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A Palestinian State is the Foundation for Regional Peace

 **THE HINDU**

20 August 2026

IR**GS2**

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

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A Palestinian State is the Foundation for Regional Peace

 The Hindu

20 August 2026

GS2



INTERVIEW ANGLE

"The editorial argues a sovereign Palestinian state is the foundation for West Asian peace. What role, if any, can India play in supporting a viable path to Palestinian statehood given its own strategic ties with Israel and Gulf states?"

 Every fact web-verified against primary sources

THE LIFT LINE

Every West Asian ceasefire so far has treated the symptom. The disease, an unresolved question of sovereignty, keeps returning because no one has cured it.

WHY THIS EDITORIAL MATTERS FOR YOUR EXAM

This editorial provides a structured framework for analysing West Asian geopolitics through the lens of unresolved sovereignty questions, a recurring GS2 international-relations theme relevant to India's balancing act in the region.

GS Paper 2: International relations, West Asia, India's foreign policy balancing between Israel and Arab/Gulf states.

CONCEPT	MEANING	WHY IT IS TESTABLE
Two-state solution	A negotiated framework establishing an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel	The proposed end-state this editorial argues for
Normalisation agreements	Bilateral diplomatic agreements establishing relations between Israel and Arab states, historically without resolving the Palestinian question	The editorial's example of progress that does not by itself deliver regional stability
External mediation	Third-party (typically US) diplomatic structuring of negotiations between parties unable to reach agreement bilaterally	The editorial's proposed mechanism for progress

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains one of the world's most protracted unresolved **sovereignty** disputes, with successive rounds of negotiation, ceasefire, and interim arrangement failing to produce a final-status settlement. **C.R. Gharekhan**, India's former Special Envoy for the Middle East Peace Process, argues in this piece that the region's recurring instability cannot be durably resolved without addressing this foundational, unresolved question.

THE ANALYSIS

- 1. The editorial distinguishes root cause from recurring symptom.** Treating each individual escalation as an isolated security problem, rather than as a manifestation of the underlying unresolved sovereignty question, leads to repeated but ultimately unstable interim fixes.
- 2. Regional normalisation without Palestinian resolution has structural limits.** Bilateral Israel-Arab state agreements can proceed on separate diplomatic tracks, but the editorial argues they cannot substitute for resolving the core grievance that continues to generate periodic conflict.
- 3. External mediation is framed as necessary, not merely helpful.** Given the scale of mistrust and the **asymmetry** of power between the parties, the editorial argues that credible, sustained third-party structuring, historically led by the US, is a structural requirement for progress, not an optional accelerant.
- 4. Sequencing security guarantees against sovereignty is the central point of contention.** The debate over whether Israeli security guarantees must precede, accompany, or follow steps toward Palestinian statehood is where most practical negotiation breakdowns have historically occurred.
- 5. India's own position requires balancing strategic relationships with **normative** positions.** India maintains strong strategic ties with Israel while also historically supporting Palestinian self-determination, a balancing act this editorial's framing implicitly tests.

DATA AND INSTITUTIONS VAULT

PRELIMS-GRADE FACTS:

The Oslo Accords (1993) established the framework for Palestinian self-governance via the Palestinian Authority, though without conferring full statehood.

India has historically supported the two-state solution while also expanding strategic ties with Israel post-1992 normalisation of India-Israel relations.

Do not conflate "normalisation agreements" (bilateral Israel-Arab state diplomatic agreements) with a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict itself; the editorial explicitly treats these as distinct.

THE DEBATE

FOR (Palestinian statehood is the necessary foundation): Without addressing the core sovereignty question, all other regional diplomatic progress remains vulnerable to periodic disruption by the unresolved conflict.

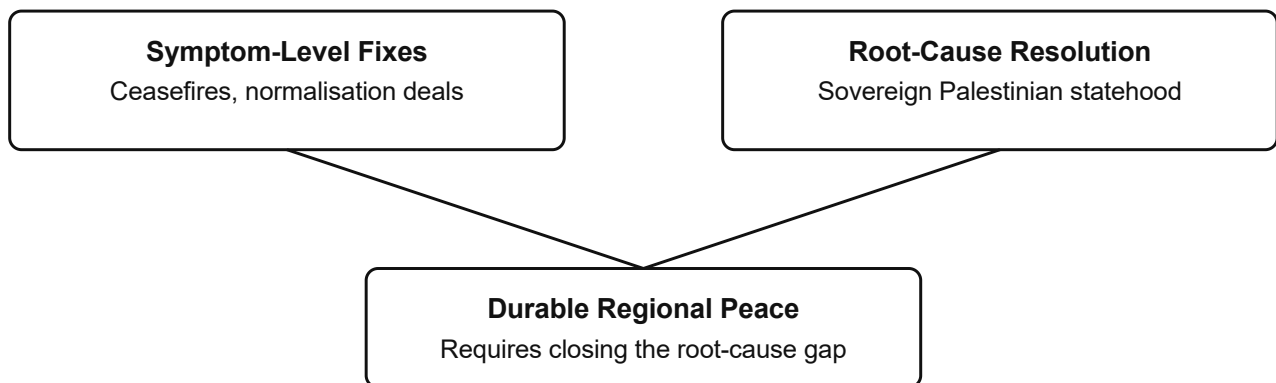
AGAINST (security guarantees must be central, not secondary): Rapid moves toward Palestinian statehood without robust, verifiable security guarantees risk creating a governance vacuum that could be exploited by hostile actors, making sequencing a legitimate primary concern, not an obstruction.

