

# 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.



PSIR OPTIONAL BY  
**Amit Pratap Singh**  
| ForumIAS |

### SOURCES SCANNED TODAY



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SC draws the line between faith and fiat : Deccan Herald

## Daily Brief · Source Plan (Monday to Saturday)

### Common Daily

*The Hindu · The Indian Express · Deccan Herald · The Statesman*

*read every day, alongside the day's sources below*

### Day-wise Sources

Monday

*ORF* (Observer Research Foundation) · *Foreign Affairs* · *The Diplomat*

Tuesday

*MP-IDSA* · *EPW* (Economic & Political Weekly) · *Gateway House*

Wednesday

*Firstpost* · *South Asia Monitor* · *ICWA* (Indian Council of World Affairs)

Thursday

*ORF* · *Frontline* · *Bar & Bench* · *World Focus*

Friday

*MP-IDSA* · *Carnegie Endowment* · *VIF* (Vivekananda International Foundation)

Saturday

*Firstpost* · *Project Syndicate* · *The Economist*

*As per relevance*, articles from other relevant sources such as NatStrat, ThePrint and The Telegraph (India) will also be included.

# Trump-Xi Meet and the Uncertainty Facing the Western Pacific

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## Trump-Xi Meet and the Uncertainty Facing the Western Pacific

AUTHOR : ABHISHEK SHARMA

Expert Speak Raisina Debates

Published on Sep 28, 2026

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*The Trump-Xi meeting may steady US-China ties, but Western Pacific allies and partners face growing uncertainty over US commitments, China's expanding influence and the shape of the regional order*



Author



### Context

Xi Jinping's state visit to the United States (23-25 September 2026) has unsettled America's allies and partners in the Western Pacific, who fear that a US-China understanding may come at their cost.

### Facts

- **Allies fear a US-China "grand bargain"** : *a modus vivendi that puts the two powers' interests above those of regional countries.*
- *The scaled-down Ulchi Freedom Shield exercises with South Korea and the continued pause on arms exports to Taiwan worried allies.*
- **Regional states are responding** : *through bandwagoning, soft or hard hedging, or ties with like-minded partners.*

## Analytical Crux

*The Western Pacific order depends more on what Washington and Beijing settle between themselves than on the rules and alliances that smaller states relied on. The United States is tied down in the Middle East, asks allies to carry more of the burden and has sent mixed signals on South Korea and Taiwan. China has used the gap to add military weight to its economic dominance in the region. The allies have not broken away but they hedge, bandwagon or turn to like-minded partners while staying inside the American alliance system. While US rhetoric has been supportive of allies, actions have not matched it. The gap between expectation and reality seems to be widening. Therefore, they fear a US-China grand bargain struck over their heads.*

## Verbatim Quotes

*"Today, China not only dominates the economic sphere but is also deepening its military activities, presence and defence posture in the Western Pacific, presenting a growing challenge to the US."*

*- Abhishek Sharma*

## Rewiring the Arsenal of Democracy

*America and Its Allies Must Scale Together for a New Era of War*

DAN DRISCOLL

September 28, 2026



DAN DRISCOLL was Secretary of the Army from 2025 to 2026.

[More by Dan Driscoll →](#)

### Context

Cheap drones and mass-produced weapons have changed warfare, so the United States and its allies must build one open and compatible defence industry to deter China and Russia.

### Facts

- **Operation Spider's Web** : *less than a million dollars of hobby-shop technology destroyed Russian strategic bombers worth billions.*

- **Three layers of reform** : *physical (critical precursors and infrastructure), digital (free flow of data) and innovation (keeping pace with the future of warfare).*

- **Over 25 allied countries** : *joined the United States Army's drone and counter-drone marketplaces, where compatibility is "the price of admission".*

## Analytical Crux

Military power comes from producing weapons in large numbers and continuing to produce them, more than from owning a few costly platforms. Ukraine's drone strike on Russian bombers is proof that cheap systems can destroy far costlier ones. The West's weakness is in its own industry i.e. a few prime contractors make closed systems that cannot share data, so allied forces cannot fight as one coalition. There should be an open allied defence market in which compatibility is compulsory, any ally can produce under licence and civilian factories can switch to weapons in a crisis. Deterrence rests on the combined industrial capacity of the alliance and on how fast it adapts, which is why the United States cannot carry the burden alone. Therefore, digital and industrial capacity, adaptability, and compatibility are the new measures of strength for the United States and its allies.

## Verbatim Quotes

"Systems physically cannot share data across platforms, and each country's exquisite capabilities resemble a walled garden—impressive on their own but useless to anyone on the other side of the wall."

