



**VAJIRAM & RAVI**  
Institute for IAS Examination

# The Analyst

**CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout**

**1st March 2026**



# Iran vs US-Israel: Chronicles & Impact on India



**CONTEXT:** Us & Israel strike Iran. Iran retaliates

## Chronology

- **The Shah's Israel Ties**
  - 'oil for arms' contracts
- **The 1979 Revolution: A Geopolitical Earthquake**
  - Ayatollah Khomeini
  - "liberation" of Jerusalem
- **Iran's "Forward Defense" & Proxy Network**
  - Network of militias: Hezbollah
  - 2000: Israel forced to withdraw
  - 2006: Israel attack
- **Rising Regional Influence (2000s)**
  - 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq
  - Yemen: rise of Houthis
  - Nuclear programme
- **Setbacks**
  - Arab Spring protests
  - Protests in Syria: Hezbollah fighters
- **ISIS Threat & Common Ground with U.S.**
- **JCPOA & Its Aftermath**
  - 2013: Obama direct talks
  - 2015: JCPOA - Israel opposed
  - 2018: Trump
  - U.S. withdrawal: Iran enrichment
  - Escalation Under "Maximum Pressure"
- **October 7, 2023**
  - Hamas attack on Israel
  - Netanyahu's vision
    - Unipolar West Asia
    - Roll back Iran
    - Marginalize Palestinian issue

- **Weakening of Iran's Axis**
  - 2024: Collapse of Assad regime
  - Hezbollah weakened and isolated
  - Iran started indirect talks
  - June 13 war
- **Post-Ceasefire Demands**
  - End nuclear programme, missile production, support for non-state actors
- **The 2026 Crackdown & All-Out War**
  - January 2026: Protests in Iran
  - Mossad agents "on the field"
  - U.S. military presence but Diplomacy continued
  - Israel: "pre-emptive strike"
  - Trump: "The hour of your freedom is at hand"

### Iran's Nuclear Programme: Key Dates

**1957:** Iran pursues a nuclear programme for the first time

ing call for Iran to suspend uranium enrichment

**LATE 1980S:** During war with Iraq, Iran decides to develop nuclear weapons to ensure its security

**2006-2011:** UNSC adopts series of resolutions imposing crippling economic sanctions on Iran

**1990S** Iran pursues agreements with China and Russia to support nuclear research

**2011-2015:** International sanctions cause Iran's economy to contract by 20%; unemployment rises to 20%

**EARLY 2002:** National Council of Resistance of Iran exposes existence of two hidden Iranian nuclear sites

**2013:** Hassan Rouhani wins presidency on promise to lift sanctions and restore economy

**2003:** Diplomats launch intensive effort to stop Iran's programme; Iran agrees to keep centrifuges only for energy

**2015:** Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action spearheaded by President Obama; UNSC approves Resolution 2231

**2004:** IAEA rebukes Iran for failing to commit to transparent reporting

**2018:** First Trump administration withdraws US from JCPOA, begins reimposing sanctions

**2005:** IAEA finds Iran in non-compliance, paving way for UNSC referral

**FEBRUARY 2026:** US and Iranian officials hold high-stakes nuclear talks in Geneva; progress reported on new concession.

**2006:** UNSC adopts Resolution 1696, first legally bind-



**CONTEXT:** Us & Israel strike Iran. Iran retaliates

## • Strikes, counter-strikes



## Chronology of Israel

- Jewish immigrations to Jerusalem - as persecution in EU
- War against the Ottomans - Balfour Declaration
- British-mandated territory
- UN proposed a plan to partition
- First Arab-Israeli war - Israel captured more territories than the UN partition plan proposal
- 1967 - Six-Day War
- PLO - Yasser Arafat - Jordan to Lebanon - intifada
- 1993 - Oslo Accords - Palestinian authority, two-state solution, no actual land concessions



## Legality of Israeli Strikes

### Pro-Israel (Justifying the Strikes)

1. **Self-Defense - Article 51**
  - Armed Attack - proxy attacks, nuclear threat
2. **Pre-emptive/Anticipatory Self-Defense**
  - **Caroline Doctrine (1837):** Allows pre-emptive strikes if threat is "instant, overwhelming, leaves no choice, no moment of deliberation"
  - Iran's nuclear program
3. **Imminence of Threat (Expansive View)**
  - Need not mean immediate
  - Iran's rhetoric "destroy Israel"
4. **Failure of Diplomatic Alternatives**

