignite a Middle East Arms Race

AUTHORS : VIVEK MISHRA | SURYA PRAKASH NOUTIYAL

Expert Speak Raisina Debates

Published on Sep 18, 2026 Add as preferred on Google

A civil nuclear pact grants Saudi Arabia uranium enrichment rights the US once denied Iran and the UAE, raising the risk of a wider nuclear race in the Middle East

Authors

Vivek Mishra

Context

The United States-Saudi Arabia civil nuclear agreement could let the Kingdom enrich uranium up to 20 per cent on its own soil, and this may start a nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

Facts

- **123 agreement :** *under Section 123 of the United States Atomic Energy Act of 1954; the pact could allow the transfer of civilian nuclear material, technology and equipment.*
- **Term and review :** *A 30-year agreement that enters into force unless Congress votes to object within 90 session days.*
- **Other pacts :** *Saudi Arabia has a bilateral Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement with Pakistan, and a trilateral Makkah Joint Defence Agreement with Pakistan and Turkey.*

Analytical Crux

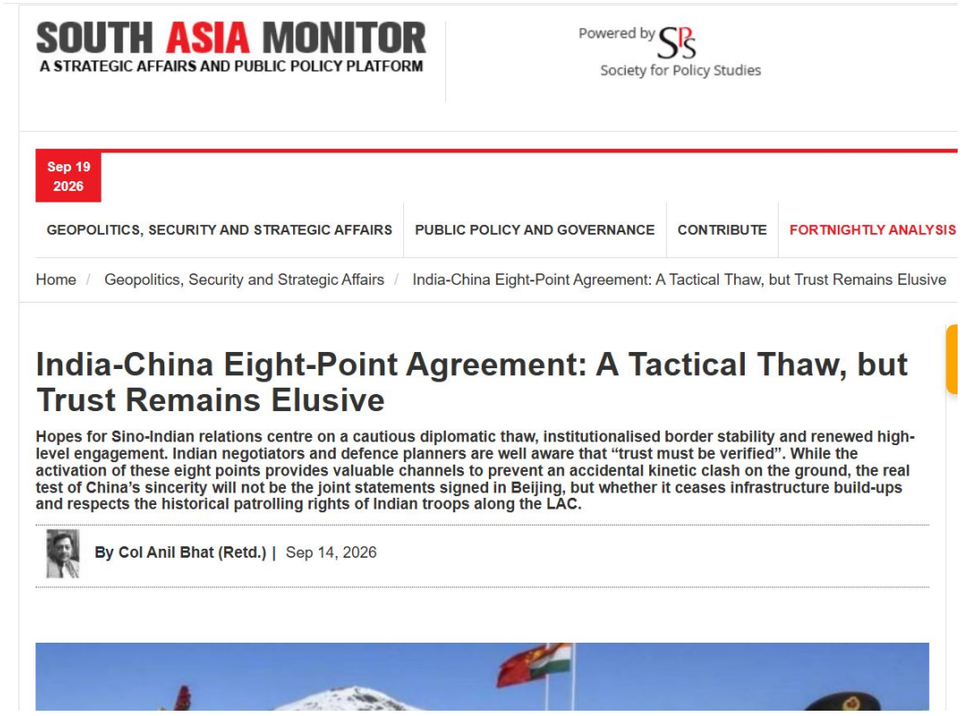
Washington has placed commercial and strategic gain above its own non-proliferation rule. It held the UAE to a no-enrichment standard and Iran to stop enriching, but offers Saudi Arabia a path to enrichment. It is because American companies can get the Saudi nuclear market and the Kingdom stays away from China and Russia. Riyadh wants the capability because if Iran gets a bomb, Saudi Arabia will want one too, and the war has shown the Kingdom that American protection has limits. However, if Saudi Arabia secures enrichment rights, Turkey, Egypt and the UAE may seek the same. Saudi Arabia has still not accepted the IAEA's Additional Protocol. Pakistan's defence pacts with Saudi Arabia and Turkey carry the proliferation risk from the Gulf into South Asia. Therefore, the most consequential spillover from the agreement will be how it shapes Washington's approach to the nuclear ambitions of other regional powers.

Verbatim Quotes

"An uncontrolled nuclear expansion in the region could open a Pandora's box, sharply compounding proliferation concerns."

