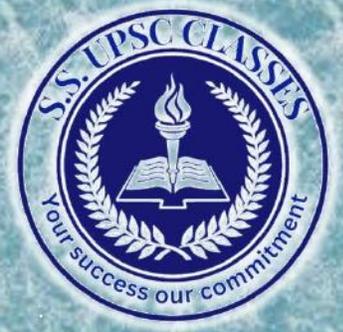


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Supreme Court Comment: Time to Decriminalize Criminal Defamation

Why in news?

The screenshot shows the top section of the Times of India website. At the top, it displays 'Edition IN', 'English', and 'Mumbai 27°C'. The main header reads 'THE TIMES OF INDIA' with a 'Subscribe' button. Below the header is a navigation bar with 'India' selected and other regional options like 'Operation Sindoor', 'Cancel Patriarchy', etc. The main content area shows a news breadcrumb 'News / India News / The Time To Decriminalise Defamation Has Come: SC'. A 'Trending' section lists 'Asia Cup 2025 Schedule', 'India vs Pakistan Live', etc. The main headline is 'The time to decriminalise defamation has come: SC' with a sub-headline 'TNN / Sep 23, 2025, 04:54 IST'. There are icons for 'Share', 'Print', 'AA', and 'Select TOI as'.

The screenshot shows the top section of The Hindu website. It features a search bar and the logo 'THE HINDU'. The main headline is 'Supreme Court judge says it's high time to decriminalise defamation'. Below the headline is a sub-headline: 'The remark mirrors the apex court's anxiety over the ramped-up use of the criminal defamation law, and reopens the question as to whether 'defamation of any person by a private person can be treated as a 'crime', for it does not subserve any public interest''. At the bottom, it says 'Updated - September 22, 2025 08:29 pm IST - NEW DELHI'.

Key Points:-

- On 22 September 2025, Supreme Court Justice M.M. Sundresh remarked that *"the time has come to decriminalize criminal defamation."*
- This comment reflects the court's concern over the growing misuse of criminal defamation laws.



Criminal Defamation Law and Constitutional Validity

It is still a punishable offense. Previously codified under Sections **499** and **500** of the **Indian Penal Code (IPC)**, these provisions have now been retained under **Section 356** of the new law, the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)**, 2023.

- The punishment for criminal defamation includes simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to **two years**, or with **fine**, or with **both**.
- In the 2016 case of *Subramanian Swamy vs. Union of India*, the Supreme Court upheld the law and stated that it is a “reasonable restriction” on Article 19(1)(a) (freedom of speech and expression).
- The Court recognized that reputation is also part of the fundamental right to life.

Recent Observations by the Judiciary

- Justice Sundresh noted that it is unreasonable to treat criminal defamation as an offense in disputes between private individuals since it does not serve any public interest.
- The Supreme Court has repeatedly said:
 - “Do not be overly sensitive.”
 - “Courts are not a platform to settle political scores.”
- In recent months, the Court has stayed the issuance of summons in several criminal defamation cases.

Key Cases and References

1. **Rahul Gandhi Case**
 - Rahul Gandhi faced multiple criminal defamation cases filed by private individuals and political opponents.
 - The Supreme Court stayed several summons issued against him.
2. **Shashi Tharoor Case**
 - Criminal defamation case regarding the alleged remark about Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a “scorpion on a Shivling.”
 - The Supreme Court stayed proceedings.
3. **Imran Pratapgarhi Case (2025)**
 - The Court stated that allegedly defamatory words should be assessed by the standard of “rational and resilient individuals,” not by the sensibilities of weak-minded persons.
4. **M. Javed Akbar vs. Priya Ramani**
 - A prominent case during the #MeToo movement.
5. **Johnny Depp vs. Amber Heard (2022, USA)**
 - An internationally high-profile defamation lawsuit that sparked debate on freedom of speech and the limits of defamation law.

What is defamation?

Let's take a peek into the basics of defamation and how it is dealt with by the judiciary!

Updated - February 25, 2025 04:24 pm IST

Defamation refers to speaking, writing, signaling or publishing any information against a person with the intention of harming that person's reputation.

- This can involve a living person or, in some cases, affect the family or close relatives of a deceased person.
- Causing harm to the reputation of an individual or group through false information also falls under defamation.

Types of Defamation

Defamation can broadly be divided into two categories:

Type	Description
Written Defamation (Libel)	Harmful statements made in a permanent form, such as written words, pictures, or published work.
Oral Defamation (Slander)	Spoken statements or temporary expressions that damage a person's reputation.

Note: Even satirical statements or unintentional harm can be considered defamation.

Conclusion:-

- The Supreme Court's recent observations have reignited the debate on whether criminal defamation laws are compatible with modern democracy and freedom of expression.
- The judiciary has consistently indicated that these laws have often been misused as tools for political revenge or personal disputes, whereas defamation can also be addressed through civil proceedings.

Which of the following international defamation cases is an example that sparked debate on freedom of expression?

- Mobashar Javed Akbar vs Priya Ramani
- Johnny Depp vs Amber Heard
- Subramanian Swamy vs Union of India
- Imran Pratapgarhi case



Supreme Court's Major Decision on the Waqf Amendment Act 2025

GS-II (Constitution, Governance), GS-I (Social Issues) and Essay

Question: *How does the Supreme Court's verdict on the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 reinforce the concepts of Separation of Powers and Judicial Review under the Constitution? Discuss.*



Why in news?