### Against Israel

1. **Violation of Article 2(4)**
  - except in self-defense or UN-sanctioned actions
2. **No Legal Basis for Pre-emptive Strike**
  - just a potential future threat
  - No actual armed attack
3. **"Imminence" Too Broadly Interpreted**
  - **Restrictive view (Milanovic):** "Imminent" = temporally proximate - (about to happen)
4. **Risk of Escalation & Abuse of Power**
  - Unilateral strikes based on conjecture = dangerous precedent
5. **Proportionality Concerns**



# Iran vs US-Israel: Chronicles & Impact on India



**CONTEXT:** Us & Israel strike Iran. Iran retaliates

## Impact on India

- Basmati rice
  - 20% of exports to Iran - 1.2 mn tonnes
  - International price dropped by \$100 a tonne
  - Stocks pile up
- Tea
  - 20k tonnes
  - Exports to Azerbaijan, Kazakh also affected
- Freight Costs & Fuel costs
- Risk insurance premiums
- Potential closure of Strait of Hormuz
  - Add 15-20 days to shipping times
  - 40-50% to shipping costs
- Oil Price Rise
  - Strait of Hormuz
    - Choke point
    - Transport of 20 mn barrels per day =  $\frac{1}{5}$  of global petroleum liquids consumption
    - 84% of crude to Asia - Major Tehran export to China
  - India not from Tehran but Global price spikes
  - Escalation - bar access to the Suez Canal and the Red Sea

## Significance of Israel

- Defence
  - Phalcon AWACS, Heron, Searcher-II, Harop drones, Spyder anti-aircraft missile systems
  - Codevelopment: Barak-8 missile

- Geo-Economic
  - Trade: FY 2022-23: ~\$ 10.77 bn (excluding defence); Indian exports: ~\$ 8.45 bn
  - Israel's 2nd trading partner in Asia
  - Exports: Pearls, Automotive diesel, Machinery, Textiles, Agri
  - IMEC, I2U2
- Water Security: desalination, drip irrigation, wastewater recycling
- West Asia Balancing
- Diaspora
  - India historically welcomed Jews
  - 26k Indian citizens, 85k Jews of Indian origin

## Outcomes of PM visit to Israel

- Tech
  - Indo-Israel Cyber CoE
  - MoU: ethical AI development
  - AI and geophysical technologies for sustainable mineral exploration
- Economic
  - UPI Integration
  - IFSCA and Israel Securities Authority MoU
  - India-Israel Innovation Centre for Agriculture

## MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

Ques. Examine the impact of Iran-Israel conflict on India's energy security and regional diplomacy. In this context, analyse the strategic significance of Israel for India.



**CONTEXT:** Pakistan Afghanistan war

## Afghanistan

- bridge SA - CA, fostering trade, cultural exchanges, alliances
- Hotspot for great power rivalries

## Historical Ties

- Ancient Links
  - IVC trade, cultural exchange
  - Silk route
  - Shared heritage
  - Religious Epics
- Islamic Empires
  - Ahmad Shah Durrani
  - Mughals
- British era
  - Anglo Afghan wars
  - Pashtun Autonomy
- Post Indep
  - Indo-Afghan Friendship Treaty, 1950
  - Soviet Invasion in 80's
  - Indian Airlines Flight 814, 1999
- Post 2000
  - Strategic Partnership Agreement 2011



## Significance

- Geostrategic
  - Gateway to CA
  - Countering Pak influence
  - Chabahar use
- Regional Stability & Security
  - Cross border terror
  - Taliban - Pak Nexus
- Economic
  - Air Freight corridor
  - Minerals - Li, Cu, rare earths
- P2P
  - Goodwill investments - infra, health, edu
  - Foodgrains, vaccines, community projects
  - 14k Afghan students

## Areas of Engagement

- Strategic Partnership Agreement
  - Assistance to rebuild infra
  - Afghan-led, Afghan-owned, broad based, inclusive process of peace & reconciliation
  - Duty free access to Indian market
- Heart of Asia Process
  - Political consultations
  - CBMs
  - Cooperation with regional organizations
- Reconstruction efforts
- Defence
  - Training security forces, Mi-25 attack helicopters



# Afghanistan Quagmire



**CONTEXT:** Pakistan Afghanistan war

## Pain Points

- Political Instability
  - 2021 - Taliban takeover & Operation Devi Shakti
- Pakistan Angle
  - Influence over the Taliban
  - Cross border Terror
- Geographical barrier
  - Land access
- Golden Crescent

## Suggestions

- Strategic Recalibration
  - No official recognition
  - Aid diplomacy
- Treading cautiously
  - limited embassy operations
  - High level engagement
- Principled Approach
  - UNSC Resolution 2593 - peace, counterterror, HR

## MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

Ques. Examine the significance of Afghanistan for India's strategic, economic and security interests. Discuss the challenges in bilateral relations in the current regional context, and suggest a roadmap for India to safeguard its long-term interests.



