

# India's Grand Strategy 2047: Interests, Alliances, and Governance Capacity for a Rising Power

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**Abstract**—India's centenary year of independence in 2047 has become the symbolic horizon for its transformation into a developed, secure, technologically capable, and globally influential power. This paper argues that the achievement of *Viksit Bharat* requires a grand strategy that aligns national interests, external partnerships, military preparedness, technological sovereignty and domestic institutional capability. The paper proposes three interlinked pillars for India's 2047 strategy: a clear hierarchy of national interests centred on territorial security, economic transformation, maritime access, technological autonomy, energy security and constitutional legitimacy; a calibrated system of partnerships based on strategic autonomy and multi-alignment rather than treaty-bound dependence; and a substantial expansion of governance capacity. The paper concludes that India's rise will depend not only on economic size or diplomatic visibility but on the ability of the Indian state to convert demographic scale, digital infrastructure, industrial capability, military modernisation and federal democratic energy into disciplined and legitimate state capacity.

**Index Terms**—Digital public infrastructure, governance capacity, grand strategy, India 2047, Indo-Pacific, multi-alignment, strategic autonomy, *Viksit Bharat*.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Grand strategy is the art of aligning national ends, means and methods across time. It is not merely foreign policy, military doctrine, economic planning or diplomatic signalling. It is the integrated logic through which a state defines its core interests, prioritises resources, manages threats, builds partnerships and converts domestic strength into international influence. For a rising power such as India, grand strategy is especially important because the transition from major developing country to

leading global power is neither automatic nor guaranteed. Economic size can increase without strategic influence. Military power can expand without institutional coherence. Diplomatic visibility can grow without durable leverage.

India's 2047 horizon marks the centenary of independence and is now associated with the policy objective of *Viksit Bharat*. The goal is not only higher gross domestic product but the emergence of India as a developed, inclusive, resilient, self-confident and globally consequential republic. This transformation will take place in an international system marked by United States-China rivalry, technological decoupling, maritime competition, supply-chain restructuring, climate stress, demographic divergence and weakening multilateral institutions [1]-[3].

The central argument of this paper is that India's 2047 grand strategy should be organised around the doctrine of autonomous capability through networked power. India should preserve strategic autonomy, but autonomy must not be misunderstood as distance from all power centres. In the twenty-first century autonomy will come from capability: economic depth, military preparedness, technological control, resilient supply chains, administrative efficiency and credible partnerships.

The paper therefore advances a three-part thesis. First, India must identify its vital national interests with greater precision. Second, it must use partnerships with the United States, Russia, France, Japan, Australia, the European Union, Gulf states, ASEAN, Africa and the Global South as instruments for capability-building rather than ideological alignment. Third, it must expand governance capacity, because external partnerships can amplify domestic capability but cannot substitute for it.

## II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

### A. Research Questions

This paper addresses four research questions. What should be the hierarchy of India's national interests by 2047? How should India structure its external partnerships while preserving strategic autonomy? What governance capacities are required to convert India's scale into strategic power? What institutional reforms are necessary to make India's rise durable, secure and legitimate?

### B. Methodology

The paper adopts a qualitative strategic-policy method. It synthesises official policy statements, economic and demographic indicators, strategic affairs literature, defence and technology policy, and governance-capacity debates. The analysis is normative and institutional: it does not predict a single future but identifies strategic requirements that India must satisfy if it is to become a developed and influential power by 2047. The paper uses bracketed references in the IJIRT style and avoids citations in the abstract, consistent with the uploaded template.

### C. Scope and Limitations

The paper focuses on grand-strategic design rather than operational military planning. It does not provide a classified threat assessment or a party-political evaluation of current policy. Its primary concern is the relationship between national interests, alliances and domestic state capacity. The central assumption is that India will remain a constitutional democracy and a federal union, and that its strategy must therefore be compatible with consent, rule of law, diversity and institutional accountability.

## III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: GRAND STRATEGY

Grand strategy may be understood through the classic triad of ends, ways and means. Ends are the political objectives of the state: security, prosperity, status, legitimacy and civilisational continuity. Ways are the instruments: diplomacy, deterrence, economic policy, technological innovation, military modernisation, institutional reform, development partnerships and narrative power. Means are the resources: population,

geography, economy, military capability, administrative institutions, technology, finance, social cohesion and leadership.