THE HINDU

HOME / NEWS / INDIA

Supreme Court refuses to stay Waqf (Amendment) Act 2025 in its entirety

Supreme Court notes that 'presumption always in favour of constitutionality of a statute.' It stays certain crucial Sections in the amendment law of 2025

Updated - September 15, 2025 12:57 pm IST - NEW DELHI

Key Points:-

- On Monday, the Supreme Court delivered a major verdict on the validity of the **Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025**.
- The Court clarified that there is no ground to strike down or suspend the entire Act.
- However, certain provisions could adversely affect citizens' fundamental rights and carry the risk of arbitrary misuse of power. Hence, those specific sections have been stayed.

SC on Waqf Amendment Act: Waqf by user to be registered; stay on clause that creator has to be practising Islam for 5 yrs

Supreme Court On Waqf Bill: The Supreme Court ruled that the provision permitting the collector to determine the right to the property is contrary to the doctrine of separation of powers.

- The bench of Chief Justice B.R. Gavai and Justice A.G. Masih noted that the evolution of Waqf laws since 1923 had been studied.
- It was found that many provisions are merely a repetition of earlier laws and need not be immediately stayed. But the controversial clauses require judicial intervention.

Objections by Muslim organizations:

Muslim bodies raised objections mainly on two issues—

1. Vesting final authority in the **Collector** could lead to illegitimate claims over Waqf properties.
2. The condition of following Islam for **five years** is discriminatory.



Stay on the “five years of Islam practice” condition for creating Waqf:

- The disputed **Section 3(1)(r)** mandated that a person could declare a Waqf only if they had been practicing Islam for at least five years.
- The Supreme Court stayed this provision, calling it arbitrary and vague.
- The Court observed that there is no clear mechanism to determine whether someone has been practicing a religion for five years or not.
- Such a condition could become a tool for discrimination and abuse of power.
- The Court directed that until state governments frame appropriate rules for testing this condition, this provision shall remain inoperative.



Cap on non-Muslim members in Waqf Boards:

- The Supreme Court upheld the inclusion of non-Muslim members in Waqf Boards and the Central Waqf Council but imposed limits on their numbers.
 - **State Waqf Boards:** maximum 3 non-Muslims out of 11 members
 - **Central Waqf Council:** maximum 4 non-Muslims out of 20 members
- The Court held that such limits are necessary to maintain balance. Excessive non-Muslim representation could affect the religious and community identity of Waqf institutions.



Supreme Court’s strict view on powers given to Collectors:

- Under the amended law, District Collectors were given final authority in disputes regarding ownership and rights over Waqf properties.
- The Supreme Court ruled this as a direct violation of the **principle of Separation of Powers**.
- The Court observed that conferring such authority on the executive (Collector) goes against the **basic structure of the Constitution**.
- Disputes over property rights can only be adjudicated by the judiciary.
- Until a tribunal or court delivers the final verdict, neither the possession of property shall change, nor shall any third party be granted rights over it.

Ban on Reporting by Government Officials

- The Act had a provision that a government-designated officer could report whether a Waqf property was encroaching upon government land, and on the basis of this report, the state government could instruct the Waqf Board to make changes in its records.
- The Supreme Court suspended this provision, terming it one-sided and unfair.
- The Court observed that such reporting could lead to false and illegitimate claims over Waqf properties and weaken the community's trust.

Compulsory Registration Upheld

- The Waqf Act 2025 included a provision for mandatory registration by the users of Waqf properties.
- This provision was also challenged. The Supreme Court held that this arrangement had already been in force from 1995 to 2013, and hence nothing new was introduced. Therefore, this provision has been upheld.

Constitutional Significance of the Judgment

- The judgment reaffirms the principle of separation of powers.
- It strengthens the constitutional rights of religious freedom and equality.
- It is an important step towards protecting minority community property and maintaining administrative balance.
- The Court made it clear that no provision can be enforced without transparency and accountability.

Waqf Act and Amendments (2024–25)

- 'Waqf' comes from the Arabic word *waqfa*, meaning "to bind, restrain, or dedicate."
- In Islam, movable or immovable property donated solely for religious or social purposes is called Waqf.
- The person donating is called *waqif/wakif*, and the caretaker is known as *mutawalli*.
- **Purpose:** Maintenance of mosques/religious institutions, helping the poor, education, and other religious/charitable activities.

Waqf Boards

- Waqf Boards are statutory bodies in India established under the Waqf Acts of 1954 and 1995 to oversee Waqf properties dedicated for religious and charitable purposes.
- These boards are responsible for managing, regulating, and protecting Waqf assets such as mosques, graveyards, and other charitable institutions.
- They utilize income from Waqf properties for religious and charitable purposes in line with the wishes of the donor.

Historical Background

- **First Example (1173):** Sultan Muhammad Ghori donated a village to the Jama Masjid of Multan.
- **Colonial Period (1923):** The first attempt at regulation through the Muslim Waqf Act.
- **Independent India:**
 - **1954:** First Waqf Act.
 - **1995:** New Act granting greater powers to Waqf Boards.
 - This law led to increased encroachments, as well as complaints of illegal leases and sales of Waqf properties.
 - **2013 Amendment:** Addressed these complaints by granting Waqf Boards unlimited authority to claim properties in the name of Muslim donations, while eliminating judicial intervention.
 - The vesting of unlimited adjudicatory powers in Waqf Boards made the matter even more serious.



Status of Waqf in India

- **After Independence:** 52,000 properties.
- **2009:** Increased to 3 lakh properties (4 lakh acres of land).
- **Present (2025):**
 - 8,72,292 registered immovable properties (8 lakh acres of land).
 - 16,713 movable properties.
 - Estimated value: ₹1.2 lakh crore.
 - Digitization of properties on the **WAMSI Portal**.
 - **Third largest landholder:** After the Armed Forces (Army) and Indian Railways, Waqf Boards hold the third-largest share of land ownership in the country.
 - Estimated value: Waqf Board properties are valued at approximately ₹1.2 lakh crore.
 - **Management of Waqf properties:** Managed by a *Mutawalli* (caretaker), who functions as a supervisor.

