



**VAJIRAM & RAVI**  
Institute for IAS Examination

# The Analyst

**CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout**

**25th June 2025**



# South Africa: Gateway to Africa?



**CONTEXT:** Submarine cooperation pacts

## **India – South Africa Relations:**

### **Historical**

- Gandhi Satyagraha
- Apartheid
- Mandela: Bharat Ratna
- 1993: Diplomatic ties restored

### **Political Relations**

- Strategic Partnership Agreement (Red Fort Declaration)
- Multilateral forums
- Agreements in trade, defense, culture, health, S&T
- High-Level Meetings

### **Defence Cooperation**

- MoU on Defence Cooperation (2000)
- Naval Engagements:
  - IBSAMAR exercises (2022, 2018)
  - INS Sunayna & Trishul port calls
  - SA Navy participation in MILAN 2024
- Military Delegations

### **Commercial & Economic Relations**

- Trade (2023-24):
  - Total Trade: \$19.25 bn
  - Exports: \$8.7 bn (vehicles, pharma, engg)
  - Imports: \$10.5 bn (gold, coal, minerals)
- Key Events:
  - India-South Africa Business Summit
  - Digital Public Infrastructure Conference
  - CEOs Forum meetings (2016, 2018)

### **Skill Development**

- Gandhi-Mandela Centre of Specialisation
- ITEC Programme

## **Cultural & Diaspora**

- ICCR-sponsored programs: Yoga, dance
- International Day of Yoga
- 1.7 mn of IO

### **Others**

- Agreement on S&T Cooperation
- Cheetah Translocation Project MoU (2023)

## **Gateway to Africa?**

### **Strengths**

- Largest economy in Africa by GDP
- Infra (ports, roads, financial systems)
- Strong legal and commercial sectors
- Historically entry point for MNCs

### **Challenges:**

- Policy instability: mining, migration, labour
- Economic stagnation: Declining FDI
- Security concerns: crime rates
- Land reform uncertainty
- Need digital infrastructure upgrades, skills

## **Mauritius: The Financial Gateway:**

### **Strengths**

- Tax advantages: No exchange controls, investment-grade credit rating
- EoDB: 13th in 2020 (vs. South Africa's 84th)
- Private equity hub
- DTAAAs with African nations

### **Limitations**

- Lacks scale: Not a "real economy"
- Perception issues
- Limited physical connectivity



# South Africa: Gateway to Africa?



**CONTEXT:** Submarine cooperation pacts

## Morocco: Bridging Continents

### **Strengths**

- Influence in Francophone Africa
- Infrastructure projects
- Growing trade with sub-Saharan Africa
- Islamic finance, RE, agriculture

### **Challenges**

- Historical mistrust: Seen as "un-African"
- Western Sahara dispute: Sahrawi state
- Cultural disconnect: affinity to Arab/European identity

## Dubai: The Logistical Wildcard

### **Strengths**

- Global connectivity: 3-8 hour flights to African cities
- Business-friendly environment
- Strong UAE-Africa trade links

### **Limitations**

- Not in Africa
- "Suitcase banking" issue: Short-term
- Can't replace regional HQs

## Kenya: The Tech & East African Hub

### **Strengths**

- Silicon Savannah: fintech innovations (M-Pesa)
- High internet penetration
- Regional access: Gateway to East African markets

### **Challenges**

- Corruption & bureaucracy
- Political instability: Policy uncertainty
- Limited scale

## India - Africa :

- Political
  - S-S Cooperation
  - UNSC membership
  - Regional organisations - ECOWAS, AfCFTA, BRICS, OIC
- Economic
  - Investments - >\$30bn, EXIM Bank's Focus Africa Programme, India-Africa Partnership project
  - Trade: \$10 bn in 2022-23
  - WTO negotiations
- Defence
  - Maritime, Piracy, Humanitarian
- CC, Tech
  - ISA, CDRI
- Soft Power
- P2P