– Vivek Mishra and Surya Prakash Noutiyal

India-China Eight-Point Agreement: A Tactical Thaw, but Trust Remains Elusive



SOUTH ASIA MONITOR
A STRATEGIC AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC POLICY PLATFORM

Powered by SPS Society for Policy Studies

Sep 19 2026

GEOPOLITICS, SECURITY AND STRATEGIC AFFAIRS | PUBLIC POLICY AND GOVERNANCE | CONTRIBUTE | FORTNIGHTLY ANALYSIS

Home / Geopolitics, Security and Strategic Affairs / India-China Eight-Point Agreement: A Tactical Thaw, but Trust Remains Elusive

India-China Eight-Point Agreement: A Tactical Thaw, but Trust Remains Elusive

Hopes for Sino-Indian relations centre on a cautious diplomatic thaw, institutionalised border stability and renewed high-level engagement. Indian negotiators and defence planners are well aware that "trust must be verified". While the activation of these eight points provides valuable channels to prevent an accidental kinetic clash on the ground, the real test of China's sincerity will not be the joint statements signed in Beijing, but whether it ceases infrastructure build-ups and respects the historical patrolling rights of Indian troops along the LAC.

By Col Anil Bhat (Retd.) | Sep 14, 2026

Context

At the 25th round of Special Representatives talks, India and China agreed on eight points to keep their border calm, but there is China's record of not keeping its commitments.

Facts

- **Military channels :** Two new Army-PLA hotlines and new meeting places for senior commanders, in the Eastern (Arunachal Pradesh) and Middle (Uttarakhand-Himachal Pradesh) sectors.
- **Non-military steps :** The consensus covers reopening border trading points, more batches for the Kailash-Manasarovar Yatra, and an expert meeting on hydrological data in September.
- **BRICS Summit :** Modi and Xi stressed border peace; Modi named mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interest.

Analytical Crux

The eight points give India and China tools to manage the LAC, while the territorial dispute itself stays where it was. Hotlines, new meeting points and faster expert talks reduce the chance of an accidental clash on the ground. The "Early and Substantial Harvest" departs from the 2005 idea of one package deal, and critics warn that settling isolated sectors such as Sikkim could give China a tactical advantage near the Siliguri Corridor without equal gains for India in the Western sector. There is a pattern of asymmetric compliance. Beijing delivers low-cost goodwill such as border trade and pilgrimages, and keeps up grey-zone pressure through border villages, grazing, renamed places and altered maps. Therefore, India will analyse whether China stops its infrastructure build-up and respects the patrolling rights of Indian troops.

Verbatim Quotes

"Real test of China's sincerity about these eight points is whether it ceases infrastructure build-ups and respects the historical patrolling rights of Indian troops along the LAC."

– Col Anil Bhat (Retd.)

Deep-sea discovery, environmental responsibility

Deep-sea discovery, environmental responsibility

India is standing at the threshold of a new frontier. But the most important question is not how deep we can go, how much we can mine, or how much wealth lies beneath the ocean floor. It is more fundamental: Should everything that can be technologically exploited necessarily be exploited? The question is particularly important as India strengthens its position in deep-sea exploration and develops the scientific and technological capabilities to access one of the least understood parts of the planet.

A growing deep-sea footprint

India is not new to seabed mineral exploration and holds three International Seabed Authority (ISA) exploration contracts covering approximately 95,000 square kilometres across the Central Indian Ocean Basin, Central Indian Ridge and Carlsberg Ridge in the international seabed area. Its exploration has identified an estimated 366 million tonnes of polymetallic nodules containing nickel, copper, cobalt and manganese, alongside extensive environmental and biodiversity studies.

Under the Deep Ocean Mission, India is developing deep-sea mining technology, underwater robotics and the MATSYA-6000 human submersible, while the National Institute of Ocean Technology has tested a mining machine at depths of about 5,270 metres. At the same time, biodiversity surveys across 19 seamounts have studied around 1,300 deep-sea organisms, including nearly 23 species reported as new to science. These achievements also impose a profound responsibility to decide whether technological ability should ultimately lead to exploitation.

Technological progress can create a dangerous assumption: if we can exploit something, we should. But the deep ocean challenges this logic. It is a complex and poorly understood ecosystem, and India's own biodiversity research continues to reveal previously unknown organisms. We cannot confidently predict the consequences of large-scale seabed disturbance while our understanding of these ecosystems remains incomplete. This is not an argument against science, but for more science before potentially irreversible intervention. Deep-sea minerals may have legitimate strategic importance for India's renewable-energy, electric-mobility and advanced-manufacturing ambitions. However, strategic importance cannot automatically become ecological permission. Before considering extraction, India should ask whether the minerals are genuinely necessary at the proposed scale, whether alternatives exist, and whether demand can be reduced through recycling, efficiency, substitution and a circular economy. Necessity must be demonstrated, not presumed.