Management of Waqf Properties

- **Mutawalli:** The manager/caretaker of the property.
- **Central Waqf Council:** Supervises the State Waqf Boards.
- **Survey:** For identification and registration of properties.

Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025

- **Passed by:** Lok Sabha (3 April 2025), Rajya Sabha (4 April 2025), Presidential assent (5 April 2025).
- **Enforced on:** 8 April 2025.
- **Objectives:**
 - To address past shortcomings.
 - To enhance the efficiency of Waqf Boards.
 - To update definitions.
 - To improve registration and record management.
 - To increase the use of technology (WAMSI).

Muslim Waqf (Repeal) Act, 2025

- **Objective:** To repeal the Muslim Waqf Act of 1923, as it was inadequate for modern India.

Key Features (1995 vs 2025)

Subject	Waqf Act, 1995	Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025
Formation of Waqf	Declaration, user, charitable donation (<i>waqf-al-aulad</i>)	Only declaration and charitable donation; user provision removed; donor must be a Muslim for at least 5 years
Waqf-al-Aulad	Could exclude female heirs	Can no longer exclude female heirs from rights
Government Property	No clear provision	Government property cannot be declared as waqf; disputes to be resolved by Collector
Property Determination	Power vested in Waqf Board	Provision removed
Survey	Survey Commissioner	To be done by Collector; pending surveys to follow revenue laws
Central Waqf Council	All members Muslim; 2 women mandatory	Some members may be non-Muslim; promotes administrative expertise
Waqf Board	Only Muslim electorate; at least 2 women	State government can nominate; 2 non-Muslim members mandatory; representation for Shia, Sunni, Bohra, Agha Khani
Tribunal	Chairperson + Muslim law expert	Chairperson (District Judge) + Joint Secretary level officer; provision for Muslim law expert removed
Appeal	Tribunal decision final	Appeal possible in High Court within 90 days
Powers of Central Government	State government could conduct audit	Central government can order audit by CAG
Separate Waqf Boards	For Shia/Sunni	Allowed for Shia, Sunni, Bohra and Agha Khani communities

Key Issues Related to Waqf

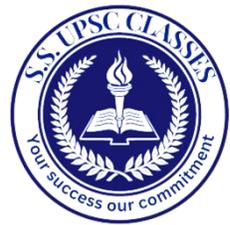
- **Principle of Irrevocability:** “Once Waqf, always Waqf” leads to disputes.
- **Litigation & Mismanagement:** Encroachments, illegal leases, ownership disputes.
- **Lack of Judicial Oversight:** No right of appeal against Tribunal’s decision under the 1995 Act.
- **Delay in Surveys:** Incomplete in many states (e.g., Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh).
- **Misuse of Provisions:** Arbitrary claims under Section 40, leading to community dissatisfaction.
- **Constitutional Questions:** Special law for one religion, whereas no such parallel exists for others.

Constitutional & Administrative Aspects

- **Waqf management is not only religious, but also administrative, economic, and social.**
- **Minimum inclusion of non-Muslim members** (2 out of 22 in the Central Council, 2 out of 11 in State Boards) – aimed at transparency and administrative expertise.
- **Section 96:** Central government empowered to regulate secular activities of Waqf institutions (education, social, economic).

Question: The Supreme Court considered making the Collector the final authority in Waqf property disputes a violation of which constitutional principle?

- (A) Federalism
- (B) Judicial Review
- (C) Separation of Powers
- (D) Right to Equality



India supported the two-state solution for Palestine at the United Nations

Question: India's support for the "New York Declaration" (2025), passed in the United Nations General Assembly, reflects which aspect of its foreign policy? Discuss.

Why in News?

THE HINDU

HOME / NEWS / INDIA

India votes in favour of UNGA resolution on Palestine endorsing two-state solution

The resolution, introduced by France, was adopted with an overwhelming 142 nations voting in favour, 10 against and 12 abstentions

Updated - September 13, 2025 10:36 am IST - United Nations



Key Points:

- The resolution, presented by France in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), was adopted on 12 September 2025 with overwhelming support from 142 countries.
- Only 10 countries opposed it, while 12 abstained.
- By voting in favor, India made its position clear that it firmly supports a peaceful resolution of the Palestine question and the two-state solution.
- The resolution was titled: *"New York Declaration on the Peaceful Resolution of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution."*

India's Balanced Stance

India has historically always supported Palestine's independence and right to self-determination.

- In 1974, India was among the first countries to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).
- In 1988, India recognized the State of Palestine.

At the same time, since the 1990s, India has expanded its strategic and defense cooperation with Israel. In this context, voting in favor of this resolution reflects India's balanced and "dual engagement" foreign policy.



New York Declaration: Background and Message

The declaration was introduced at a high-level international conference held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in July 2025.

- **Co-chairs:** France and Saudi Arabia
- **Objective:** To end the Gaza war and establish a global roadmap toward lasting peace.

The declaration made it clear that the Israel–Palestine conflict can only be resolved through the two-state solution, where:

1. A sovereign, viable, and independent Palestinian state comes into existence.
2. Israel continues to exist peacefully within secure borders.



Strong Message to Israel

In the resolution and declaration, Israel was directly addressed with the following points:

- Settlement construction in the occupied Palestinian territories (especially East Jerusalem) must be stopped immediately.
- Land grabbing and any attempts at annexation must be abandoned.
- Violence against Palestinians, incitement, and violent activities by settlers must be ended.
- A clear and public commitment to the two-state solution must be made.

