

Editorial of the Day – 12.05.2026

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1. A New Phase in the India-Vietnam Strategic Partnership (TH)

GS Paper II – International Relations

Topic – Bilateral, regional, and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Sub-Topic – India-Vietnam Strategic Partnership; Act East Policy; Indo-Pacific Security.

1. Introduction

Vietnamese President Tô Lâm's state visit to India (May 5–7, 2026) marked a milestone in diplomatic history as both nations formally upgraded their ties to an Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. This elevation reflects a move from limited sectoral engagement to a broad-spectrum alliance encompassing defence, economic resilience, and maritime security in the Indo-Pacific.

2. Strategic Convergence in the Indo-Pacific

The partnership is increasingly anchored by shared geopolitical concerns and regional visions –

Maritime Order – Both nations advocate for a rules-based maritime order and share concerns regarding growing assertiveness in the South China Sea.

Policy Alignment – India's Act East Policy finds a natural complement in Vietnam's strategic balancing approach.

ASEAN Centrality – Vietnam is a pivotal pillar in India's engagement with ASEAN, supporting the principle of ASEAN centrality in Indo-Pacific architecture.

Strategic Autonomy – Collaboration is driven by a mutual desire for strategic autonomy and regional stability amid intensifying great-power competition.

3. Defence – The Backbone of the Partnership

Defence has evolved from capacity-building to a deterrent-focused pillar –

Hardware Transfer – Following the 2023 transfer of the missile corvette INS Kirpan, ties have deepened significantly.

BrahMos Exports – Advanced discussions on exporting BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles indicate a shift toward high-end deterrence capabilities.

Security Cooperation – Strategic cooperation includes maritime security, joint training, and financial assistance to bolster Vietnam's naval strength.

Trust Building – Regular high-level Défense dialogues have solidified mutual trust since the 2016 Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

4. Economic and Technological Expansion

The relationship is diversifying into critical future-oriented sectors –

Trade Growth – Bilateral trade has surpassed \$16 billion, with a formal target set at \$25 billion by 2030.

Supply Chain Resilience – Both nations are collaborating to reduce "China-centric" dependencies by building resilient supply chains.

Critical Sectors – Cooperation now extends into rare earth minerals, digital payment systems, and energy.

Manufacturing Hubs – Leveraging Vietnam's role as an ASEAN manufacturing hub aligns with India's economic diversification strategies.

5. Regional Significance and Bilateralism

Power Balancing – India and Vietnam contribute to the regional balance of power by engaging with other partners like Japan, Australia, and the United States.

International Law – Joint efforts promote peace and adherence to international law in vital maritime corridors.

Mini lateral Cooperation – The ties reflect a broader trend of growing Mini lateral groupings in Asia aimed at maintaining regional peace.

6. Challenges and the Path Ahead

Despite the momentum, several hurdles remain for the partnership –

Implementation Gaps – Converting high-level political agreements into practical, on-ground outcomes in connectivity and trade.

Defence Barriers – Geopolitical and financial complexities surrounding the export of sensitive technologies like the BrahMos system.

Private Sector Role – There is a need to increase private sector participation and improve legal/logistics frameworks to support economic ties.

Emerging Tech – Future success will depend on how effectively both nations collaborate on critical minerals and emerging technologies.

Conclusion

The India-Vietnam relationship has matured into a vital strategic partnership essential for Indo-Pacific stability. By strengthening collaboration in maritime security, trade, and technology, both nations are positioning themselves as central actors in the evolving regional architecture. The long-term success of this "Enhanced" partnership will rely on the effective institutionalization of these new agreements.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/a-new-phase-in-the-india-vietnam-strategic-partnership/article70966755.ece>

Question

"The transition of the India-Vietnam relationship into an 'Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership' signifies a shift from mere diplomatic engagement to a robust security-centric alliance in the Indo-Pacific. Comment." (250 Words, 15 Marks)

1. Introduction

The state visit of Vietnamese President Tô Lâm to India in May 2026 culminated in the formal upgrade of bilateral ties to an Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. This elevation reflects a profound transformation in diplomatic priorities, where shared geopolitical anxieties and a mutual vision for a rules-based Indo-Pacific have replaced traditional, low-intensity engagement.