A successful grand strategy requires coherence between all three. If ends are too ambitious and means are weak, strategy becomes rhetoric. If means exist but are not organised, strategy becomes drift. If methods are not adapted to context, strategy becomes outdated. India's challenge is not the absence of national ambition; it is the need to discipline that ambition through institutional design, prioritisation and execution.

For India, grand strategy must also be democratic. Unlike authoritarian great powers that can impose mobilisation from above, India must build strategic capacity through consent, federal bargaining, competitive politics, public accountability and institutional legitimacy. This makes decision-making slower, but it also gives India a form of political resilience that highly centralised systems may lack. The task is not to abandon democratic complexity but to make it strategically functional.

## IV. THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT TO 2047

### A. Multipolarity Without Stability

The post-Cold War unipolar moment has ended, but a stable multipolar order has not yet emerged. The United States remains a central military, financial, technological and alliance power. China has become a systemic competitor with industrial depth, military reach and technological ambition. Russia remains militarily significant and strategically disruptive. Middle powers such as India, Japan, Turkey, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Brazil and the European Union are seeking greater room for manoeuvre. The result is not orderly multipolarity but competitive fragmentation.

For India, this environment creates both opportunity and danger. Opportunity arises because multiple power centres seek India as a partner. Danger arises because intensified bloc politics can constrain India's freedom of action. India must therefore preserve strategic autonomy while acquiring the capabilities necessary to make autonomy credible.

#### B. The Indo-Pacific as the Central Theatre

India's geography gives it a central position in the Indian Ocean, close to vital sea lanes connecting the Persian Gulf, East Africa, Southeast Asia and the wider Pacific. The Indo-Pacific has become a primary theatre of maritime competition, supply-chain reconfiguration, naval modernisation and technology-security coalitions [4]. India's continental challenges with China and Pakistan remain serious, but its long-term rise depends heavily on maritime security, port connectivity, naval reach, island partnerships, blue economy capacity and chokepoint security.

#### C. Technology as Geopolitics

Artificial intelligence, semiconductors, quantum technologies, cyber capabilities, space systems, biotechnology, digital identity, payments infrastructure, autonomous systems and critical minerals are no longer purely economic domains. They are instruments of national power. Technological dependency can create strategic vulnerability, while technological capability can generate diplomatic leverage. India's digital public infrastructure has given it a distinctive model of population-scale digital governance, but the next stage is more difficult: India must move from digital adoption to technological creation [5], [6].

#### D. Climate, Energy and Resource Security

India's development pathway must manage the contradiction between growth and sustainability. It must industrialise, urbanise and expand energy consumption while also reducing emissions intensity, increasing non-fossil capacity, securing critical minerals and adapting to climate shocks [7], [8]. Climate change is not only an environmental issue; it affects agriculture, migration, water security, urban resilience, disaster management, public health and military logistics.

#### E. Crisis of Multilateralism

The United Nations system, WTO, global climate finance mechanisms and traditional arms-control regimes face legitimacy and effectiveness challenges. As universal multilateralism weakens, minilateral and plurilateral groupings have become more important: Quad, BRICS, SCO, I2U2 and issue-specific coalitions in technology, health, connectivity and climate. India should not treat these platforms as

mutually exclusive. Its diplomatic advantage lies in participating in multiple forums without becoming captive to any one bloc.

### V. INDIA'S CORE NATIONAL INTERESTS BY 2047

#### A. Territorial Integrity and Border Security

India's first vital interest is the defence of sovereignty and territorial integrity. The unresolved boundary with China, the persistent challenge of Pakistan-backed terrorism and the militarisation of borders requires sustained deterrence. India must strengthen infrastructure along the northern borders, improve surveillance, integrate air-land operations, accelerate theatre commands, modernise logistics and strengthen intelligence fusion.

Deterrence must be multi-domain. Future crises will not remain confined to land borders. Cyber attacks, space disruption, information warfare, grey-zone coercion, economic pressure and maritime signalling may accompany conventional confrontation. India's national security architecture must therefore integrate military, diplomatic, technological, financial and informational instruments.

#### B. Internal Stability and Social Cohesion

No rising power can sustain external influence without internal stability. India's diversity is a source of strength, but it requires constant political management. Social cohesion, constitutional trust, rule of law, communal harmony, regional inclusion and equitable development are strategic assets. Internal disorder imposes economic costs, distracts security institutions, weakens diplomatic credibility and creates openings for adversarial influence operations.