**SYLLABUS: GS Paper 2:** Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment

**Newspaper:** The Hindu **Page No:** 9

- **Disinvestment**

- sale or liquidation of assets by govt
- complete privatisation = 100% control to buyer

- **Objectives**

- Reducing fiscal burden
- Private Ownership >>Efficiency >>Profitability
- Funding development programmes
- Promoting competition

- **Evolution**

- First time in Interim Budget 1991
- 1993: Rangarajan committee
- 1999: Department of Disinvestment created
- 2001: Ministry of Disinvestment
- 2016: DIPAM

- **Critic**

- Loss of dividend payments
- Can create private monopoly
- Vague classification of strategic and non-strategic sectors
  - i. E.g., Strategic disinvestment in Oil sector - energy security
- Faulty model
- to bridge FD ~ equivalent to selling family silver

central government's focus has decisively shifted from selling off its assets to extracting the maximum value from them, an analysis of data shows. The recent launch of the National Monetisation Pipeline 2.0 marks an extension of this policy shift.

The Centre had in 2021 launched the Public Sector Enterprises Policy, under which it said it would exit all non-strategic sectors, and would retain a minimum presence in strategic ones. An analysis by *The Hindu* of data with the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management, however, shows that, except for a brief surge in 2022-23, revenue from disinvestment has been falling every year.

sue was that the private sector was not keen to buy public sector companies due to their large employee headcounts and loss-making assets.

In fact, in the revised estimates for 2023-24, the Centre removed the separate header for disinvestments in the budget documents, instead clubbing



**SYLLABUS: GS Paper 2:** Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment

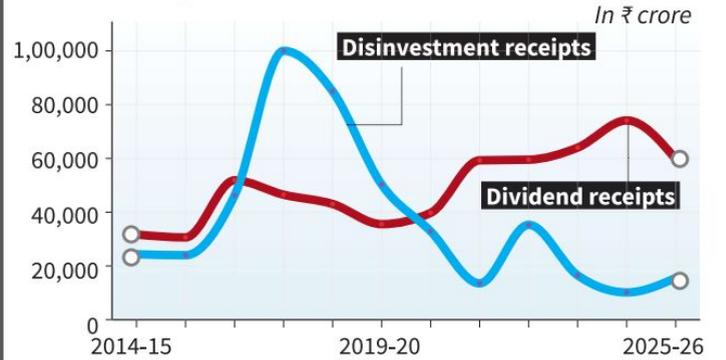
**Newspaper:** The Hindu **Page No:** 9

In November 2020, DIPAM issued an advisory to the CEOs and Managing Directors of all central PSEs regarding a “consistent dividend policy”.

“CPSEs are advised to strive to pay higher dividends taking into account relevant factors like profitability, capex requirements with due leveraging cash/reserves and net worth,” it said.

## Changing priorities

The Centre’s focus has shifted decisively from selling stake in PSUs to earning more from them



Source: Department of Investment and Public Asset Management



**SYLLABUS: GS 2: Health**

**Newspaper: The Hindu Page Number : 8**

### Rare Diseases

- orphan diseases
- WHO: “often debilitating lifelong disease or disorder with a prevalence of 1 or less per 1,000 population”
- Examples: Spinal Muscular Atrophy, Gaucher’s disease, Whipple’s disease

### Status in India

- 1/3 of the global incidence (ICMR 2023)
- 95 % of orphan drugs are imported: annual therapy costs ₹3–5 cr per patient
- Psychological Trauma: 62 % of caregivers report depression and burnout (MoHFW review 2024)
- Financial Catastrophe: 78 % families (> 25 % of income); 41 % sold assets (NHP 2024)

### Initiatives

- National Policy for Rare Diseases 2021
- National Fund for Rare Diseases: to finance high-cost therapies
- Digital Crowdfunding Portal (2022): voluntary donations
- Customs & IGST Exemption (2022): orphan drugs and medical devices
- Patient Registry (ICMR–NIMS): database for tracking
- State Rare-Disease Cells