2. Shift Toward a Security-Centric Alliance

The "Enhanced" nature of the partnership is fundamentally anchored in defense and strategic coordination –

Defense as a Core Pillar – Defense cooperation has transitioned from basic training and capacity building to providing high-end deterrence. This is evidenced by the 2023 transfer of the missile corvette INS Kirpan and ongoing discussions regarding the export of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to Vietnam.

Maritime Security Convergence – Both nations share deep concerns over maritime assertiveness in the South China Sea. Their alignment supports a rules-based order, emphasizing ASEAN centrality and India's Act East Policy as counter-balances to regional hegemony.

Strategic Autonomy – By strengthening ties, both India and Vietnam aim to maintain strategic autonomy, avoiding over-dependence on any single great power while contributing to the regional balance of power.

3. Economic and Technological Dimensions

A robust security alliance is unsustainable without economic integration, which is also being "enhanced"

Resilient Supply Chains – Both nations are actively collaborating to build supply chains that are less "China-centric," focusing on rare earth minerals and emerging technologies.

Strategic Trade – Bilateral trade has crossed \$16 billion, with a 2030 target of \$25 billion, shifting focus toward strategic sectors like energy and digital finance.

4. Implementation Challenges

Despite the high level of political will, the partnership faces hurdles –

Geopolitical Sensitivities – High-end defense exports like the BrahMos system involve navigating complex financial and regional geopolitical landscapes.

Practical Outcomes – There is a persistent need to convert high-level diplomatic agreements into tangible infrastructure, logistics, and connectivity projects.

Conclusion

The upgrade to an Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership is a clear signal that India and Vietnam view each other as indispensable security partners in the evolving Indo-Pacific architecture. While the relationship is maturing rapidly, its long-term success will depend on how effectively both nations institutionalize defense manufacturing and economic diversification to provide a credible alternative to existing regional power dynamics.

Source – <https://indianexpress.com/article/business/renewable-energy-curtailment-critical-issue-mnre-secy-10684584/>

2. Renewable Energy Curtailment Critical Issue; India Requires Super Grid Like China – MNRE Secy (IE)

GS Paper III – Economy / Infrastructure / Environment

Topic – Infrastructure – Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.; Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation.

Sub-Topic – Renewable Energy Transition, Grid Management, and Energy Storage Systems.

1. Introduction

India's clean energy transition has reached a critical juncture where generation capacity is outpacing grid capability. On May 12, 2026, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) identified Renewable Energy Curtailment as a primary structural challenge. With nearly 23 GWh of solar power being curtailed daily in April 2026—enough to power one-fourth of Delhi—the focus has shifted from merely adding capacity to ensuring grid resilience and transmission efficiency.

2. Understanding Renewable Energy Curtailment

Definition – The intentional reduction of electricity generation from available renewable sources despite favourable weather conditions.

Primary Drivers –

Grid Saturation – Inability of the electricity grid to absorb excess supply during peak daytime solar generation.

Transmission Bottlenecks – Inadequate evacuation infrastructure prevents the transport of power from generation hubs to demand centres.

Economic Impact – Frequent curtailment discourages private investment and threatens the financial viability of green projects.

3. Structural and Infrastructure Challenges

Legacy Design – India's grid was originally built for stable, conventional thermal power, making it difficult to handle the intermittent nature of solar and wind.

Supply-Demand Mismatch – Solar peaks occur during the day, while India's peak demand often occurs in the evening.

Geographical Concentration – High generation is limited to states like Rajasthan and Gujarat, putting immense pressure on regional transmission lines.