#### C. Economic Transformation

India's global influence will ultimately depend on its economic base. By 2047, India must aim not only for a large economy but for a high-productivity economy. A large low-productivity economy may possess demographic scale but limited strategic surplus. A high-productivity economy can fund defence, innovation, infrastructure, welfare, climate adaptation and diplomacy. The strategic requirements are manufacturing depth, export competitiveness, urban productivity, agricultural modernisation, logistics

efficiency, capital formation, skill development, research and development, regulatory predictability and financial resilience [2].

#### D. Maritime Security

India's prosperity depends on secure sea lanes, energy flows, trade routes, undersea cables, ports and maritime partnerships. The Indian Ocean must be treated as a strategic space, not merely a commercial route. India should become the preferred security partner for smaller Indian Ocean states by offering capacity-building, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, coastal surveillance, digital governance tools and infrastructure alternatives.

#### E. Technology Sovereignty

Technology sovereignty does not mean technological isolation. It means the ability to make independent choices in critical technologies because domestic capability, trusted partnerships and supply-chain alternatives exist. India cannot afford dependency in semiconductors, AI compute, defence electronics, telecom networks, cyber infrastructure, space systems, critical minerals and advanced batteries. The strategic objective should be selective self-reliance: domestic capability in critical layers, diversified imports where efficient and trusted co-development with partners where necessary.

#### F. Energy, Food and Water Security

India's development will require massive energy consumption. The challenge is to ensure that energy security and climate responsibility reinforce rather than undermine each other. Renewable energy, nuclear expansion, green hydrogen, battery storage, grid modernisation, energy efficiency and critical-mineral security should be treated as part of one strategic system. Food and water security are equally central because climate shocks can destabilise rural incomes, intensify migration, increase inflation and burden welfare systems.

#### G. Rule-Shaping Power

India seeks not merely to participate in the international order but to shape it. This includes permanent membership of reformed global institutions, leadership in the Global South, standard-setting in digital governance, climate equity, counter-terrorism norms, maritime law, health security and

development finance. Status, however, follows capability. India's claim to leadership will be stronger when backed by domestic performance and external public goods.

## VI. ALLIANCES, PARTNERSHIPS AND STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

India traditionally avoids formal military alliances. This is not a sentimental inheritance from non-alignment alone; it reflects a structural preference for autonomy in a complex neighbourhood. However, the contemporary environment requires India to move beyond passive non-alignment toward active multi-alignment.

#### A. The United States

The United States is indispensable for India's 2047 strategy because of its technological ecosystem, defence capabilities, capital markets, universities, diaspora networks, intelligence capacity and Indo-Pacific role. India should deepen cooperation with the United States in semiconductors, AI, quantum, space, cyber, defence co-production, maritime domain awareness and supply-chain resilience [9]. However, India should avoid strategic dependency. U.S. policy can fluctuate with domestic politics, and export controls, sanctions, trade pressures and alliance expectations can constrain partners.

#### B. Russia

Russia remains important to India because of defence legacy systems, energy supplies, Eurasian geography, nuclear cooperation and its role in continental geopolitics. India should maintain a functional relationship with Russia while gradually reducing excessive defence dependence. The aim should not be abrupt disengagement but managed diversification. India must also account for Russia's growing closeness to China. A weakened Russia dependent on China is not in India's interest.

#### C. France, Japan, Australia and the European Union

France is a valuable partner because it combines defence capability, Indo-Pacific presence, nuclear expertise, space cooperation and relative strategic autonomy within the Western system. Japan offers infrastructure finance, technology, maritime cooperation and a shared concern about Indo-Pacific balance. Australia is central to maritime coordination,

critical minerals, education and Quad cooperation. The European Union matters for trade, technology regulation, green transition, investment and standards.

#### D. Quad as a Platform

The Quad is best understood as a strategic platform for shaping the Indo-Pacific, not as an Asian NATO. Its value lies in maritime coordination, resilient supply chains, infrastructure, health security, emerging technologies, cyber standards, undersea cable security, disaster relief and deterrence by political signalling [4]. India should strengthen the Quad while preserving its non-alliance character.

#### E. Gulf and West Asia

The Gulf is central to India's energy security, diaspora welfare, remittances, investment flows, food corridors, logistics and maritime access. India's relations with the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman and Israel have become increasingly strategic. At the same time, India must manage relations with Iran because of geography, energy history, Central Asian access and regional balance. The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor may become transformative, but India should maintain redundant routes through Chabahar, the International North-South Transport Corridor, Southeast Asia and maritime shipping.