– Dan Driscoll

# Why Climate Resilience Must Become a Priority for MSMEs

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The Statesman

Monday, 28 September, 2026

HOME INDIA WORLD BUSINESS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT OPINION LAW LIFESTYLE DAINIK STATESMAN MORE \* EPAPER \*

Opinion

## Why Climate Resilience Must Become a Priority for MSMEs

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) form the backbone of India's manufacturing supply chains, connecting local production systems to national and global markets. [Download Interactive Maps](#)

Bhawna Ahuja, Arivudai Nambi Appadurai and Ananya Chakraborty | New Delhi | September 28, 2026 3:01 pm



### Context

Three WRI India researchers show that floods and extreme heat are disrupting production and harming workers in India's small enterprises. Climate resilience must become part of economic and industrial policy.

### Facts

■ **MSMEs** : *nearly 31 per cent of GDP and livelihoods of over 32.8 crore people.*

■ **Floods** : *over 90 per cent of directly affected units were disrupted and nearly three-fourths closed for a time.*

■ **Heat** : *92 per cent affected and nearly four in five reported lower worker productivity.*

■ **The four-part agenda** : *risk intelligence, resilient infrastructure, protection of workers and resilience finance, including parametric insurance.*

## Analytical Crux

Climate change is an economic risk for India. MSMEs are among the sectors most exposed to it but a debate centred on agriculture and infrastructure often overlooks them. Floods and heat stop production, and the losses spread when transport, power, supply chains and workers fail across an industrial cluster. Few small firms have the resources, information or institutional support to prepare and each shock leaves them weaker for the next one. Many adaptation measures, such as better drainage, cool roofs, and shade and drinking water for workers, are neither complex nor expensive, but small firms still need credit, insurance and outside support to put them in place. Therefore, the way forward is MSME resilience written into industrial policy, labour regulation, infrastructure planning and credit, because the resilience of the economy depends on it. Climate resilience must be recognised not merely as a risk management exercise but as an economic development priority.

## Verbatim Quotes

"As India seeks to strengthen its manufacturing base and expand its presence in global supply chains, resilience of its MSMEs will increasingly determine the resilience of the economy."

- Bhawna Ahuja, Arivudai Nambi Appadurai and Ananya Chakraborty

# Kashmir as India’s gateway to Eurasian opportunity

## Kashmir as India’s gateway to Eurasian opportunity

India stands at a critical demographic crossroads. With one of the world’s largest youth populations, the country possesses an immense economic advantage. Yet, a youthful population becomes a genuine demographic dividend only when young citizens are educated, skilled, gainfully employed and provided with meaningful opportunities. Otherwise, that demographic promise risks turning into social disillusionment.

China, despite its comparable population, is moving in the opposite demographic direction. Decades of low fertility have accelerated the ageing of its population. India, by contrast, possesses an extraordinary reservoir of young people entering the workforce. The central question is whether the country can create the economic opportunities and infrastructure needed to harness this potential.

### The aspiration-reality gap

The smartphone revolution has intensified this challenge. A young person in a town or remote village can now see within seconds how the rest of the world lives, studies, works and travels. Global possibilities are visible on high-definition screens, even as tangible opportunities remain painfully out of reach.

This has created a widening divide between aspiration and reality. The horizons of young Indians have expanded far faster than the institutions and economies around them. Access to higher education has widened, yet meaningful employment opportunities have not kept pace. A college degree is no longer a guarantee of a job, leaving many without financial security or the dignity that comes with economic independence. When heightened aspirations collide with limited opportunities, frustration inevitably follows, often finding expression in protests over recruitment, examination irregularities, examination and test paper leaks, unemployment



Mehbooba Mufti

President, Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)

independence, dignity, opportunity and a future in which they are not permanently viewed with suspicion.

Jammu and Kashmir possesses an exceptional combination of natural wealth and geographic significance. Its rivers offer substantial hydroelectric potential, its mountains contain valuable mineral resources, and its landscapes sustain a major tourism economy. Yet, its most underutilised strategic asset may be its location.

### Focus on Kashmir’s historic crossroads

For centuries, Kashmir was never a cul-de-sac. It was a thriving crossroads. Historic caravan routes linked Kashmir and Ladakh with Central Asia, Tibet and the broader Indian subcontinent. These routes carried far more than merchandise. They connected people, ideas, philosophies, literature, cultures and skills. The arrival of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani, revered as Shah-i-Hamadan, is deeply embedded in Kashmiri history and is traditionally associated with the arrival of Persian and Central Asian craftsmen who enriched Kashmir’s celebrated handicraft traditions. The historical lesson is clear: connectivity creates economic ecosystems.

Today, Indian strategic thinking needs to look beyond the immediate constraints posed by the Line of Control with Pakistan and the Line of Actual Control with China. Where political and security conditions permit, India needs a pragmatic framework to gradually restore Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh to the role they historically occupied: that of a bridge connecting South Asia with Central Asia and the wider Eurasian landmass.

For this, India needs a diplomatic road map alongside its infrastructure road map. Reopening traditional routes towards Pakistan or Central Asia cannot happen without sustained engagement with neighbouring countries. With Pakistan, the objective should be to explore

Pilot corridors could be developed and expanded progressively on the basis of experience.