Balanced verdict: The most durable outcome likely requires parallel-track progress, simultaneous, credible movement on both sovereignty and security guarantees, rather than treating either as a precondition that must be fully resolved before the other can advance.

HOW TO THINK ABOUT THIS

When analysing protracted regional conflicts, distinguish between diplomatic activity (bilateral deals, ceasefires, summits) and structural resolution (addressing the root cause). Progress on the former can create an illusion of stability while the latter remains unaddressed, and durable peace requires closing that gap, not merely managing around it.

DIAGRAM-IN-WORDS



TAKEAWAY BOX

Every West Asian ceasefire so far has treated the symptom. The disease, an unresolved question of sovereignty, keeps returning because no one has cured it.

Oslo Accords (1993); Palestinian Authority; India-Israel relations (normalised 1992).

How should India balance normative support for Palestinian self-determination against its strategic partnership with Israel?

Connects to past UPSC Mains questions on India's West Asia policy and the Israel-Palestine conflict.

“Regional diplomatic progress in West Asia cannot substitute for resolving the core Palestinian statehood question.” Discuss.

Source: A Palestinian State is the Foundation for Regional Peace — Ujjyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Editorial Analysis

• KEY ARGUMENTS AT A GLANCE

The Hindu, drawing on an op-ed by C.R. Gharekhan, India's former envoy to the Middle East Peace Process, argues that West Asia's recurring conflicts trace fundamentally to the continued absence of a sovereign Palestinian state, and that only sustained, credible external mediation, chiefly by the United States, can create the conditions for viable Palestinian statehood and durable regional peace.



SUPPORTING

- Decades of intermittent ceasefires and interim arrangements without a final political settlement have repeatedly proven unstable, suggesting that partial or temporary measures cannot substitute for a genuine sovereign-statehood resolution.
- Regional normalisation agreements between Israel and some Arab states have proceeded without resolving the core Palestinian question, leaving an unaddressed grievance that continues to generate instability regardless of bilateral diplomatic progress elsewhere.



COUNTER

A counter-view holds that security guarantees for Israel must precede or accompany any move toward Palestinian statehood, given legitimate concerns about a future Palestinian state's governance capacity and potential for hostile use of sovereign territory, making sequencing, not just the end goal, a central point of contention.



WAY FORWARD

The editorial's position is that sustained, credible external mediation, historically led by the United States but requiring genuine buy-in from regional and international stakeholders, remains the only realistic path to a negotiated two-state framework capable of addressing both Palestinian sovereignty aspirations and Israeli security concerns simultaneously.


MAINS ANSWER FRAMEWORK
QUESTION

Critically examine the argument that the absence of a sovereign Palestinian state is the root cause of recurring conflict in West Asia. (250 words)

INTRODUCTION

The Hindu examines the structural roots of West Asian instability, arguing that the unresolved question of Palestinian statehood remains the foundational obstacle to durable regional peace, a position articulated through the perspective of India's former Middle East Peace Process envoy.

BODY

The editorial's core argument rests on distinguishing symptom from cause: intermittent conflicts, ceasefires, and even bilateral normalisation agreements between Israel and various Arab states are treated as symptoms of an underlying, unresolved cause, the absence of a sovereign, viable Palestinian state with genuine governance capacity and internationally recognised borders. This framing implies that diplomatic progress on parallel tracks, such as Israel-Gulf normalisation, cannot by itself deliver durable regional stability so long as the core Palestinian question remains unaddressed, because the underlying grievance continues to generate periodic escalation regardless of unrelated diplomatic achievements.

The editorial credits sustained external mediation, historically anchored by US involvement given its unique leverage over both Israeli and regional Arab state relationships, as the only realistic mechanism capable of bridging the wide gap between Palestinian sovereignty demands and Israeli security requirements, since bilateral Israeli-Palestinian negotiations alone have repeatedly stalled without external structuring and guarantees.

CONCLUSION

A complete Mains answer should engage with both the moral-sovereignty argument for Palestinian statehood and the legitimate security-guarantee concerns raised by critics of accelerated statehood processes, since resolving West Asian instability durably requires addressing both dimensions rather than treating either as dispositive on its own.

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