#### F. Neighbourhood First

India cannot be a global power if its immediate neighbourhood remains unstable or alienated. The neighbourhood is not a diplomatic periphery; it is the foundation of Indian security. India's strategy toward Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Myanmar and Afghanistan should combine respect for sovereignty with credible delivery. Smaller neighbours often fear domination more than neglect; India must therefore become a provider of choice rather than a power of pressure.

#### G. Global South Leadership

India's Global South leadership should not be rhetorical. It should be built through development finance, digital public goods, affordable health technologies, climate adaptation support, capacity-building, food security partnerships, education networks and reform of global institutions. India can distinguish itself from both Western conditionality and Chinese infrastructure dependence by offering

transparent, demand-driven, scalable and sovereignty-respecting partnerships.

### VII. GOVERNANCE CAPACITY: THE DECISIVE CONSTRAINT

India's greatest strategic challenge is governance capacity. A country may have grand ambitions, but grand strategy fails when ministries do not coordinate, projects are delayed, courts are overburdened, procurement is slow, local governments are weak, data systems are fragmented and regulatory uncertainty discourages investment.

#### A. Strategic Coordination

India needs stronger whole-of-government coordination. National security, trade, technology, energy, climate and industrial policy are now interdependent. Semiconductor policy involves commerce, education, defence, external affairs, finance, electronics, power and mining. Critical minerals involve diplomacy, geology, industry, recycling, environment and trade. Without institutional coordination, strategy becomes a collection of schemes. India should create a formal National Grand Strategy Review every five years, supported by a strengthened National Security Council Secretariat and linked to NITI Aayog, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Commerce and state governments.

#### B. Civil Service Reform

The Indian civil service remains capable in crisis but often weak in specialisation, lateral expertise, project management and long-term policy continuity. By 2047, India needs a professional state with deep domain expertise. Officers should be trained in technology policy, climate economics, defence procurement, urban systems, international law, data governance, supply chains and strategic communication. Specialised career tracks should be developed in national security, infrastructure, digital governance, trade negotiations, climate diplomacy and regulatory economics.

#### C. Federal Capacity

India's rise will be implemented through states. Manufacturing zones, skilling, health, education, policing, agriculture, land, electricity distribution and

urban governance depend heavily on state capacity. Cooperative federalism must move from consultation to execution. India should create competitive federal compacts around strategic sectors: semiconductors, defence corridors, green hydrogen, agro-processing, logistics, tourism, higher education and urban reform.

#### D. Judicial and Regulatory Capacity

Judicial delay is a strategic economic problem. Contract enforcement, land disputes, insolvency, criminal justice, taxation and regulatory litigation affect investment, social trust and state legitimacy. India must expand judicial capacity, modernise procedure, increase court management efficiency, use technology responsibly, strengthen alternative dispute resolution and reduce government litigation [10]. Regulatory capacity is equally important. India should build predictable, expert-led regulators in data, AI, competition, telecom, energy, environment, finance and biotechnology.

#### E. Defence Governance

India's defence challenge is not only budgetary; it is organisational. The armed forces must prepare for integrated multi-domain warfare. Theatre commands, joint logistics, cyber-space integration, unmanned systems, electronic warfare, precision fires, air defence, undersea capability and indigenous defence manufacturing are essential [11]. Defence procurement should be faster and more outcome-oriented. Indigenous production must build design capability, intellectual property, testing infrastructure, private-sector scale and export competitiveness.

#### F. Urban Governance

By 2047, India's urban population and economic output will be far larger. Cities will determine productivity, innovation, quality of life and social stability. Yet municipal governance remains one of India's weakest institutional layers. India needs empowered mayors, professional city management, metropolitan planning authorities, better property taxation, mass transit, affordable housing, water security, waste systems and climate-resilient infrastructure. Urban reform is grand strategy because productive cities generate the fiscal and human-capital base of national power.

#### G. Digital Public Infrastructure

India's digital public infrastructure has demonstrated the ability to deliver identity, payments, welfare transfers and digital services at scale [5], [6]. The next phase should integrate DPI with health records, education credentials, skilling, agriculture advisory, judicial services, logistics, land records and urban governance. However, digital capacity must be matched by privacy, cybersecurity, grievance redress, algorithmic accountability, inclusion of digitally vulnerable citizens and resilience against cyberattacks.