P. Ragavan

Marine biologist with over a decade of professional experience in the conservation and management of coastal and marine environments

India has an opportunity to become a global leader not only in deep-sea technology but also in deep-sea ecological governance

India's investment in deep-ocean science need not imply a commitment to commercial mining. Exploration can advance knowledge, biodiversity assessment, environmental baselines and technology without leading to exploitation. Mining, however, would physically disturb the seabed. Therefore, adaptive management alone cannot guarantee ecological protection. India has an opportunity to adopt a stronger principle before exploitation begins: the question should not be "How can we mine with minimum damage?" but "Do we need to mine at all?" Since India's ISA activities remain at the exploration stage, this is the right time to establish a high ecological threshold for any future decision to exploit.

Science must also teach us to say 'no'

The deep ocean is now emerging as the next frontier for economic growth. Yet, we expect the ocean to regulate climate and support biodiversity while extending industrial activity into its least understood ecosystems. The ocean should not become a place where the environmental costs of human consumption are simply relocated. Scientific progress should not mean making more of nature exploitable and then calling it sustainable. True sustainable development must reduce dependence on extraction through lower demand, resource efficiency, recycling, substitution and circular consumption – principles reflected in India's Mission LiFE. Science must therefore help us use resources responsibly and, equally importantly, determine when we do not need to use them at all. This calls for a broader understanding of scientific progress. Science should not merely open new frontiers for exploitation; it should also reveal which frontiers are best left untouched. The ability to say "we do not need to go there" may itself represent a higher level of scientific and civilisational maturity than simply proving that we can

India can lead a different model

India has an opportunity to become a global leader in deep-sea ecological governance. India could take the bold step of recognising the deep ocean not merely as a mineral reserve, but as a precious ecological asset whose value may exceed that of its mineral wealth. It could use the knowledge gained through the Deep Ocean Mission to conclude that some poorly understood and potentially irreversible ecosystems are better left undisturbed. Progress is not how much nature we can convert into resources, but how much we can preserve while meeting human needs. This would reaffirm India's long-standing civilisational tradition of living in harmony with nature.

The defining environmental approaches of this century – Nature-based Solutions, the SDGs, the Circular Economy and Mission LiFE – share a common principle: nature is the capital on which development depends. They call for conserving ecosystems, reducing resource consumption and ensuring responsible development. Science and technology must therefore tell us not only how far we can go but also where we must stop. Our future depends on preserving the natural capital that sustains development.

Context

India holds deep-sea exploration contracts and is building the machines to mine the ocean floor, but India should first ask whether it needs to mine at all.

Facts

- **Three International Seabed Authority exploration contracts :** *covering about 95,000 sq km of international seabed area in the Central Indian Ocean Basin, Central Indian Ridge and the Carlsberg Ridge.*
- **Exploration identified :** *an estimated 366 million tonnes of polymetallic nodules containing nickel, copper, cobalt and manganese.*
- **Deep Ocean Mission :** *India is developing deep-sea mining technology, underwater robotics and the MATSYA-6000 human submersible.*

Analytical Crux

Strategic importance cannot automatically become ecological permission. Necessity must be demonstrated and not presumed. India holds exploration contracts today and it can fix a high ecological threshold before any decision to exploit. India must prove that it needs deep-sea minerals at the proposed scale, and weigh that need against recycling, substitution and lower demand. Mining physically disturbs the seabed and adaptive management alone cannot guarantee protection. If India treats the deep ocean as an ecological asset, it can lead in deep-sea ecological governance in the spirit of Mission LiFE, where nature is the capital on which development depends. Therefore, there should be a higher level of scientific and civilisational maturity to preserve nature while meeting human needs.

Verbatim Quotes

"Science should not merely open new frontiers for exploitation; it should also reveal which frontiers are best left untouched."

– P. Ragavan

UPSC LINK

• PSIR 2026, Paper II: Accelerating of Chinese influence across South Asia is fundamentally reshaping the region's geopolitical landscape. This is a big foreign policy challenge for India. Analyse.