DISCOM Health – The weak financial position of State Electricity Distribution Companies (DISCOMs) hampers procurement and payment for renewable power.

4. Government Initiatives – Green Energy Corridor (GEC)

The GEC scheme is the cornerstone of India's strategy to integrate renewables –

Objective – Strengthening transmission networks through dedicated lines and substations for power evacuation.

Scope – Supports both interstate and intrastate networks to transfer power from RE-rich states to consumption hubs.

Expansion – MNRE is planning larger outlays for GEC to include storage systems and improve overall grid reliability.

5. Technological Solutions for Grid Stability

Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) – Stores excess daytime power for supply during peak evening hours, minimising wastage.

1. **Policy Support** – Domestic manufacturing is encouraged via the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme.

Grid-Forming Inverters – These allow RE systems to mimic conventional plants, improving voltage and frequency stability.

Synchronous Condensers – Provide reactive power and inertia as thermal plants are phased out.

Smart Grids – Use digital monitoring and advanced forecasting to manage real-time electricity flows and predict generation patterns.

6. Strategic Road Ahead – Diversification and Global Models

Geographical Diversification – Expanding beyond Rajasthan and Gujarat through Agri-photovoltaics and Floating Solar on reservoirs to reduce transmission congestion.

The China "Super Grid" Model – India may eventually require ultra-high-voltage transmission lines similar to China's model to transfer power efficiently over long distances.

Policy Coordination – Enhanced synchronisation between the MNRE, Ministry of Power, CEA, and CTU is vital for smooth energy evacuation.

7. Conclusion

India's target of 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030 cannot be achieved by generation alone. Addressing renewable energy curtailment requires a parallel revolution in grid modernisation. By investing in BESS, strengthening the Green Energy Corridor, and adopting smart grid technologies, India can build a flexible and resilient power system essential for long-term energy security and climate goals.

Source – <https://indianexpress.com/article/business/renewable-energy-curtailment-critical-issue-mnre-secy-10684584/>

Question

"Renewable energy curtailment is emerging as a significant structural bottleneck in India's journey toward its 2030 clean energy goals. Discuss the causes of this phenomenon and the multi-dimensional strategies required to build a resilient national grid." (250 Words, 15 Marks)

1. Introduction

India has set an ambitious target of achieving 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030. However, the recent identification of significant renewable energy curtailment—where nearly 23 GWh of solar power was backed down daily in April 2026—highlights that generation capacity has outpaced the electricity grid's ability to absorb and transmit it.

2. Causes of Renewable Energy Curtailment

Infrastructure Mismatch – India's grid was primarily designed for stable thermal power; the intermittent nature of solar and wind creates operational stress that legacy systems are ill-equipped to handle.

Temporal Imbalance – Solar generation peaks during the day, creating a surplus that often fails to align with the evening peak demand.

Transmission Congestion – Many high-capacity RE projects are concentrated in specific states like Rajasthan and Gujarat. Inadequate evacuation infrastructure leads to regional transmission bottlenecks.

Financial Health of DISCOMs – The weak financial position of distribution companies often leads them to "back down" renewable power to avoid high procurement costs or technical imbalances.

3. Multi-dimensional Strategies for a Resilient Grid

A holistic approach is required to ensure energy security and reduce wastage –

Infrastructure Strengthening – Accelerating the Green Energy Corridor (GEC) scheme to create dedicated interstate and intrastate transmission lines for RE evacuation.

Energy Storage Solutions – Prioritizing Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) to store excess daytime generation for peak-hour usage, supported by the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for domestic manufacturing.

Technological Interventions – Deploying Grid-forming inverters and Synchronous condensers to provide the inertia and frequency stability traditionally offered by thermal plants.

Geographical Diversification – Moving beyond concentrated hubs by promoting Agri-photovoltaics and Floating solar projects to distribute generation closer to demand centers.

