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EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

India's Israel Habit Meets West Asian Realities

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 **The Hindu** 1 July 2026 **GS2**

Source: ujyari.com — researched, fact-checked & UPSC-mapped



INTERVIEW ANGLE

"When a country's foreign policy toward a partner becomes a habit rather than a calculation, how do you tell the difference, and what would it take to correct course without abandoning the partnership?"

Source: [Original editorial](#)  [The Hindu](#)

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WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

As **Gaza** endures a prolonged humanitarian crisis and **Israel-Iran** tension flares across the Gulf, India faces a pointed question: is its deepening tilt toward Israel a deliberate (<https://ujyari.com/vocab/deliberate/>) strategy or a reflex it has stopped examining. For an aspirant, this is a live GS2 case on **strategic autonomy** (<https://ujyari.com/terms/strategic-autonomy/>), **de-hyphenation and India's West Asia interests**.

THE CRUX IN 60 WORDS

India's **de-hyphenation** of Israel from Palestine was a smart move, but it has hardened into a habitual tilt. With Gaza and Israel-Iran tension reshaping the region, India's stakes in **energy, the Gulf diaspora** (<https://ujyari.com/vocab/diaspora/>) and **Iran connectivity** are best served not by following one alignment but by **shaping** de-escalation, while holding its official line: a **two-state solution** and strategic autonomy.

THE ISSUE, DECODED

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CONCEPT	WHAT IT MEANS	WHY IT MATTERS
De-hyphenation	Judging ties with Israel, Palestine and Iran on their own merits	A reflexive tilt collapses this flexibility
Strategic autonomy	Not being bound to any bloc's agenda	Lets India hedge and convene across camps
Two-state solution	India's official stand on Palestine	Balances the Israel partnership
Strait of Hormuz (https://ujivari.com/terms/strait-of-hormuz/) / Chabahar	Energy chokepoint (https://ujivari.com/vocab/chokepoint/) and connectivity gateway	Concrete stakes tied to Iran and the Gulf

THE ANALYSIS

- 1 **Habit versus strategy.** De-hyphenation was designed to keep every relationship open and separately judged; a default tilt toward one partner quietly undoes it and narrows India's room to manoeuvre.
- 2 **The diaspora and remittance stake.** Close to nine million Indians live in the Gulf, sending home the world's largest remittance flow. A posture perceived as one-sided complicates India's standing with the very governments hosting them.
- 3 **Energy geography is unforgiving.** A large share of India's crude oil transits the Strait of Hormuz. Any West Asia conflict that closes or threatens that chokepoint hits India directly, regardless of who India favours.
- 4 **Iran is a connectivity asset, not a proxy** (<https://ujivari.com/vocab/proxy/>). Chabahar port (<https://ujivari.com/terms/chabahar-port/>) and the International North-South Transport Corridor give India access to Central Asia bypassing Pakistan; alienating Tehran forfeits that leverage.
- 5 **Shaping beats following.** India has ties with Israel, the Arab Gulf and Iran simultaneously, a rare position that suits mediation, not spectatorship.

DATA AND INSTITUTIONS VAULT

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India's **de-hyphenation** of West Asia relationships, formalised with the PM's standalone Israel visit in 2017; India upgraded ties with Israel further in 2026. **Official stand:** support for a **negotiated two-state solution**; India voted with the majority at the **UN General Assembly (September 2025)** for a two-state settlement. **Diaspora:** roughly **8 to 9 million** Indians in the Gulf; India is the world's top remittance recipient. **Assets:** **Chabahar port** (Iran), the **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** (<https://ujivari.com/terms/instc/>), the **I2U2** (India, Israel, UAE, US) grouping, and the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** (<https://ujivari.com/terms/imec-india-middle-east-europe-corridor/>). **Concept:** strategic autonomy; balance of power; the security dilemma.

THE DEBATE

Argument for a firm Israel tilt: The partnership delivers advanced defence technology, drones, missile systems, agriculture and water expertise, and counter-terror cooperation; hedging dilutes trust and returns.

Argument for balanced engagement: A tilt that reads as endorsement of one actor's war aims endangers India's Gulf, Iran and diaspora interests; strategic autonomy means keeping all channels open and shaping de-escalation.

Balanced verdict: The Israel relationship should be kept and valued, but embedded within a genuinely de-hyphenated, autonomy-first posture that pairs it with support for a two-state solution and active engagement with Iran and the Gulf.

HOW TO THINK ABOUT THIS (TRANSFERABLE SKILL)

Ask: if the underlying conditions changed, would the policy change? A genuine strategy has switching conditions; a habit does not. Apply this to any bilateral (<https://ujivari.com/vocab/bilateral/>) relationship in an answer, and to any institutional practice in the interview. Naming the switching condition shows you can distinguish inertia from strategy.