## India - Africa :

### **Challenges**

- Ground of Geopolitical Contest
- Chinese assertiveness: infra developer, resource provider, financier
- Strategic Vision & Clarity
- Deep pockets needed
- Imperative to consolidate in Asia
- P2P issues

### **Suggestions**

- Political & Diplomatic Push
- Defence Coop & LoCs
- Eco & Development Cooperation
- Socio Cultural Initiatives
- Implementing Roadmap 2030





# Shanghai Cooperation Organization

**CONTEXT:** Defence Minister at SCO meet

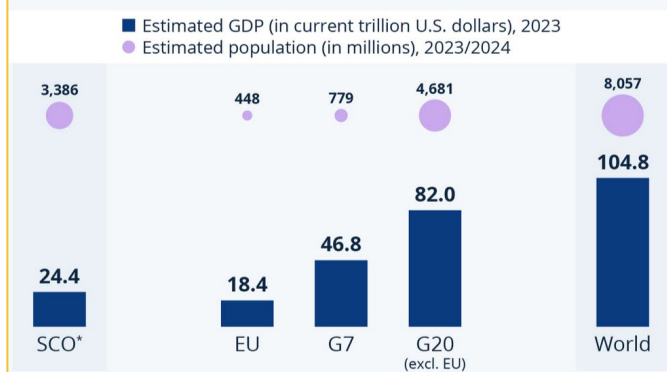


- April 1996**  
The Shanghai Five mechanism was created following the signing of the Agreement on Confidence-Building in the Military Field in Border Areas between China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in Shanghai.
- June 2001**  
SCO was established in Shanghai at its first summit meeting and Uzbekistan was accepted as a member state.
- June 2002**  
The SCO Charter was signed during the St. Petersburg summit.
- June 2006**  
SCO members issued a joint communiqué at the Shanghai summit, saying fight against the "three evil forces" of terrorism, separatism and extremism remains the organization's top priority.
- June 2012**  
SCO accepted Afghanistan as observer and Turkey as dialogue partner at the summit in Beijing.
- July 2015**  
The summit in Russian city Ufa approved the SCO Development Strategy until 2025.
- June 2016**  
President Xi Jinping put forward a five-point proposal in a speech at the summit in Uzbek capital Tashkent.
- June 2017**  
India and Pakistan would complete the process of joining the SCO during the Astana summit.

- **Shanghai Spirit** – mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for cultural diversity, and the pursuit of common development
- **External policy** – principles of non-alignment, non-targeting any third country, and openness

## SCO: 42% of World's Population, 23% of Global GDP

Comparison of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization with selected regional/international organizations



## Significance

- **Areas of Cooperation** – regional security, terrorism, ethnic separatism, religious extremism, regional development
- **Strategic significance**
  - catalyst for regional integration in Asia
  - stability across borders
  - connectivity
- **Comparison with QUAD** – shared military and security goals – "Peace Mission" drills
- **Economic cooperation** – access to markets, technology, and investment opportunities
- **Multilateral diplomacy**
- **Boosting relations with CA**



# Shanghai Cooperation Organization



**CONTEXT:** Defence Minister at SCO meet

## Why SCO is important

- ▶ Is seen as an Eastern counter-balance to NATO
- ▶ Enhances security cooperation among members
- ▶ Helps deal with terrorism, particularly IS terrorists
- ▶ Increases economic cooperation in the region
- ▶ China's One Belt and One Road (OBOR) initiative
- ▶ India's push for connectivity with Chabahar port in Iran
- ▶ International North-South Transport Corridor connecting the sub-continent with Central Asian countries

## Issues

India's objections to China on OBOR

Traditional hostility between India and Pakistan

Russia and China standoff over Ukraine

## Challenges:

- Balancing ties with China and Russia
- Maintaining strategic autonomy
- Issue of sovereignty
- Low bilateral trade with SCO countries
- Regional security concerns
- Managing relations with Pakistan
- Ensuring economic benefits – market access, infrastructure, connectivity