### National Policy for Rare Diseases

- MoH&FW launched in 2021
- 63 rare diseases included
- Recommendation of Central Technical Committee for Rare Diseases
- 3 groups:
  - Group 1: Disorders amenable to one-time curative treatment
  - Group 2: long-term/lifelong treatment with relatively lower cost
  - Group 3: definitive treatment but optimal patient selection as very high cost and lifelong therapy
- Rs. 50 lakhs per patient at the notified CoEs
- 12 CoEs identified - diagnosis, prevention, and treatment
- Nidan Kendras: for genetic testing and counselling
- Exemption from Duty on drugs imported for individual use and through CoE
- National Consortium for R&D on Therapeutics for Rare Diseases
- Promotion of R&D for diagnosis and treatment; local development and manufacture of drugs

crisis in India. A notified policy for rare diseases is in place, there are Centres of Excellence (CoEs) established across the country, and a robust budget to assist with treatment.

However, about ₹271 crore allocated for rare disease patients remains unused, and many of the chil-

#### Care halted

“Nearly 2,000 rare disease patients across India are currently awaiting treatment, including around 450 eligible patients with life-threatening Lysosomal Storage Disorders (LSD).



**SYLLABUS: Prelims:** Current events of national and international importance  
**Newspaper:** The Indian Express **Page Number : 11**

## CBAM

- EU tariff on carbon-intensive products
- preventing carbon leakage
  - shifting of production to non-EU countries where lower or no carbon cost
- Purpose
  - fair price on the carbon emitted during production
  - encourage cleaner industrial production in non-EU countries
- Ensure carbon price of imports is equivalent to carbon price of domestic production = EU's climate objectives not undermined
- **Carbon Certificates**
  - EU importers will have to buy ~ corresponding to the carbon price that would have been paid in the EU if produced locally
  - Price of certificates = auction prices in the EU carbon credit market
  - Number of certificates = quantity of goods and embedded emissions
  - EU importers to declare the emissions embedded and surrender corresponding certificates each year
  - Else prove that a carbon price already paid during production
  - Countries with a domestic carbon pricing regime equivalent to EU ~ export without buying CBAM certificates

• The carbon tax ensures imported carbon-intensive goods into the EU bear a cost **starting January 2026**. It is **seen by several developing nations as discriminatory and in conflict with global environmental law**

• **Brazil, China, India and South Africa** have raised serious concerns about CBAM **at forums of the World Trade Organisation**, and Russia initiated a formal dispute on May 12 last year

**EVEN AS India and the European Union (EU) have agreed to 'most favoured nation' (MFN) treatment on the carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM) in an effort to get a concession on the EU's most controversial regulation, the trade deal stops short of recognising independent Indian accreditation bodies that could have given immediate relief to Indian exporters.**

As per the trade deal's text released late Friday, India and the EU **can engage in a technical dialogue covering, the possibility of and, if relevant, conditions for "mutual recognition of accreditation bodies for the accreditation of verifiers, for the purpose of checking compliance with carbon border adjustment measures"**.



**SYLLABUS: Prelims:** Current events of national and international importance  
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This would imply an extra compliance measure for Indian exporters to align with accreditation bodies recognised both by India and the EU.

Though there are no National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies or NABCB-accredited Indian agencies recognised under EU regulations, there are certain validation and verification bodies in India for the EU's CBAM scheme based on accreditation granted by other accreditation bodies.

The NABCB is the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies that provides accreditation to inspection, certification, validation and verification bodies on assessment of their competence as per the Board's criteria and in line with international stan-

dards and guidelines.

However, the text said that the EU shall "endeavour to support" India's greenhouse gas emission reduction efforts, in particular through the mobilisation of financial resources, tools, instruments and related investments, as appropriate. The use of the

The Indian industry, however, stands to gain from the MFN clause in the India-EU deal on the CBAM measures.

It will help the Indian industry receive the same concessions that the EU has promised the US under their trade deal signed earlier last year, a senior government official said.



