

UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · [UJIYARI.COM](https://ujiyari.com)**EDITORIAL ANALYSIS**

# The Crisis at the Heart of Nuclear Non-Proliferation

 **THE HINDU**16 July 2026 · **IR** · **GS2** · **GS3**

CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator &amp; Content Creator

 [linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)**ALSO FROM THE CREATOR****BharatNotes**Free UPSC notes, MCQs, PYQ analysis. **100% Free.**[bharatnotes.com](https://bharatnotes.com) → **ADVERTISE****Advertise with Ujiyari**

Reach thousands of UPSC aspirants daily.

 [epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)



# The Crisis at the Heart of Nuclear Non-Proliferation

The Hindu

16 July 2026

GS2

GS3

Source: ujjyari.com — researched, fact-checked &amp; UPSC-mapped

✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources (<https://ujjyari.com/how-we-verify/>)

## THE LIFT LINE

On July 16, 1945, a desert in New Mexico lit up brighter than the noon sun, and the world has been trying, ever since, to build a rulebook that the powerful will actually obey.

## WHY THIS EDITORIAL MATTERS FOR YOUR EXAM

Nuclear non-proliferation (<https://ujjyari.com/vocab/proliferation/>) is one of the most reliably examined intersections of GS2 (international treaties, groupings, India and the world) and GS3 (security, nuclear technology). The **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)** is not a settled subject you can memorise once. It is a living argument about fairness, **deterrence** (<https://ujjyari.com/terms/deterrence/>) and whether disarmament is a shared duty or a permanent exemption for a privileged five. The anniversary of the **Trinity Test** on July 16 is exactly the kind of hook UPSC and interview boards use to open a values-and-strategy discussion.

For an aspirant, the deeper payoff is analytical. This editorial teaches you to read any arms-control regime through the lens of who writes the rules, who is bound by them and who is left to modernise quietly. That frame transfers directly to questions on the **Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)**, the **Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)**, and India's principled refusal to sign a treaty it considers discriminatory.

**GS Paper 2:** **Bilateral** (<https://ujjyari.com/vocab/bilateral/>), regional and global groupings; important international institutions and treaties; India and its neighbourhood and the wider world. **GS Paper 3:** Security challenges; developments in science and technology and their applications; the strategic dimension of nuclear energy.

For **Prelims**, hold the specifics: the NPT was opened for signature in **1968** and entered into force in **1970**; it rests on **three pillars**, non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy; it recognises **five Nuclear Weapon States (NWS)**, namely the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France and China, defined as those that tested a device before **January 1, 1967**; **Article VI** obligates all parties to

pursue negotiations in good faith on disarmament; **NPT Review Conferences** are held every five years; India is **not** a signatory to the NPT or the CTBT; the NSG granted India a waiver in **2008**; the IAEA administers safeguards; the **JCPOA** was the Iran nuclear deal.

For **Mains**, the argument is that the credibility of the entire regime depends on making the Article VI disarmament obligation universal and time-bound, rather than treating it as an aspiration the recognised powers may indefinitely postpone while restraining everyone else.

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The NPT was born from a genuine fear. In the two decades after Trinity, the number of states with the bomb had grown, and policymakers imagined a future of dozens of nuclear powers. The treaty's bargain was blunt (<https://ujjayanti.com/vocab/blunt/>): the states that had already tested by the 1967 cut-off would be recognised as nuclear-armed, and everyone else would forgo weapons in exchange for access to peaceful nuclear technology and a promise that the recognised powers would themselves disarm over time.

That bargain has held better than pessimists feared and worse than optimists hoped. Proliferation slowed, and the treaty now has near-universal membership. Yet the disarmament half of the deal has aged badly. The five recognised powers have modernised warheads, delivery systems and doctrines while the disarmament clause remained a paragraph rather than a schedule.

India read this **asymmetry** (<https://ujjayanti.com/terms/asymmetry/>) early and refused to sign. New Delhi's position has been consistent across governments: the NPT is **discriminatory** because it freezes a hierarchy of haves and have-nots rather than pursuing genuine universal disarmament. India instead conducted itself as a **responsible nuclear power**, adopting a doctrine of **No First Use (NFU)** and **credible minimum deterrence**, maintaining rigorous export controls, and championing, through the **Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan of 1988**, a phased and time-bound path to a nuclear-weapon-free world.

## THE CORE ARGUMENT / ISSUE

### A hierarchy dressed as a norm

The core problem is not that the NPT restrains proliferation. It is that it restrains it selectively. A regime that permits five states to keep and improve arsenals while telling the rest that possession is illegitimate is asking the majority to accept a permanent second tier. Norms endure when they apply to the powerful; they erode when they read as privileges.