• GS 2026, Paper III: Discuss the aim and goals of Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework. Mention India's commitments and initiatives to achieve the goals and targets of this framework giving suitable examples.

• PSIR 2026, Paper II: India has recognised that West Asia is not a single contest, but a tangle of rivalries, bargains and anxieties. Comment.

• GS 2025, Paper II: "Energy security constitutes the dominant kingpin of India's foreign policy, and is linked with India's overarching influence in Middle Eastern countries." How would you integrate energy security with India's foreign policy trajectories in the coming years?

• GS 2025, Paper III: Mineral resources are fundamental to the country's economy and these are exploited by mining. Why is mining considered an environmental hazard ? Explain the remedial measures required to reduce the environmental hazard due to mining.

• PSIR 2024, Paper II: The changing global order and ongoing regional conflicts, with the global powers taking sides, have jeopardised the progress made towards disarmament in the past. Comment.

ForumIAS | PSIR OPTIONAL

ADMISSIONS OPEN

FOUNDATION COURSE · FOR MAINS 2027

PSIR Optional Foundation 2027

Political Science & International Relations · UPSC Civil Services, Mains

Not just a foundation course — a complete journey, from your first class to the final stage.

STARTS 21 SEPTEMBER · ONLINE | OFFLINE

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN

Crucible

THE CORE COURSE · YOUR MODE

- ✓ **100 core sessions** — full Paper I & II
- ✓ **PSIR Dynamics** — both phases, till Mains
- ✓ **Class notes, quote bank** & enrichment
- ✓ **One-to-one mentorship**, all year
- ✓ **Online · Offline · Hybrid** — your choice
- ✓ **PSIR Test Series** — available as add-on

FLAGSHIP

Magnus

THE COMPLETE JOURNEY · ONE FEE

Everything in Crucible, and—

- ✓ **+25 PSIR Praxis sessions** — GS, Essay & Ethics
- ✓ **Full PSIR Test Series** — included
- ✓ **OGP Advanced** for Mains 2027 — free
- ✓ **OIGP Interview Guidance** — free
- ✓ **Any mode** — one fee, switch anytime

ADMISSION & ENQUIRY

Call / WhatsApp 93117 40432

Faculty channel · t.me/psirbyamitpratap

Amit Pratap Singh

PSIR FACULTY ForumIAS

ForumIAS

LIVE · EVERY WEEK

PSIR OPTIONAL · UPSC CIVIL SERVICES MAINS

PSIR DYNAMICS

THE CURRENT LAYER OF BOTH PAPERS

2027 BATCH BEGINS **SATURDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 2026**

INSIDE EVERY SESSION

01	**CONTEXT**	Where the development comes from, and what it follows.
02	**THE RECORD**	Dates, official wording, and the document it came from.
03	**THE ANALYSIS**	The argument it raises, and the positions taken on it.
04	**THEORY & VERBATIM QUOTATION**	The concept on the syllabus, in the scholar's own words.
05	**FURTHER QUOTATIONS**	More lines to cite, each one carrying its source.
06	**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**	On the theme, at 10, 15 and 20 marks.

Plot No. 36, 3rd Floor (Above Kalyan Jewellers), Pusa Road, New Delhi 110005
academy.forumias.com · admissions@forumias.academy · **9311740400 | 9311740404**

Amit Pratap Singh
PSIR FACULTY · FORUMIAS

ForumIAS

PSIR OPTIONAL · COHORT 6

PSIR TEST SERIES 2027

400+ QUESTIONS · 4 LAYERS OF TESTS

O-AWFG

BALANCED

05 SEPTEMBER

35	DAILY ANSWER WRITING TESTS
2	OPTIONAL SIMULATORS

O-AWFG PRIME

MOST INTENSIVE

05 SEPTEMBER

35	DAILY ANSWER WRITING TESTS
8	REVISION TESTS
2	FULL-LENGTH TESTS
2	OPTIONAL SIMULATORS
◆	PSIR DYNAMICS CLASSES

ATS

EXAM REALISM

06 SEPTEMBER

4	SECTIONAL TESTS
6	FULL-LENGTH TESTS
2	OPTIONAL SIMULATORS

CONTENT BLUEPRINT ◆ MODEL ANSWERS ◆ EXPERT EVALUATION ◆ PERSONALISED MENTORSHIP

TO ENROL OR FOR GUIDANCE, CALL

93117 40432

AMIT PRATAP SINGH

PSIR FACULTY ◆ ForumIAS