DIAGRAM-IN-WORDS

De-hyphenation (all channels open) -> reflexive tilt toward one partner -> lost flexibility -> exposure of energy, diaspora, Iran stakes -> return to balanced, autonomy-first shaping

THE WAY FORWARD

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- ❶ **Re-open every channel.** Restore working de-hyphenation so Israel, Palestine, Iran and the Gulf are each engaged on their own logic.
- ❷ **Voice the official line audibly.** Pair the Israel partnership with visible support for a two-state solution and Gaza humanitarian relief.
- ❸ **Protect the Iran and Gulf assets.** Insulate Chabahar, the INSTC and Gulf labour ties from the swings of the conflict.
- ❹ **Offer India as a bridge.** Use India's cross-camp credibility to push verifiable de-escalation rather than reacting after the fact.

THE TAKEAWAY BOX

Frame India's West Asia policy as a test of strategic autonomy, distinguishing a valuable partnership from a settled, reflexive strategy.

"A partnership becomes a habit when its logic is no longer re-examined, and India's Israel tie risks that fate at the moment the region is most fluid."

de-hyphenation; two-state solution; Strait of Hormuz; Chabahar port; INSTC; I2U2; IMEC; UNGA 2025 two-state vote.

Is loyalty to a partner a virtue in statecraft, or can it become a failure of judgement when it stops responding to changed facts.

UPSC has asked about India's strategic autonomy and the significance of West Asia to India's energy security (<https://ujiyari.com/terms/energy-security/>) and diaspora; this connects those to a live crisis.

India's energy security; the Gulf remittance economy; strategic autonomy; the Palestine question.

Sources: *The Hindu* (<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion>), *Ministry of External Affairs* (<https://www.mea.gov.in/>)

Source: India's Israel Habit Meets West Asian Realities — Ujiyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Editorial Analysis

KEY ARGUMENTS AT A GLANCE

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India's growing alignment with Israel has drifted from calculated strategy into a reflexive habit, and the Gaza crisis and Israel-Iran tension demand that India return to actively shaping regional strategy while balancing ties with Palestine, Iran and the Gulf.

 **SUPPORTING**

- De-hyphenation was meant to free each relationship to be judged on its merits, but reflexive tilt collapses that flexibility back into a single alignment.
- India's core interests, energy security through the Gulf and Iran, and the safety of nearly nine million expatriates, are not served by a posture tied to one actor's war aims.
- Strategic autonomy requires India to convene, mediate and hedge across camps, not to inherit another power's regional enmities.

 **COUNTER**

A close, unapologetic partnership with Israel delivers defence technology, counter-terror cooperation and intelligence that a hedged posture would dilute.

 **WAY FORWARD**

Restore genuine de-hyphenation, pair the Israel partnership with visible support for a two-state solution and humanitarian relief in Gaza, protect the Iran and Gulf channels, and use India's standing to shape de-escalation rather than merely react to it.


MAINS ANSWER FRAMEWORK

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QUESTION

"India's West Asia policy risks confusing a close partnership with a settled strategy." Critically examine India's approach to Israel amid the Gaza crisis and Israel-Iran tension, and outline how strategic autonomy should shape a balanced regional posture. (250 words)

INTRODUCTION

A partnership becomes a habit when its logic is no longer re-examined. India's relationship with Israel, valuable on its own terms, risks that fate as West Asia burns.

BODY

India's de-hyphenation policy, formalised from 2017, was a genuine strategic advance: it let New Delhi build defence, agriculture and technology ties with Israel while keeping its historic support for Palestine and its energy and connectivity stakes in Iran and the Gulf. The danger now is that the Israel relationship has become reflexive, a default tilt rather than a weighed choice, at the precise moment the region is most fluid.

The war in Gaza and the sharpening Israel-Iran confrontation put India's real interests under strain. Nearly nine million Indians work in the Gulf and send home the world's largest remittance flow; a large share of India's crude transits the Strait of Hormuz; the Chabahar port anchors India's reach to Central Asia. None of these is secured by aligning with any single actor's maximalist aims. India's official position remains steady and correct: support for a negotiated two-state solution, concern for civilian lives, and strategic autonomy.

Translating that into strategy means India must convene and hedge, keeping lines open to Israel, Palestine, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE at once, and offering itself as a de-escalatory bridge. The test of a mature power is not loyalty to a camp but the capacity to shape outcomes across camps.

India has the diaspora, the energy stakes and the credibility to do exactly that.

CONCLUSION

The Israel partnership is an asset; treating it as a settled strategy is a liability. India should shape West Asia's trajectory through balanced engagement, not follow anyone else's alignment into it.


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