Smart Grid Adoption – Implementing digital monitoring and advanced forecasting tools to better predict generation patterns and manage real-time power flows.

4. Conclusion

The success of India's clean energy transition depends on a parallel revolution in its transmission and storage architecture. By shifting focus from mere capacity addition to grid modernization and flexibility, India can mitigate curtailment, protect investor confidence, and achieve its long-term net-zero commitments.

Source – <https://indianexpress.com/article/business/renewable-energy-curtailment-critical-issue-mnre-secy-10684584/>

3. Asean's Elusive Search for Financial Safety (BL)

General Studies Paper – General Studies Paper II – International Relations

Topic – Regional groupings and international institutions

Sub-Topic – Financial stability and currency arrangements

Introduction

The ASEAN region has long sought mechanisms to protect itself from external financial shocks and currency crises. The article discusses ASEAN's efforts to create regional financial safety arrangements, especially through initiatives such as the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM). However, despite institutional development, questions remain regarding the effectiveness, adequacy, and autonomy of such regional financial mechanisms in times of crisis.

1. Background – Why ASEAN Needs Financial Safety Nets

Experience of the Asian Financial Crisis (1997)

1. The 1997 Asian Financial Crisis exposed the vulnerability of Southeast Asian economies to sudden capital outflows and currency instability.

Dependence on External Institutions

1. Many countries relied heavily on IMF assistance during crises, leading to concerns regarding external conditionalities and loss of policy autonomy.