Security cannot be ignored in any such endeavour. But security and connectivity need not automatically be treated as opposing objectives. Properly regulated connectivity can create greater economic interdependence and potentially provide stronger incentives for stability.

The same principle should guide India’s approach to Central Asia. Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh could become India’s northern economic gateway, giving Indian businesses greater access to Central Asian markets while bringing investment, tourism and commerce to the region. The benefits would extend far beyond Kashmir.

### A road to opportunity

A functioning land corridor creates opportunities at every stage, from construction, transport and warehousing to hospitality, manufacturing, agriculture, logistics, finance, technology and services. Unlike air connectivity, whose economic benefits are concentrated around a limited number of nodes, a trade corridor can generate economic activity across a wider geography through which it passes.

Most importantly, it could give the young people of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh something far more valuable than another promise. It could give them wings to fly towards new horizons.

India’s demographic advantage is a window of opportunity, not a permanent condition. We cannot afford to allow a generation to grow up watching possibilities on smartphones while encountering closed doors in the real world.

For Jammu and Kashmir, the answer may lie partly in reopening doors that history once kept open. The Silk Road was never only about silk. It was about the movement of goods, people, ideas

### Context

India should revive the old trade routes linking Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh with Central Asia and could make the region India's northern economic gateway.

## Facts

■ **Demographic contrast** : India has one of the world's largest youth populations, while China, with a comparable population, is ageing after decades of low fertility.

■ **Constraints and diplomacy** : the LoC with Pakistan and the LAC with China are the immediate constraints; there should be confidence-building measures and trade with Pakistan, and dialogue with China on trans-Himalayan connectivity.

■ **Phased strategy** : revive historic trade corridors as modern economic corridors, starting with pilot corridors where security and diplomatic conditions are most conducive.

## Analytical Crux

*For centuries, Kashmir was never a cul-de-sac. It was a thriving crossroads. India's demographic window is the future of Kashmir. Too often, young Kashmiris have been viewed through a narrow security lens, as potential liabilities rather than national assets. Young Kashmiris want the same jobs and dignity as young people elsewhere. The region's location, once a crossroads between South and Central Asia, is the asset that can provide them jobs and dignity. The Silk Road was never only about silk. The historical lesson is clear i.e. connectivity creates economic ecosystems. Properly regulated connectivity can build economic interdependence and give neighbours stronger incentives for stability. There should be a diplomatic road map beside an infrastructure road map, and a few pilot corridors before any wider opening. The LoC and the LAC are immediate constraints, and no route towards Pakistan or Central Asia can reopen without sustained engagement with neighbouring countries.*

## Verbatim Quotes

*"We cannot afford to allow a generation to grow up watching possibilities on smartphones while encountering closed doors in the real world."*

*- Mehbooba Mufti*

# SC draws the line between faith and fiat



## Context

As per the Supreme Court, the people who decline, on grounds of conscience, to sing Vande Mataram should not face criminal prosecution under the 2026 amendment to the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act.

## Facts

- **T M Krishna's petition** : *challenges the 2026 amendment to the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act.*

- **Article 25** : *no criminal prosecution for declining to sing on grounds of conscience.*

- **Bijoe Emmanuel vs State of Kerala (1986)** *governs the new law : freedom of religion and expression includes the right to remain silent.*

- **The Court's position** : *the bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said that those who refuse to sing because it goes against their conscience cannot be punished.*

## Analytical Crux

*There is a difference between respect for a national symbol and compulsion to perform it. The question was whether the State can force a person to demonstrate patriotism by prescribing a standard and tools for it. Under Article 25, read with Bijoe Emmanuel, the person who stands in silence is protected, and the penal law can reach only those who obstruct the singing or disturb the gathering. There is a difference between the refusal to sing the song and preventing its singing or causing disturbance at the function where it is sung. The larger question is the one the Court set aside. By making all six stanzas official, the State brings back into use the verses the Congress left out in 1937 because they invoke Hindu deities. A secular State should not turn a song into a test of patriotism, because national symbols must carry values that all citizens share.*

## Verbatim Quotes

*"National symbols should embody shared values of a nation, and should not be used to target sections of the people."*

*- Editorial, Deccan Herald*

- PSIR Paper II, 2026: Does power transition theory reflect the dynamics of US-China relations?
- PSIR Paper I, 2026: The Constitution of India was secular even before the word was included in the Preamble. Comment.
- PSIR Paper II, 2025: “Trump’s return to the White House is a jolt to push the European Union to invest in its own defence and economic and technological revival.” Comment.
- GS Paper III, 2024: What is disaster resilience? How is it determined? Describe various elements of a resilience framework. Also mention the global targets of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030).
- GS Paper II, 2024: Critically analyse India’s evolving diplomatic, economic and strategic relations with the Central Asian Republics (CARs) highlighting their increasing significance in regional and global geopolitics.

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| 03 | THE ANALYSIS                | The argument it raises, and the positions taken on it.   |
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