



## Global Geopolitical Intricacies and Opportunities for India

**For Prelims:** Global Geopolitical Intricacies and Opportunities for India, [Russia-Ukraine conflict](#) and the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip, [Khalistani](#) separatist in the US.

**For Mains:** Global Geopolitical Intricacies and Opportunities for India.

[Source: IE](#)

### Why in News?

Despite India's emphasis on that, **"this is not the era of war"**, the Year 2023 became a year of wars: Russia-Ukraine conflict and the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip are now among the most destructive conflicts of recent decades.

- These conflicts, alongside China's assertive behavior, pose significant challenges and disrupt diplomatic efforts, causing **worry not only in the West but also in India**.

### What is the Overview of 2023 Global Geopolitical Trends and Challenges for India?

- **Crisis in the Middle East:**
  - Two years of sustained effort to normalize ties between **Israel and the Arab world** was **disrupted by the Hamas attack** in which more than 1,200 civilians and military personnel were killed, and more than 230 taken hostage.
  - Israel's angry and disproportionate **response has so far killed more than 20,000 Palestinians in Gaza** — which has attracted criticism from even the US. The Israeli-Arab reconciliation process has been derailed for now, and the future of Gaza is unknown.
    - India backed **a two-state solution** to resolve the decades-old Israel-Palestine conflict and bring lasting peace to the troubled region.
- **Stress in India-US Ties:**
  - After successful visits by the Indian and President Joe Biden to each other's capitals, **bilateral ties are facing headwinds over allegations of an Indian official link** to an assassination plot against a [Khalistani separatist in the US](#).
  - India's response has been **different from the way it reacted to Canada when it suggested an Indian government link** to the murder of another Khalistani in that country.
  - India has expressed **India's "commitment to the rule of law"**, and promised to "look into" the role of Indian citizens in the alleged US plot if information is provided.
- **Russia-Ukraine War:**
  - As the war drags on, the **West is facing funding challenges**. Ukraine hopes to get Euro 18.5 billion from the European Union and more than USD 8 billion from a US package that also **contains vital military assistance**.
  - But the **assistance has been blocked** — by Republicans in the US Congress and by Hungary in the EU — so far.

- Meanwhile, Putin's re-election as Russia's President is a foregone conclusion. The Russian economy has been resilient despite sanctions, and proximity between Moscow and Beijing worries the West.
- **India's Maldives Challenges:**
  - The **government of President Mohamed Muizzu**, who rode an **"India Out" campaign** to power, has asked India to withdraw military personnel stationed in the Maldives, and conveyed its intention to terminate a water survey pact. The Muizzu establishment is considered close to China.
- **China's Behaviour:**
  - China continues to be **India's biggest worry and strategic challenge**. The **Border Standoff** is in its fourth year, with the force posture being maintained to rival the Chinese military presence. The dependence of Moscow, India's strategic defence partner, on Beijing for economic survival, and the Maldives getting closer to China in the Indian Ocean have added to the concern.
- **G-20 and Global South:**
  - India's success **in negotiating a joint declaration at the G20 summit** came as a surprise for many in the international community.
  - A big takeaway from the **G20 process was New Delhi's mobilisation** of developing and less developed countries under the umbrella of the Global South.
  - The idea of leading the Global South is seen as taking forward the legacy of India's Non-Alignment leadership, only adapted to the 21st century.
- **Engagement with Taliban:**
  - There has been a change of guard in the Afghanistan embassy in New Delhi, with the incumbent ambassador leaving and that country's diplomats in Mumbai and Hyderabad stepping in to take charge.
  - To India's relief, they have assured **they won't fly the Taliban flag** or have Taliban nomenclature in their official correspondence.

## What are the Upcoming Challenges for India in 2024?

- **US & Canada Relations:**
  - Resolving the US 'assassination plot' issue is a challenge. The US President's absence at **Republic Day caused irritation, delaying the Quad summit**.
  - Canada's allegations also strain ties, but public support backs India's response. Different approaches are needed for US and Canada issues, as both countries hold distinct importance for India.
- **Pakistan Relations:**
  - Since 2019, when the Indian government was re-elected and the constitutional changes in Jammu and Kashmir were affected, ties **with Pakistan have been at a low**.
  - The change of guard in Islamabad and Rawalpindi did not make much difference, and India kept to its doctrine of indifference towards Pakistan.
    - Elections are now due in Pakistan, and there could be a new government there after February 2024.
- **Bangladesh Elections:**
  - Bilateral ties have gained positive momentum in the last 15 years of the Sheikh Hasina government, and Indian will be keen to see her return to power in the elections due early in the new year.
  - Security imperatives guide India's choice in Dhaka; the Bangladesh opposition is viewed with **suspicion and animosity**, going by the track record of the Khaleda Zia government in the early 2000s.
- **China Border Standoff:**
  - The border standoff is ongoing **since 2020**, and any fresh escalation will impact both the security environment and India's domestic political atmosphere.
  - India will be extra careful in its response to a challenge from its biggest adversary. That imperative will frame India's diplomacy towards China in the next few months, and even later.
- **West Asia Dynamics:**
  - India's evolving stance in the Israel-Hamas conflict and the nuanced diplomatic positioning in the region present complex challenges.

- **Balancing Interests between Russia and US:**

- Balancing interests between imports of Russian oil and pressure from the US amid the ongoing war shapes India's foreign policy strategy.

## Way Forward

- India will be looking to move the **efforts at improving connectivity between its Northeast and Bangladesh** to a higher gear, which will benefit the region and both countries. India aims for continuity in positive bilateral ties with Sheikh Hasina's government while navigating potential shifts in power.
- India must continue evolving its diplomatic stance in the Israel-Hamas conflict, aiming for a balanced approach between supporting Israel and addressing concerns of the Global South. Seeking ways to contribute positively to peace-building efforts and advocating for humanitarian aid could be crucial.
- The free trade pacts with the UK and European partners are said **to be at a critical stage**. Elections to the EU parliament, and possibly in the UK, are due in 2024— and this shrinks the policy space and flexibility for negotiators. Even so, 2024 may see these major economic diplomacy initiatives come close to fruition.
- The dialogues with the US and EU on technology and **trade, to remove the barriers for India to access high tech in AI**, quantum computing, and cybersecurity, will be a related policy space to look out for.

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