## Suggestions:

- Connectivity with CARs
- Land corridor through Pakistan
- Bilateral trade in national currencies
- Humanitarian ties



**SYLLABUS: GS I Paper: Post-independence India**  
**Newspaper: Indian Express Page Number: 9,10,11**

## **Constitution used to subvert Democracy:**

- Article 352 – grounds of “internal disturbance”
- SC conditional stay on the HC order
- Rule 12 of the Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules, 1961

## **Emergency Module:**

- Weaponization of laws
  - 1,11,000 detained under preventive detention laws
  - 39th CAA
    - MISA u/9th schedule
    - election of President, VP, PM, Speaker no JR
- Subverting judicial independence
  - committed judiciary
  - Justice MH Beg as CJI
- Erosion of the rule of law
  - unequal application of laws
- Executive aggrandisement
  - Indira is India and India is Indira
  - fusing of personality and state

## **Lessons:**

- Democracy as a legal construct requires – Accountability and RoL
- Functioning of political Opposition, an independent judiciary, a free press, a robust civil society

## **Grounds for Invoking Article 352:**

- **Threats:** War, external aggression, or armed rebellion endangering India's security
- Preemptive Declaration

## **Procedures for Authorization & Duration**

- **Approval:**
  - Special majority in both Houses – 1 M
  - If LS dissolved, approval within 30 days of reconstitution (RS must approve meanwhile)

## • **Duration:**

- Initial: 6 months
- Extensions: Parliamentary approval every 6 months

## **Impacts of a National Emergency:**

- Executive: direction to states in governance
- Legislative: legislate on State List
- Financial: President can modify C-S revenue distribution
- Term Extensions:
  - LS: 1 year at a time (max. 6 months post-Emergency)
  - State Assemblies: Similar

## **Effect on Fundamental Rights:**

- Article 358: Suspends A- 19 during war/external aggression
- Article 359: President can suspend court enforcement of specified rights (except Articles 20-21)

## **Revoking (Articles 352(2) & 352(7)):**

- President's Power: Can revoke without Parliament's approval
- Automatic Lapse: If not extended – 6 months

## **Instances of National Emergency in India:**

- **1962:** Indo-China War
- **1971:** Bangladesh Liberation War (Indo-Pak War)
- **1975:** Internal Emergency (due to political unrest)



**SYLLABUS: GS 2 Paper:** Dispute Redressal Mechanisms and Institutions  
**Newspaper:** The Hindu **Page Number:** 7

## Tributaries:

- Left Bank
  - Penganga - Origin in Ajanta, joins Wardha
  - Wainganga - Origin in Mahadeo Hills
  - Wardha - Origin in Satpura
  - Pranahita - largest tributary, covers 34% of the basin, combined waters of Penganga, Wardha, Wainganga
  - Indravati - Boundary Chattis-Maha
  - Purna, Indravati, Sabari
- Right Bank
  - Manjra - Nizam Sagar reservoir, origin in Balaghat Range
  - Pravara

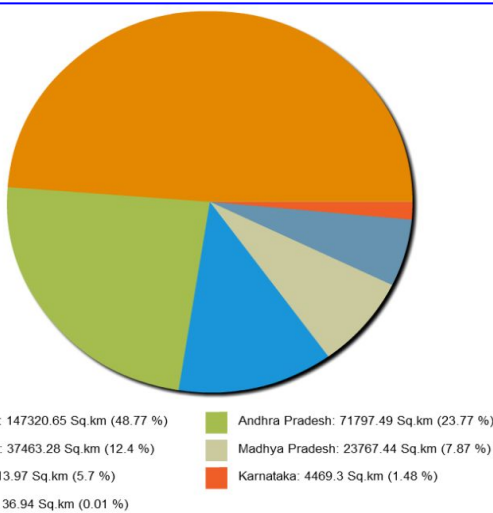


Figure 1. State-wise basin area

## Polavaram-Banakacherla Link Project Dispute

### Project Overview

- Divert 200 TMC ft of Godavari water to Krishna & Penna basins
- Beneficiary: Drought-hit Rayalaseema region (AP)
- 50% funded by Centre under river interlinking