Humanitarian Crisis and Global Concern

The resolution also stated that the recent conflict has pushed the Middle East into a severe humanitarian catastrophe:

- Thousands of civilians have been killed in Gaza, and millions displaced.
- Medical, food, and energy crises have pushed the local population into a survival crisis.
- This war has not only endangered regional stability but has also affected global peace and security.

Gaza: An Integral Part of the Palestinian State

The declaration made it clear that:

1. Gaza is an inseparable part of the Palestinian state.
2. It must be integrated with the West Bank.
3. Occupation, blockade, territorial reduction, or forced displacement there will not be acceptable. This message is directed not only at Israel but also at those countries seeking to impose control over Gaza in the name of humanitarian intervention or resettlement plans.



Implications for India

India's vote carries three important messages:

1. India's role is strengthened in the leadership of the Global South, as most developing countries stand with Palestine.
2. India continues its balanced foreign policy—maintaining defense-technology cooperation with Israel while supporting Palestine's right to self-determination.
3. India's ties with the Muslim world and Arab countries (especially in the context of energy and its diaspora) will grow stronger.

Future Challenges

However, despite the resolution, challenges remain:

- The opposition of countries like Israel and the U.S. shows weak political will on the ground.
- The political situation in Gaza and the West Bank (Hamas vs. Fatah) also raises questions about Palestinian internal unity.
- If concrete guarantees and a time-bound plan for the two-state solution are not made, the conflict is likely to deepen further.



Israel-Palestine Conflict

Historical Background

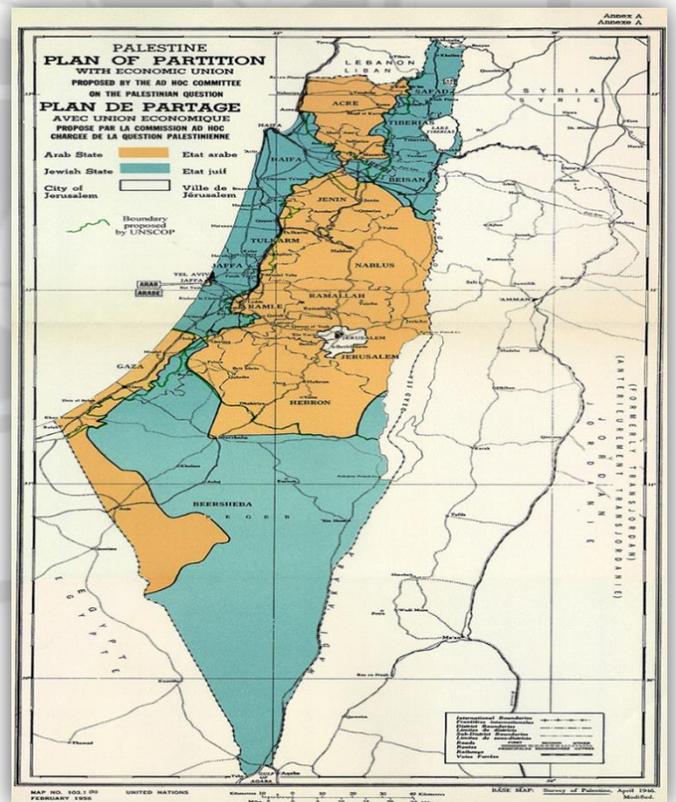
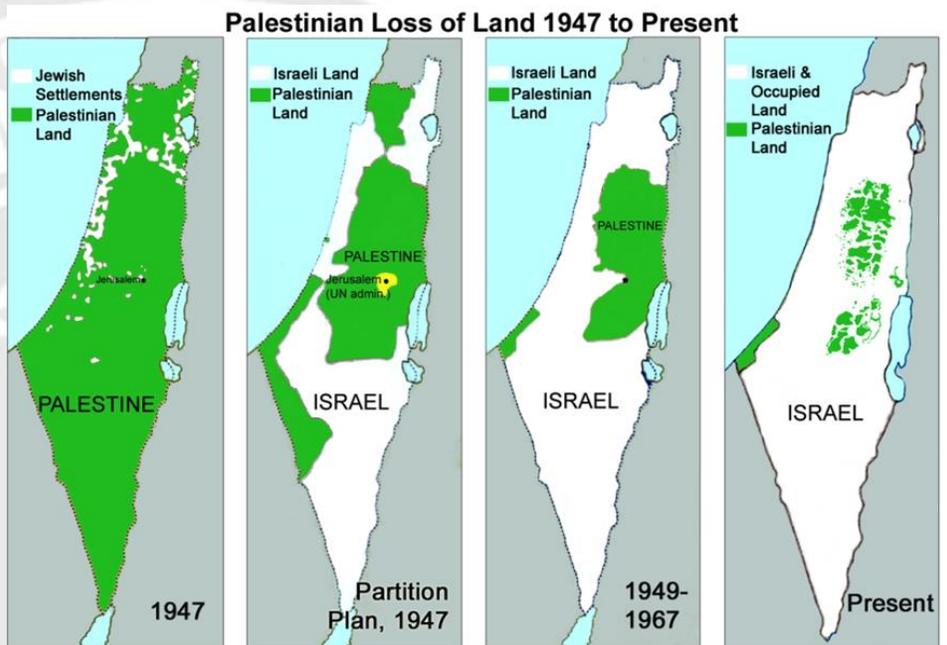
- **Since ancient times** – The region of Palestine has been sacred for Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike.
- **Ottoman Empire (1517-1917)** – The region remained under the control of the Ottoman Turks.
- **British Mandate (1917-1947)** – After World War I, Britain took control of the region. During this period, Jewish migration from Europe to Palestine increased.
- **United Nations Partition Plan (1947)** – The UN proposed to divide the region into two parts:

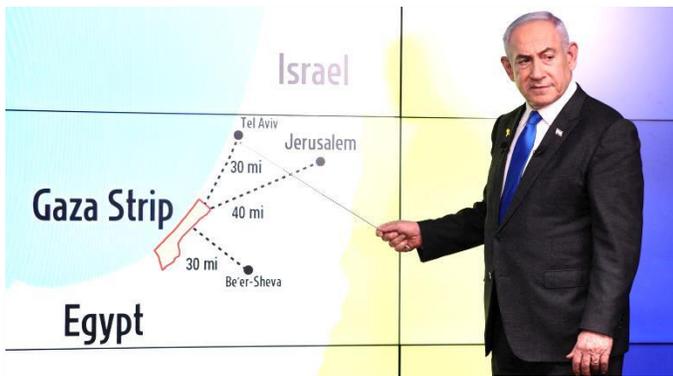
- 55% for Jews (Israel)
- 45% for Arabs (Palestinians)
- Jerusalem was to be placed under international administration.

The Jews accepted the proposal, but Arab countries rejected it.

Major Wars and Events

- **1948 – Establishment of Israel** → Arab countries attacked → Israel won → nearly 700,000 Palestinians became refugees.
- **1967 Six-Day War** – Israel captured the Gaza Strip, West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Golan Heights.
- **1973 Yom Kippur War** – Arab states attacked Israel, but failed to achieve success.
- **Oslo Accords (1993)** – For the first time, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) signed a peace agreement. Limited Palestinian self-rule was allowed in the West Bank and Gaza.





- **After 2000** – Intifadas (Palestinian uprisings), terrorist attacks, and intensified Israeli military operations in Gaza.
- **Hamas vs. Fatah** – Internal political division among Palestinians: Gaza under Hamas' control, West Bank under Fatah/Palestinian Authority.



Key Issues in the Conflict

- **Status of Jerusalem** – Both sides claim it as their capital.
- **Right of Return of Refugees** – Millions of Palestinians displaced since 1948, along with their descendants, claim the right to return.
- **Border Demarcation** – The future of the West Bank, Gaza, and settlements remains unresolved.
- **Security** – Israel seeks protection from terrorism and attacks, while Palestinians demand sovereignty and freedom.
- **Jewish Settlements** – Israel continues to expand settlements in the West Bank, which are considered illegal under international law.



Current Situation (as of 2025)

- Ongoing conflict between Hamas and Israel in the Gaza Strip.
- A humanitarian crisis persists in Gaza.
- Expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and intensified Palestinian protests.
- The US, European Union, United Nations, and Arab states advocate a “two-state solution,” but ground realities make it increasingly difficult.
- Recently (September 2025), India also voted in favor of a UN resolution supporting the two-state solution.

Conclusion

- The resolution passed in the United Nations General Assembly is not just a paper declaration, but a symbol of global consensus.
- India’s support shows that it stands for a solution based on peace, justice, and balance.
- However, the real challenge lies in turning this declaration into practical policy and concrete steps on the ground.

Question: Recently, the “New York Declaration” adopted in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is related to:

- (a) Climate change and the Net-Zero roadmap
- (b) The Palestine question and the two-state solution
- (c) The new treaty of the Arctic Council
- (d) Marine plastic pollution

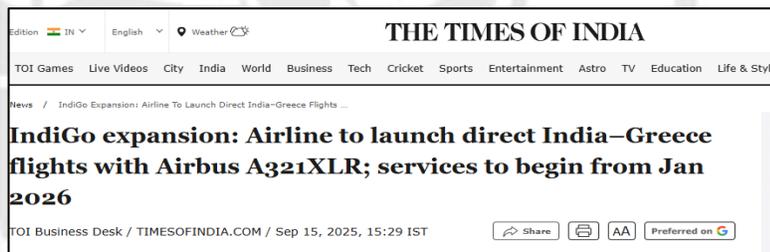
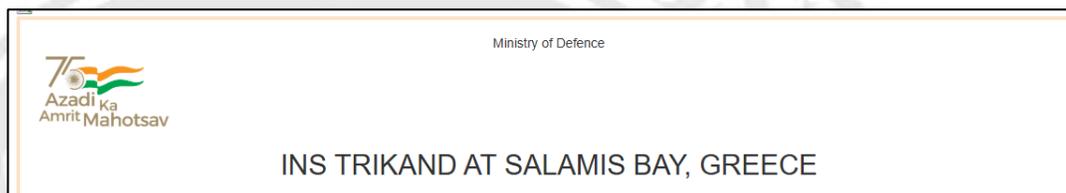


India–Greece First Naval Exercise: Building a New Strategic Axis in the Mediterranean

GS Paper II - International Relations (IR)

Question: Explain the strategic significance of the first India–Greece naval exercise (2025). How does this exercise highlight India's role in the changing global balance of power?

Why in news?



Key Points:

- In the changing global geopolitics, India has begun to strengthen its presence from the Indo-Pacific to the Mediterranean Sea.
- In this sequence, the first bilateral naval exercise between India and Greece (13–18 September 2025) holds historic significance.
- With the participation of **INS Trikand**, this exercise will not only serve as a platform for sharing military expertise but also symbolize the pinnacle of growing India–Greece defense cooperation.
- This exercise is not only a marker of military cooperation but also a strategic message in the context of the **Turkey–Pakistan equation** and the shifting global balance of power.