Need for Regional Self-Protection

1. ASEAN countries recognised the importance of building regional financial cooperation mechanisms.

2. What is the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI/CMIM)?

Origin

1. The Chiang Mai Initiative was launched in 2000 among ASEAN+3 countries (ASEAN, China, Japan, and South Korea).

Objective

1. To create a regional financial safety net through currency swap arrangements.

Multilateralization

1. The mechanism later evolved into the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM).

3. Purpose of Regional Financial Safety Nets

Protection Against Currency Crises

1. Regional arrangements aim to provide liquidity support during financial instability.

Reducing Dependence on IMF

1. ASEAN countries sought greater financial autonomy and faster regional responses.

Regional Economic Stability

1. Financial cooperation strengthens investor confidence and macroeconomic resilience.

4. Structural Challenges Facing CMIM

Limited Financial Capacity

1. Questions remain regarding whether available funds are sufficient during major crises.

Dependence on IMF Linkage

1. A significant portion of CMIM assistance remains linked to IMF programmes.

Political and Strategic Rivalries

1. Strategic competition among China, Japan, and other regional actors affects institutional cohesion.

Weak Institutionalisation

1. CMIM lacks the enforcement power and operational depth of institutions like the IMF.

5. ASEAN's Broader Financial Vulnerabilities

Exposure to Global Capital Flows

1. ASEAN economies are highly integrated into global trade and finance.

Currency Volatility Risks

1. Sudden capital outflows can destabilise exchange rates and financial markets.

External Economic Dependence

1. Export-oriented economies remain vulnerable to global slowdowns and geopolitical tensions.

6. Geopolitical Dimensions

ASEAN+3 Cooperation

1. Financial cooperation reflects broader efforts at Asian regionalism.

China–Japan Competition

1. Leadership competition influences regional financial governance dynamics.

Indo-Pacific Economic Context

1. Financial resilience has become increasingly important amid geopolitical uncertainty and supply-chain disruptions.

7. Importance of Regional Financial Cooperation

Enhancing Collective Resilience

1. Regional mechanisms can provide faster and context-sensitive responses to crises.

Complementing Global Institutions

1. Regional arrangements need not replace the IMF but can supplement global financial governance.

Strengthening Economic Integration

1. Financial cooperation supports regional trade and investment flows.

8. Lessons for Emerging Economies Including India

Need for Financial Buffers

1. Countries require strong forex reserves and prudent macroeconomic management.

Regional Cooperation Matters

1. Financial stability increasingly depends on regional institutional coordination.

Importance of Crisis Preparedness

1. Developing economies must strengthen financial surveillance and contingency planning.

9. Way Forward for ASEAN Financial Architecture

Strengthening CMIM Capacity

1. Increase funding and improve rapid-disbursal mechanisms.

Reduce Excessive IMF Dependence

1. ASEAN should gradually improve institutional autonomy and credibility.

Improve Regional Surveillance

1. Better monitoring of financial vulnerabilities can strengthen preventive action.

Deepen Financial Integration

1. Greater monetary and financial cooperation can improve long-term regional stability.

Conclusion

ASEAN's search for financial safety reflects the broader challenge of building regional resilience in an uncertain global economy. While initiatives such as CMIM represent important progress, stronger institutional capacity, deeper cooperation, and greater financial autonomy are necessary for an effective regional financial safety net.

Source - <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/aseans-elusive-search-for-financial-safety/article70965393.ece>

Question

Q. "Regional financial safety mechanisms have become increasingly important in an era of global financial volatility." Discuss with reference to ASEAN's financial cooperation initiatives. (250 words)

Introduction

Global financial volatility and sudden capital movements have increased the importance of regional financial safety mechanisms. ASEAN countries, especially after the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, have attempted to strengthen regional financial cooperation through initiatives such as the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM).

Importance of ASEAN Financial Cooperation

1. CMIM was created to provide liquidity support during financial crises.
2. Regional arrangements reduce excessive dependence on IMF assistance.
3. Financial cooperation strengthens investor confidence and macroeconomic stability.
4. ASEAN+3 cooperation promotes deeper regional economic integration.

Challenges Facing CMIM

1. Available financial resources may be insufficient during large-scale crises.
2. Significant portions of assistance remain linked to IMF conditionalities.
3. Strategic rivalry among regional powers affects institutional cohesion.
4. CMIM lacks the operational strength and institutional depth of the IMF.

Broader Relevance

1. Regional financial safety nets complement global financial institutions.
2. Financial resilience is increasingly important amid geopolitical uncertainty and capital-flow volatility.
3. Emerging economies require strong reserves, regional cooperation, and crisis-management mechanisms.

Conclusion

ASEAN's financial cooperation initiatives represent important efforts toward regional resilience. However, stronger institutional capacity, deeper coordination, and greater financial autonomy are necessary for an effective and credible regional financial safety framework.

Source - <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/aseans-elusive-search-for-financial-safety/article70965393.ece>

4. The Global Failure to Protect Women (TP)

General Studies Paper – General Studies Paper I – Society and Women Issues

Topic – Role of women and women's organisations

Sub-Topic – International conventions and treaties

Introduction

Violence against women remains one of the most widespread human-rights violations across the world. Despite constitutional protections, international conventions, and national laws, women continue to face domestic violence, sexual harassment, trafficking, child marriage, workplace discrimination, and gender-based violence. The article argues that weak enforcement mechanisms and the absence of a binding global accountability framework continue to undermine women's safety, dignity, and empowerment.