### Status:

- Pre-feasibility report submitted to CWC
- Detailed Project Report awaited

### Telangana's Objections:

#### Legal & Political Concerns:

- Violation of riparian rights under AP Reorganisation Act, 2014
- FRBM borrowing limits:
  - Centre reduced Telangana's borrowing capacity (citing Kaleshwaram project)
  - But allowed AP to borrow beyond FRBM
- Political blame game

### Other Arguments:

- Apprehensions:
  - Diversion plan could alter water allocation in future tribunal rulings
- Retired Engineers' Association:
  - Clear Telangana's pending projects first before approving Polavaram-Banakacherla
  - Compensate Telangana with +200 TMC ft Krishna water

### Andhra Pradesh's Defense:

- "Surplus water": Godavari loses 3,000 TMC ft annually to sea
- Precedent: Krishna diversion to Penna basin
- Project critical for drinking water & irrigation in Rayalaseema

### Broader Implications:

- Inter-state water disputes = economic & sentimental tensions
- Centre's role: unbiased mediation





# West Asia reset: De-escalation for the world



**SYLLABUS : GS 2 Paper :** Policies of Developed Nations and its impact on India's Interests  
**Newspaper:** The Hindu **Page Number: 6**

## Current Situation:

- Israel & U.S. bombed Iran – tacit global approval (EU, Russia, China silent)
- Iran's nuclear threat neutralized → Israel sole regional nuclear power
- 40,000 U.S. troops in WA – Israeli security dominance

## Gulf States' Dilemma:

- Previously feared Iran > Israel → relied on U.S./Israel for balance
- Now unchecked Israeli power
- Abraham Accords progressing, but Palestine sidelined
- **Weak Opposition**
  - Silent on Palestine for economic integration with Israel/U.S
  - 50k+ killed in Gaza, West Bank settler expansions ongoing
  - Regional stability at risk if annexation

## Iran's Retaliation & Escalation:

- Missile strikes on U.S. bases in Qatar & Iraq
- Proportional response: Matched bomb count
- Existential crisis for Tehran regime – no surrender option for survival
- Risk of further escalation:
  - Potential Strait of Hormuz closure
  - Possible NPT withdrawal

## U.S.-Brokered Ceasefire & Aftermath:

- Surprise ceasefire call after Iranian retaliation
- Gulf states wake-up call: mediate to prevent Libya/Iraq-like collapse
- Nuclear deal talks may revive – Gulf support

## Netanyahu's Next Moves: Palestinian

### Annexation:

- Post-Iran strike boost: Netanyahu's domestic revival
- "Eretz Israel" plan:
  - Annex West Bank & Gaza before 2026 U.S. elections
- Future scenarios:
  - Apartheid state (Palestinians as second-class citizens)
  - Or genuine democracy (equal rights – unlikely historically)

## India's Stance:

- No strong condemnation of Israeli strikes
- Balanced diplomacy:
  - Close ties with Israel (supported India in past conflicts)
  - Strategic projects with Iran
- Called for "de-escalation" – neutral stance





**SYLLABUS : GS 3 Paper : Sustainable Development**  
**Newspaper: The Hindu Page Number: 12**

## India's Ranking & Performance:

- 2025 SDG Index Rank: 99th (out of 167 countries) – first time in top 100
- Score: 67/100 (109th in 2024, 112th in 2023)
- Comparison:
  - China: 49th, US: 44th
  - Neighbors:
    - Maldives: 53rd
    - Bhutan: 74th
    - Nepal: 85th
    - Sri Lanka: 93rd
    - Bangladesh: 114th
    - Pakistan: 140th

## Global SDG Trends:

### Top Performers

- Nordic countries – Finland, Sweden, Denmark
- 19 of top 20 are European nations
- Fastest Progress Since 2015 in Asia: Nepal (+11.1), Cambodia (+10), Bangladesh (+8.3)