Historical Perspective of India–Greece Relations

- **Ancient cultural ties:** Since the era of Alexander and Chanakya, India and Greece have shared cultural, philosophical, and trade relations.
- **Modern period:** After independence, Greece maintained good diplomatic relations with India. During the Cold War, Greece was a part of NATO, yet its relations with India remained cordial.
- **New era (post-2020):** With the rise of the China–Pakistan–Turkey axis, both Greece and India began to face shared security concerns. This compelled them to advance rapidly toward strategic cooperation.

India–Greece Defense Cooperation: Recent Milestones



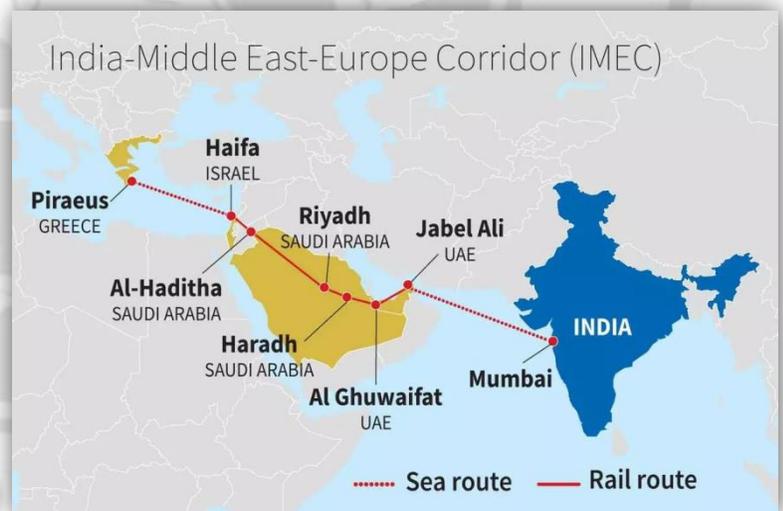
- **Defence Cooperation Agreement (2024):** Created a framework for regular dialogue and intelligence sharing among the three armed forces (Army, Navy, Air Force).
- **Air Force Exercises:**
 - *Iniochos-25 (Greece, 2025):* India participated with Su-30, IL-78, and C-17.
 - *Tarang Shakti-24 (India, 2024):* Greece participated with Eurofighter Typhoon.
 - *Rafale Exercise (2024):* India sent its Rafale fighter jets to Greece.
- **Naval Cooperation:**
 - In September 2025, **INS Tamal** and the Greek cruiser **Ritsos** conducted a PASSEX in the Eastern Mediterranean.
 - Now, **INS Trikand** is participating in the bilateral exercise.
- **High-Level Visits:**
 - Indian Air Force Chief **Amar Preet Singh (June 2025)** and the Army's **DGMO (December 2024)** visited Greece.
 - These visits gave new direction to defense diplomacy.
- **Weapons and Technology:**
 - Greece has shown interest in India's **BrahMos missile**, **loitering drones**, and **long-range cruise missiles**.





Strategic Aspects of the Exercise

- **Focus:** Interoperability, anti-drone warfare drills, anti-submarine operations, maritime surveillance, and emergency search and rescue.
- **Location:** Eastern Mediterranean, a sensitive region due to energy resources and strategic sea lanes.
- **Significance:** This exercise will establish India as a “reliable partner” in the European theatre.
- **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC):** Emerging as a promising pathway to enhance economic relations between India and Greece.





Turkey–Greece Dispute: Tensions from the Aegean Sea to Cyprus

- Relations between Turkey and Greece have always been tense, despite both being members of NATO.
- The two countries have come close to war several times.
- The main dispute concerns maritime boundaries and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) in the Aegean Sea.
- Turkey claims that Greek islands are not entitled to full EEZ rights, whereas Greece, under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), asserts full maritime zones for its islands.
- Disagreement also exists over airspace: Greece claims 10 nautical miles of airspace, while Turkey recognizes only 6 nautical miles.
- Tensions have further escalated over exploration rights and natural gas reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean.
- Cyprus remains at the heart of these disputes; in 1974, Turkey launched a military operation and occupied the northern part of Cyprus, which has not been recognized internationally.
- Only Turkey recognizes it as the “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.”
- These disputes are pushing Greece closer to partners like India, which opposes Turkey’s expansionist policies.

Turkey–Pakistan Axis and India–Greece Response

- Turkey, acting as Pakistan’s “big brother,” is boosting its military strength.
- Pakistan depends heavily on Turkish drones and weapon systems.
- India demonstrated its technological superiority by neutralizing Turkish drones in operations like *Operation Sindoor*.
- India–Greece cooperation could become a “strategic headache” for the Turkey–Pakistan alliance.