1. Nature and Scale of Violence Against Women (VAW)

Forms of Violence

1. Women face physical, sexual, psychological, economic, and digital violence.

Domestic and Public Spaces

1. Violence occurs both within households and in workplaces, educational institutions, and public spaces.

Structural Nature of Gender Violence

1. Violence against women is rooted in patriarchal norms, unequal power relations, and gender discrimination.

2. Global Dimensions of the Problem

Persistence Across Countries

1. Violence against women exists across developed and developing countries alike.

Weak Legal Protection

1. Many countries still lack comprehensive laws against marital rape, workplace harassment, and domestic abuse.

Enforcement Deficit

1. Even where laws exist, implementation remains weak due to institutional failures and social stigma.

3. Economic and Developmental Consequences

Impact on Women's Participation

1. Violence reduces women's access to education, employment, and public participation.

Economic Costs

1. Gender violence lowers labour productivity and increases healthcare and social costs.

Developmental Losses

1. Exclusion and insecurity prevent societies from fully utilising women's capabilities and human capital.

4. Public Health and Psychological Impact

Physical Health Consequences

1. Violence results in injury, disability, reproductive health problems, and mortality.

Mental Health Impact

1. Survivors often face trauma, depression, anxiety, and long-term psychological distress.

Intergenerational Effects

1. Violence affects children, families, and broader social stability.

5. International Legal and Institutional Frameworks

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

1. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women is the primary international treaty addressing women's rights and gender discrimination.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

1. SDG 5 focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls.

Limitations of Global Frameworks

1. Many international agreements lack strong enforcement and accountability mechanisms.

6. Indian Context

Constitutional Protections

1. The Constitution guarantees equality, dignity, and protection against discrimination.

Legal Measures

1. India has enacted laws relating to domestic violence, workplace harassment, dowry, trafficking, and child marriage.

Continuing Challenges

1. Low reporting rates, social stigma, judicial delays, and weak enforcement remain serious concerns.

7. Violence and Governance

Institutional Accountability

1. Police, judiciary, healthcare systems, and social institutions play critical roles in protection and justice delivery.

Importance of Survivor-Centred Approaches

1. Legal systems must ensure dignity, rehabilitation, and support for survivors.

Data and Monitoring Gaps

1. Underreporting often hides the true scale of violence.

8. Need for Social and Cultural Transformation

Patriarchal Norms

1. Deep-rooted gender stereotypes perpetuate violence and discrimination.

Education and Awareness

1. Gender-sensitive education is essential for behavioural change.

Men and Community Participation

1. Preventing violence requires broader societal engagement beyond legal reform alone.

9. Way Forward

Stronger Enforcement Mechanisms

1. Improve police responsiveness, judicial efficiency, and survivor protection systems.

Comprehensive Legal Reform

1. Close legal gaps relating to marital rape, cyber abuse, and workplace safety.

Economic Empowerment of Women

1. Financial independence improves women's bargaining power and resilience.

Global Accountability Frameworks

1. International institutions should strengthen monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

Multi-Sectoral Approach

1. Governments, civil society, schools, media, and communities must work together.

Conclusion

Violence against women is not only a human-rights issue but also a major social, economic, and developmental challenge. Sustainable progress requires stronger legal enforcement, institutional accountability, cultural transformation, and genuine commitment to gender equality at both national and global levels.

Source - <https://dailypioneer.com/news/the-global-failure-to-protect-women>

Question

Q. "Violence against women is both a human-rights issue and a developmental challenge." Discuss the causes, consequences, and measures required to address gender-based violence globally and in India. (250 words)

Introduction

Violence against women remains one of the most widespread human-rights violations globally. Despite legal and institutional reforms, gender-based violence continues to undermine women's safety, dignity, and socio-economic participation.

Causes of Violence Against Women

1. Patriarchal social norms and gender inequality sustain discriminatory attitudes.
2. Economic dependence and unequal power relations increase vulnerability.
3. Weak law enforcement and judicial delays reduce accountability.
4. Social stigma and underreporting discourage victims from seeking justice.

Consequences

1. Violence affects women's physical and mental health.
2. It reduces access to education, employment, and public participation.
3. Gender violence imposes economic and social costs on societies.
4. Intergenerational impacts weaken social cohesion and human development.

Measures Required

1. Strengthen implementation of laws and institutional accountability.
2. Improve police responsiveness, legal aid, and survivor support systems.
3. Promote gender-sensitive education and behavioural change.
4. Expand women's economic empowerment and financial independence.
5. Strengthen international cooperation and monitoring under frameworks such as CEDAW.

Conclusion

Eliminating violence against women requires more than legal reform alone. Sustainable change depends on combining effective institutions, social transformation, and gender-equitable development policies.