### Article VI: the promise that was never scheduled

Article VI is the moral core of the treaty, and it is the most ignored. It commits every party, including the five recognised powers, to negotiate in good faith toward disarmament. Without milestones, verification and dates, good faith becomes a word rather than a duty. India's argument is precisely that disarmament must be **universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable**, applying to all and checked by all.

| ELEMENT                   | NPT DESIGN                           | INDIA'S PRINCIPLED POSITION                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Recognised nuclear powers | Five, fixed by the 1967 test cut-off | Rejects a permanent two-tier order                   |
| Disarmament (Article VI)  | Obligation without a timeline        | Time-bound, verifiable, universal                    |
| Membership                | Near-universal signatories           | Non-signatory; calls treaty discriminatory           |
| Doctrine                  | Varies by state                      | No First Use, credible minimum deterrence            |
| Export controls           | IAEA safeguards, NSG guidelines      | Strong record; 2008 NSG waiver; seeks NSG membership |

## India outside the treaty, inside the responsibility

The **paradox** (<https://ujjayanti.com/vocab/paradox/>) worth stressing is that a non-signatory has often behaved more responsibly than signatories. India seeks **NSG** membership not to escape scrutiny but to join the rule-setting table, having earned the **2008 waiver** through a demonstrated record of non-proliferation. Its stand is that legitimacy should follow behaviour, not the accident of a 1967 date.

## HOW TO THINK ABOUT THIS (ANALYTICAL FRAME)

Read every arms-control arrangement by separating the **rule** from the **rule-makers**. Ask three questions: Who is bound? Who is exempt? Who verifies? A regime is stable and just only when the answer to all three is “everyone.” When exemptions cluster among the powerful and obligations cluster among the rest, the regime is not a norm but a settlement, and settlements imposed by the strong invite resistance from the excluded. The transferable rule: durable global order requires symmetry of obligation, not symmetry of capability. India’s case rests entirely on that principle, which is why its non-signature is a stance about fairness rather than a claim to license.

## THE DIAGRAM IN WORDS

Trinity Test 1945 -> fear of many nuclear states -> NPT 1968 freezes five recognised powers -> non-proliferation held, disarmament stalled -> Article VI without a timeline -> two-tier order resented -> India refuses discriminatory treaty, acts responsibly (NFU, minimum deterrence) -> demands universal, verifiable, time-bound disarmament

## WAY FORWARD

Ujjayanti Current Affairs - [ujjayanti.com](https://ujjayanti.com) · Free Daily Current Affairs for UPSC & State PCS

- ① **Make Article VI time-bound.** The recognised powers must convert an open-ended disarmament promise into a schedule with verifiable milestones, so the treaty's fairest clause stops being its most ignored.
- ② **Reward behaviour, not birthdays.** Global regimes should extend legitimacy on the basis of demonstrated non-proliferation conduct, which strengthens the case for India's inclusion in the NSG as a rule-maker.
- ③ **Revive the disarmament vision.** The **Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan of 1988** offers a ready template for a phased, universal and non-discriminatory road to zero, and India should keep pressing it in **multilateral** (<https://ujjayanti.com/vocab/multilateral/>) forums.
- ④ **Strengthen verification and peaceful use.** **Empower** (<https://ujjayanti.com/vocab/empower/>) the **IAEA** with resources and access so that the peaceful-use pillar expands safely, keeping energy access from becoming a proliferation risk.

## PYQ LINKAGE AND PRACTICE

UPSC has repeatedly probed this terrain, asking why India stayed out of the NPT and CTBT, how the NSG waiver changed India's standing, and whether global nuclear governance is **equitable** (<https://ujjayanti.com/vocab/equitable/>). The Mains pattern favours the fairness-versus-security tension rather than treaty trivia, so your answer must argue, not just list. **Practice question:** "The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty institutionalised a hierarchy that it never scheduled to dismantle. Examine India's principled objection to the treaty and its vision of universal, verifiable disarmament." (15 marks, 250 words)

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

Source: The Crisis at the Heart of Nuclear Non-Proliferation — Ujjayanti.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Editorial Analysis

### RELATED DAILY ARTICLES

16 Jul **India Hosts the 5th BIMSTEC Security Chiefs Meeting**

14 Jul **Current Affairs Today, July 14, 2026**

14 Jul **India Launches SHANTI Campaign for a UN Security...**

13 Jul **Current Affairs Today, July 13, 2026**

Ujiyari Current Affairs · [ujiyari.com](https://ujiyari.com) · ~~Free Daily~~ Current Affairs for UPSC & State PCS

CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

## Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator &amp; Content Creator

[in linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)[Read Full Article on Ujiyari →](#)<https://ujiyari.com/editorials/2026/07/th-npt-nuclear-non-proliferation-crisis-2026/>

### ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

## BharatNotes

Free UPSC study platform — subject-wise notes across all 4 GS papers, Prelims MCQs, Mains answer frameworks, PYQ analysis & progress tracking. **100% Free • No Login Required.**

[Start Preparing → bharatnotes.com](https://bharatnotes.com)

### OPPORTUNITY

## Advertise with Ujiyari

Reach **thousands of serious UPSC & State PCS aspirants** daily through our PDFs, website, and social channels.

**Ideal for:** Coaching institutes • EdTech platforms • Book publishers • Exam prep apps

[✉ epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)

Write to us for rates & media kit

Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs · [ujiyari.com](https://ujiyari.com) · [bharatnotes.com](https://bharatnotes.com)