Benefits for India

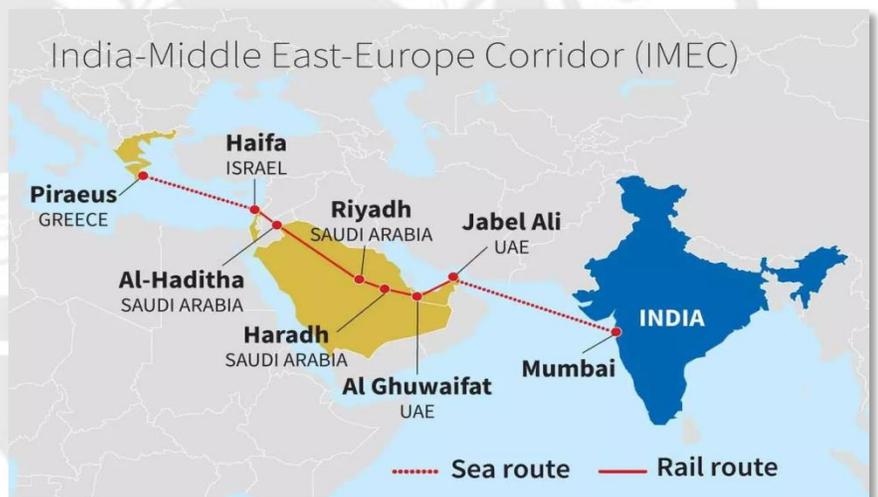
- **Geographical expansion:** Active presence of the Indian Navy in the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Strategic axis:** Position in the “West Asia Quad” with Greece, Cyprus, and Armenia.
- **Defence exports:** Potential market for BrahMos and other Indian weapons.
- **European engagement:** Strengthened indirect linkages with NATO countries.
- **Message to Turkey–Pakistan:** India is capable of balancing any regional axis.

Other Aspects

- The first India–Greece naval exercise is not just a military drill but a geopolitical signal. It is part of India’s global vision—“Security and Cooperation from the Indo-Pacific to the Mediterranean.”
- This partnership with Greece will not only pose a strategic challenge to Turkey and Pakistan but will also redefine India’s role between Europe and Asia.
- In essence, the exercise is a combined demonstration of India’s maritime power, diplomacy, and global influence.

What is the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)?

- IMEC (India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor) was announced on **9–10 September 2023** at the 18th G20 Summit held in New Delhi.
- Its purpose is to establish **physical, economic, and strategic connectivity** between Asia, Europe, and the Gulf countries.
- It is part of the **Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII)** announced by the US, which promotes high-quality infrastructure projects in developing countries.



Structure and Corridors

IMEC is a **multi-modal corridor** (rail + road + sea route):

- **Eastern Corridor** – Connects India with Gulf countries (UAE, Saudi Arabia).
- **Northern Corridor** – Connects Gulf countries with Europe (Greece, Italy, France).



Major Ports

- **India:** Mundra, Kandla, JNPT (Navi Mumbai)
- **UAE:** Fujairah, Jebel Ali, Abu Dhabi
- **Saudi Arabia:** Dammam, Ras Al Khair
- **Israel:** Haifa
- **Europe:** Piraeus (Greece), Messina (Southern Italy), Marseille (France)

Railway Network

- Fujairah (UAE) → Saudi Arabia (Ghuwaifat & Haradh) → Jordan → Haifa (Israel)



Objectives

- **Transport Network:** To connect India, the Middle East, and Europe.
- **Reduction in time & cost:** Compared to the Suez Canal route, **40% less time** and **30% lower cost**.
- **Reduction in GHG emissions:** Green transport solutions.
- **Industrial & Trade Benefits:**
 - Faster and cheaper exports/imports
 - Seamless flow of raw materials and finished goods
 - Attracting foreign investment through SEZs
- **Employment generation and regional development**
- **Energy security:** Stable energy supply from the Middle East

Importance for India

- **Strategic advantage:** Deepening relations with the Arabian Peninsula.
- **Strengthening India's role in global supply chains.**
- **Alternative to BRI:** A democratic, transparent alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative.
- **Export competitiveness:** Faster and cheaper access of Indian goods to Europe.
- **Boost to "Make in India" and Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes.**
- **Energy & food security:** Uninterrupted supply of oil, gas, and agricultural products.

Global and Geopolitical Significance

- **Challenge to China:** IMEC is seen as a counter to BRI by the US-India-Europe coalition.
- **Regional stability:** Corridor may help reduce political tensions (especially by boosting Arab-Israel cooperation).
- **Expansion to Africa:** Its model could be replicated as a Trans-African Corridor.
- **US-India partnership:** Both nations can jointly present an alternative global economic framework.

Greece

- Greece is a country in southeastern Europe, with its capital at Athens.
- It is famous for its ancient civilization, birthplace of democracy, philosophy, science, and the Olympic Games.



Key Facts

- Capital: Athens
- Currency: Euro (€)
- Geographical Location: Southeastern Europe, along the Mediterranean Sea.
- Major Seas: Aegean Sea, Ionian Sea, Mediterranean Sea

Ancient Significance:

- Philosophers like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were from here.
- The Olympic Games began in 776 BCE in Olympia (Greece).
- The concept of democracy originated in Athens.



Modern Politics:

- Greece is a member of the European Union (EU), NATO, and the Eurozone.

India–Greece Relations:

- Cultural and trade ties since ancient times.
- In modern times: cooperation in defense, maritime security, education, and economic partnership.
- In 2025, the first India–Greece naval exercise was held.
- In the IMEC (India–Middle East–Europe Corridor), Greece is considered an important gateway to Europe.

1. In which region was the first India–Greece naval exercise 2025 held?

- (A) Arabian Sea
- (B) Bay of Bengal
- (C) Eastern Mediterranean Sea
- (D) Aerial Sea

2. Which Indian warship participated in the first India–Greece naval exercise?

- (A) INS Vikrant
- (B) INS Trikand
- (C) INS Vikramaditya
- (D) INS Sumitra



Many Countries, Including the Maldives, May Disappear from the Map

Why in news?

Shocking! Maldives and 9 other countries that could vanish sooner than you think

The situation of countries sinking into the ocean is a serious issue, especially for small island nations such as Tuvalu, Kiribati, the Maldives and the Marshall Islands, which are affected by rising sea levels due to climate change.

What does international law say about this?