## Challenges:

- Only 17% of SDG targets on track globally
- Reversals in:
  - Obesity rates (SDG 2)
  - Press freedom (SDG 16)
  - Corruption (SDG 16)

## Achievements & Gaps:

### Multilateral Commitment

- Top 3: Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago
- G20 Best: Brazil (25th)
- OECD Best: Chile (7th)
- US: 193rd (last) – opposes SDGs, exited Paris Agreement & WHO

## Strong Progress Areas:

- **Basic services & infrastructure:**
  - Mobile broadband (SDG 9)
  - Electricity access (SDG 7)
  - Reduced child mortality (SDG 3)

## Setbacks:

- **Climate & biodiversity** (even top-ranked nations struggle)
- **Unsustainable consumption** in developed countries:



**SYLLABUS : GS 2 Paper :** Devolution of Powers and Finances up to Local Levels and Challenges Therein

**Newspaper:** The Hindu **Page Number: 4**

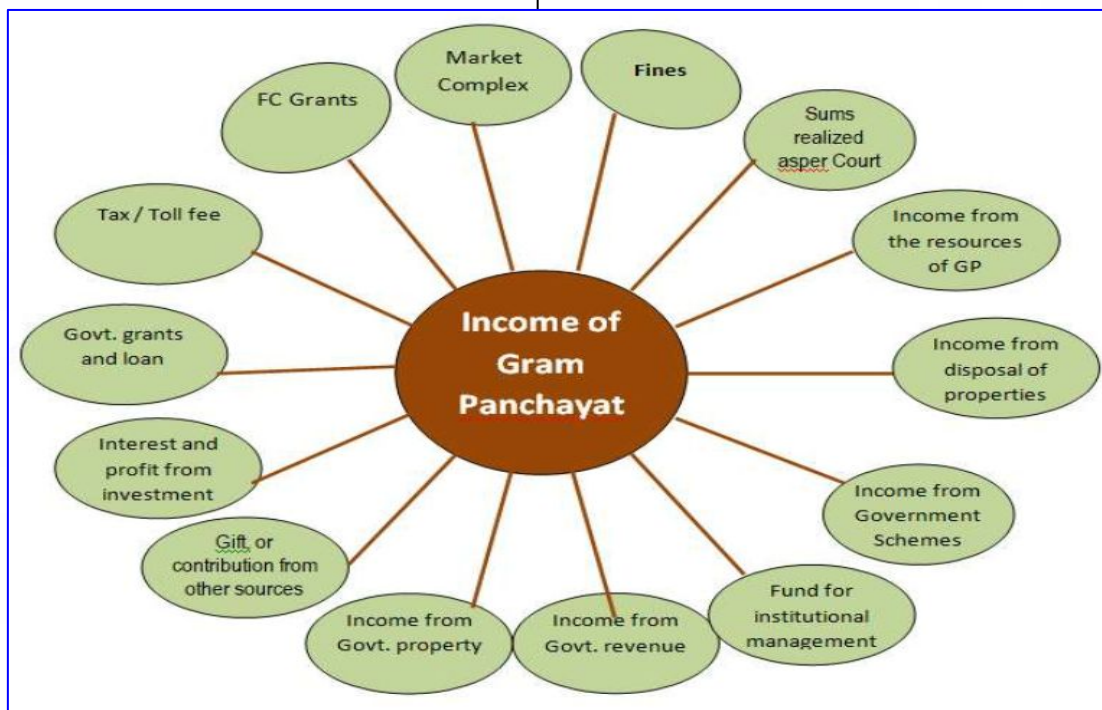
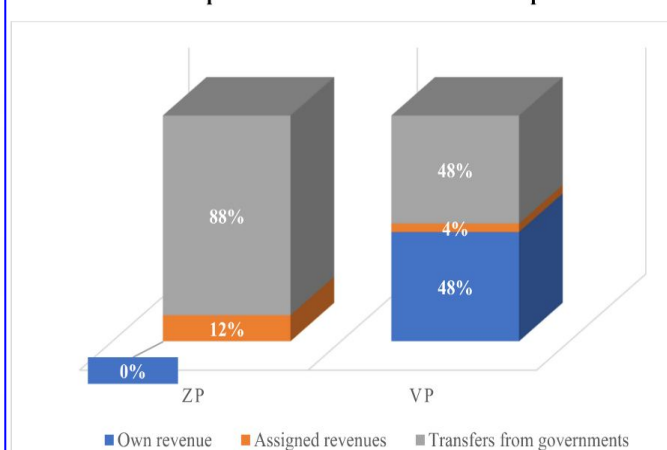