**SYLLABUS: Prelims:** Economic Development  
**Newspaper:** The Hindu **Page Number :** 9

## GSI

- set up in 1851 by Sir Thomas Oldham to find coal deposits for Railways
- Attached office to the Ministry of Mines
- Role: provide objective, impartial and up-to-date geological expertise and geoscientific information
- Documentation of all geological processes, both surface and subsurface
- geological, geophysical, & geochemical surveys
- mineral resource assessment
- geological mapping, mineral exploration, disaster studies, and geoscientific research
- Headquarter: Kolkata
- 6 regional offices: Lucknow, Jaipur, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Shillong and Kolkata

India (GSI) has plans to pursue approximately 300 projects for exploration of critical minerals in the upcoming field season, said

“Rare earths are available not only in beach sand, but also inland and/or within rocks, like carbonatite or other alkali rocks,” Mr. Saha said, adding, “It is there [in the mentioned forms] in Assam, Gujarat’s Ambadongar which is very famous and Rajasthan’s Sivana. These are places where large deposits of rare earths are present.”



# Rice Fortification Scheme suspended



**SYLLABUS: Prelims:** Economic and Social Development  
**Newspaper:** The Hindu **Page Number :** 8

## PMGKAY

- launched in 2020 as a response to COVID-19
- financial assistance to EWS
- distribution of 5 kg of free food grains each month, cash transfers to women and elderly
- in addition to the subsidised ration under PDS
- Eligibility
  - Families belonging to the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Priority Households (PHH) categories
  - PHH to be identified by State Govts/UT as per criteria evolved by them
  - AAY families identified by States/UTs as per the criteria prescribed by the Central Govt
- Criteria
  - Households headed by widows, or terminally ill persons, or disabled, or >60 years with no assured means of subsistence or societal support
  - All primitive tribal households, landless agricultural labourers, marginal farmers, rural artisans/craftsmen such as potters, tanners, slum dwellers, and persons earning their livelihood on a daily basis in the informal sector like porters, coolies in both rural and urban areas
  - All citizens from BPL families

As the Union Food Ministry decided to temporarily discontinue the process of rice fortification “until a more effective mechanism for delivery of nutrients to beneficiaries is identified”, activists who had challenged the scheme in the Supreme Court have welcomed the move, and said fortification is not a scientific method to curb anaemia.

Food Ministry said, citing a study by the IIT, Kharagpur to assess the shelf life of fortified rice kernels and fortified rice under actual storage conditions in diverse agro climatic zones in the country.

“The report concludes that factors such as moisture content, storage conditions, temperature, relative humidity, and packaging material critical-



# Rice Fortification Scheme suspended



**SYLLABUS:** Prelims: Economic and Social Development  
**Newspaper:** The Hindu **Page Number :** 8

ly influence their stability and shelf life. They are susceptible to micronutrient reduction and shortening of shelf life during prolonged storage and routine handling. This reduction is rendering the effective shelf life shorter than expected and, in turn, limiting the intended nutritional outcomes,” the release

cation is an expensive and ineffective intervention, which is unsafe and toxic. “While the government is citing a study to stop this large-scale fortification, we had shown much evidence that not all anaemia is linked to iron deficiency, nor is fortification an effective solution,” she said.



**Q1. With reference to Disinvestment in India, consider the following statements:**

1. Disinvestment refers to the sale or liquidation of government assets.
2. Complete privatization implies transfer of 100% ownership and management control to the buyer.
3. Disinvestment always results in complete privatization.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Answer: a**

**Q2. With reference to Rare (Orphan) Diseases, consider the following statements:**

1. According to WHO, a rare disease is defined as a lifelong disorder with a prevalence of 1 or less per 1,000 population.
2. India accounts for nearly one-third of the global incidence of rare diseases.
3. A majority of orphan drugs used in India are domestically manufactured.
4. The National Fund for Rare Diseases was established to finance high-cost therapies.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 and 4 only
- b) 1, 2 and 4 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

**Answer: b**

**Q3. With reference to the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), consider the following statements:**

1. CBAM is a tariff imposed by the European Union on carbon-intensive imports.
2. Under CBAM, the carbon price of imports is intended to be equivalent to the carbon price faced by domestic EU producers.
3. CBAM completely prohibits imports from countries that do not have a carbon pricing regime.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

**Answer: a**

**Q4. With reference to the Geological Survey of India (GSI), consider the following statements:**

1. It was established in 1851 by Sir Thomas Oldham to locate coal deposits for railways.
2. Its headquarters is located in Hyderabad.
3. It is an attached office under the Ministry of Mines.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

**Answer: c**

**Q5. With reference to the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), consider the following statements:**

1. It was launched in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. It provides 5 kg of free food grains per month in addition to subsidised ration under the PDS.
3. It replaces the Public Distribution System (PDS) for eligible households.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

**Answer: a**





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