- According to the Montevideo Convention (1933), the definition of a state includes population, territory, government and the capacity to enter into international relations.
- However, recent developments show that rising sea levels do not automatically terminate statehood.



1. What will happen to statehood?

- In international law, the principle of continuity of statehood is strong. The ILC's 2025 final report stated that statehood is not terminated due to sea-level rise caused by climate change, even if land is submerged.
- This is based on the right to preserve the existence of a state.
- The ICJ's advisory opinion in July 2025 emphasized obligations regarding climate change and recognized the existential threat to small islands, but did not provide for termination of statehood.
- This opinion acknowledges a shift in state practice.

Example: Even in failed states like Somalia, where no effective government exists, statehood continues. Similarly, for sinking nations, the ILC report emphasizes preventing injustice.

2. Will borders disappear or not?

- Land boundaries may be affected, but maritime zones can be preserved. The ILC report noted that even if baselines shift due to sea-level rise, maritime boundaries can remain fixed.
- The Pacific Islands Forum's 2021 declaration affirmed the preservation of maritime zones despite rising sea levels, based on UNCLOS principles.

Example: The *Falepili Union Treaty* between Australia and Tuvalu permanently recognizes Tuvalu's maritime zones despite sea-level rise, and also provides migration pathways.

- These boundaries are crucial for fisheries, mineral resources, and navigation, and there is no rule in international law that automatically erases them.

3. Will identity vanish or survive?

- With statehood preserved, national identity, citizenship, UN membership, and sovereignty also remain protected.
- According to the ILC and ICJ, rising sea levels do not affect people's will or right to self-determination.
- Declarations from the Pacific Islands Forum and AOSIS (Alliance of Small Island States) affirm that the sea cannot erase nations or peoples; identity is linked to people.
- Countries like Tuvalu are attempting to create "digital nations" by digitizing their culture and government so that their identity survives even after displacement.
- However, if all elements completely vanish, some legal uncertainty may remain, though current trends lean toward protection.

Montevideo Convention (1933): Convention on the Rights and Duties of States

- The Montevideo Convention, officially known as the "*Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States*," was signed on **26 December 1933** in Montevideo, Uruguay, during the Seventh International Conference of American States.
- It entered into force on **26 December 1934** and was registered in the League of Nations Treaty Series on **8 January 1936**.
- Although primarily concerning the countries of the American continent, the Convention is considered an important document in international law for the definition and recognition of statehood.

Purpose and Significance

- The Convention codifies existing norms of international law and provides criteria for defining statehood.
- It is based on the **declarative theory**, according to which the existence of a state does not depend on its recognition by other states.
- This particularly facilitated the recognition of former colonies or countries with limited sovereignty.
- In the modern context, it is relevant for maintaining the statehood of climate-change-affected sinking islands (such as Tuvalu), although the Convention itself does not explicitly mention climate change.

Definition of a State (Statehood Criteria)

Article 1 of the Convention defines a state as a person of international law. A state must have the following four essential elements:

1. **Permanent Population** – There must be a stable population.
2. **Defined Territory** – There must be a specific territory.
3. **Government** – There must be an effective government.
4. **Capacity to Enter into Relations with Other States** – Ability to participate in international relations.

Independence and sovereignty are not explicitly mentioned but are implied.

Important Articles on Recognition of States

- **Article 3:** The political existence of a state is independent of recognition by other states. Even before recognition, a state can exercise its rights under international law. This supports the **declarative theory**, as opposed to the **constitutive theory**, in which recognition is necessary.
- **Article 11:** Prohibits acquiring sovereignty by the use of military force. Any territorial gain or advantage obtained through coercion—whether by arms, threats, or coercive diplomacy—must not be recognized.

Summary of Key Articles

Article	Main Provision
Article 1	Four main characteristics of a state: population, territory, government and capacity for international relations.
Article 3	Existence of a state is independent of recognition.
Article 11	Prohibition on recognition of territorial gains acquired by force.

The Convention contains **16 articles in total**, covering issues such as equality of states, non-intervention, and peaceful settlement of disputes.

Signatories and Parties

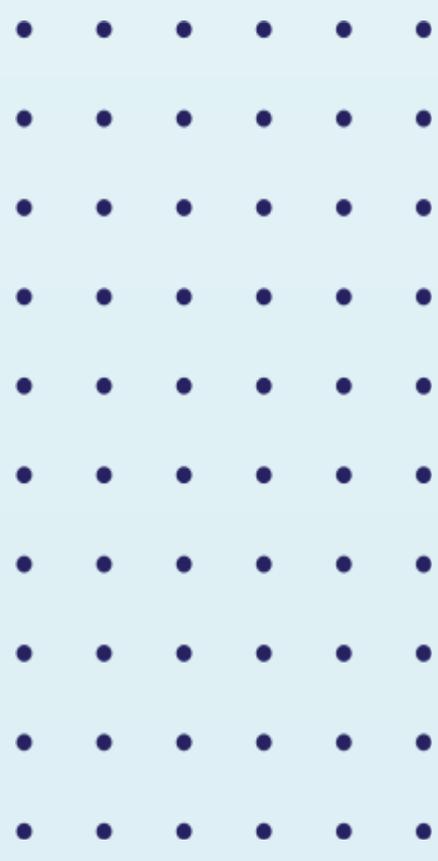
- **Signatories (1933):** 20 countries signed on 26 December 1933, including **Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, the United States, Venezuela**, etc. Brazil, Peru, and the United States signed with certain reservations.
- **Parties:** As of November 2021, 17 countries had ratified the Convention, including **Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica (by accession), Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, the United States, and Venezuela**. Ratification dates range from 1934 to 2018



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