Chart 5.1: Composition of revenues of PRIs for the period 2016-21



(Source: Information provided by Directorate of Panchayat)

## Issues in Finances of PRIs:

### Limited Own Revenue Generation

- **ZPs:** No own revenue sources; depend entirely on govt grants
- **VPs:** Underutilized revenue potential due to:
  - Non-revision of property tax
  - Inefficient collection mechanisms
  - Unrecovered arrears

### Dependence on Govt Grants

- Delays in CFC grants release
- Poor monitoring of CFC grant utilization
- Uneven release of State Govt grants

### Weak SFC Mechanism

- Delays in SFC constitution
- Non-implementation of SFC reco by state

### Budgeting & Financial Management Issues

- ZPs: Failed to prepare budgets
- VPs: Prepared unrealistic budgets
- Adoption of financial tools:
  - Model Accounting System not used in ZPs
  - PRIASoft & e-gramswaraj used only for CFC grants in VPs

### Financial Sustainability Challenges

- Majority of VPs unable to cover establishment expenses from own revenues
- Increased reliance on grants due to weak fiscal autonomy



**Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO):**

1. The SCO charter was signed during the St. Petersburg summit in 2002.
2. India, Pakistan & China were accepted as member states in 2017.
3. Border regional security is one of the key aspects of the SCO's charter.

**How many of the statements given above is/ are correct?**

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

**Answer: b**

**Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the National Emergency:**

1. It is imposed by the President of India as per the provisions of Article 352 of the Constitution.
2. The 44th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1978 provided "Internal disturbances" as one of the factors for the imposition of the Emergency.
3. The President can declare a National Emergency even before the occurrence of war or external aggression.

**How many of the statements given above is/ are correct?**

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

**Answer: b**

**Q3. Consider the following rivers:**

1. Penganga
2. Wainganga
3. Manjra
4. Pravara
5. Indravati
6. Pranahita

**How many of the above-mentioned rivers are the left bank tributaries of the Godavari River?**

- a) Only Two
- b) Only Three
- c) Only Four
- d) Only Five

**Answer: c**

**Q4. Consider the following statements:**

1. India, for the first time, has featured in the Top 100 countries in the recently released SDG Index 2025.
2. More than two-thirds of the Top-20 countries are European nations.
3. India lags behind Sri Lanka, Bangladesh & Pakistan in the SDG ranking.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1 and 2 only

**Answer: d**

**Q5. Regarding the Abraham Accords 2020, consider the following statements:**

1. They are a set of agreements that established diplomatic normalisation between Israel and Arab states like the UAE & Bahrain.
2. The agreement was mediated by the efforts of the USA & India.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer: a**





# **VAJIRAM & RAVI**

## **Institute for IAS Examination**

A unit of Vajiram & Ravi IAS Study Centre LLP

---

9-B, Bada Bazar Marg, Old Rajinder Nagar,  
New Delhi - 110060 • Ph.: 41007400, 41007500

New No. 62, P Block, 6th Avenue, Anna Nagar,  
Chennai - 600040 • Ph.: 044-4330-2121

Visit us at : [www.vajiramandravi.com](http://www.vajiramandravi.com)