### VIII. ECONOMIC STATECRAFT FOR 2047

#### A. Manufacturing and Supply Chains

India must become a trusted manufacturing and supply-chain hub. This requires stable policy, logistics efficiency, skilled labour, reliable power, export infrastructure, trade facilitation and integration into global value chains. Production-linked incentives can help, but long-term competitiveness requires lower transaction costs, research capability, supplier ecosystems and labour-intensive as well as high-tech manufacturing.

#### B. Trade Strategy

India should avoid both indiscriminate free trade and protectionist stagnation. The correct approach is strategic openness. India should negotiate trade agreements that expand market access while protecting policy space for critical sectors. It should integrate with trusted supply chains in electronics, pharmaceuticals, green technologies, defence components, food processing and digital services.

#### C. Financial Power

A rising India needs deeper capital markets, infrastructure finance, municipal bonds, development finance institutions, insurance expansion, pension capital and calibrated rupee internationalisation. Financial power gives strategic autonomy. Excessive external vulnerability can constrain foreign policy choices, while domestic financial depth gives the state the ability to fund infrastructure, innovation, defence and climate adaptation.

#### D. Innovation and Research

India cannot become a developed power without a research revolution. Universities, laboratories, start-

ups, defence research, private R&D and public procurement must be connected. The state should fund mission-oriented research in AI, biotechnology, energy storage, climate adaptation, quantum technologies, materials science, agriculture and defence technologies. The goal should be to make India not only a market for technology but a source of technology.

## IX. STRATEGIC NARRATIVES AND CIVILISATIONAL POWER

Material capability alone does not create leadership. Nations also project narratives. India's narrative advantage lies in combining civilisational depth, democratic legitimacy, developmental experience, digital public goods, plural society and Global South credibility. However, narrative power must be disciplined. Civilisational confidence should not become civilisational arrogance. Democratic identity should be protected through institutional integrity. Global South leadership should be backed by delivery. India's soft power - yoga, Ayurveda, cinema, cuisine, diaspora networks, Buddhism, knowledge traditions, democratic experience and constitutionalism - should be integrated with education diplomacy, cultural centres, language training, research networks and digital platforms. By 2047, India should aim to become a knowledge power: a country whose universities, think tanks, technology platforms, public-policy models, legal ideas and civilisational scholarship shape global debates.

## X. RISKS TO INDIA'S 2047 STRATEGY

### A. China-Pakistan Collusion

A two-front security challenge remains India's most serious military risk. China's infrastructure and military posture along the border, combined with Pakistan's hostility and nuclear deterrence, require preparedness for simultaneous pressure.

### B. Economic Underperformance

If India fails to create jobs, raise productivity and expand manufacturing, demographic advantage may become social stress. The 2047 vision requires employment-intensive growth and strong human-capital formation.

### C. Institutional Overload

India's institutions may be asked to deliver more than they are designed to handle. Courts, police, municipalities, regulators and local governments require capacity expansion. Institutional overload can convert ambitious schemes into implementation fatigue.

### D. Climate Shocks

Heatwaves, floods, water scarcity, crop failures and coastal risks may impose fiscal and social burdens. Climate adaptation should be mainstreamed into planning, fiscal policy, public health, urban infrastructure and national security.

### E. Technological Dependency

Dependence on foreign platforms, chips, cloud systems, cyber tools and critical minerals can create strategic vulnerability. India must build domestic capability and diversify external dependencies.

### F. Social Polarisation

Internal division weakens national power. Social trust is a strategic resource. A state that loses social cohesion will struggle to mobilise citizens for long-term national objectives.

## XI. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Publish a National Grand Strategy Review

India should produce a classified and public version of a National Grand Strategy Review every five years. It should align defence, diplomacy, economic security, technology, climate and governance priorities with budgets, timelines and measurable outcomes.

### B. Strengthen the National Security Council System

The National Security Council Secretariat should be expanded with domain experts in technology, trade, climate, energy, cyber, space and supply chains. Strategic planning should be institutional rather than personality-driven.

### C. Create an Economic Security Council

Economic security now includes supply chains, sanctions exposure, critical minerals, export controls, investment screening, food security and financial resilience. India needs a formal institutional mechanism to coordinate these issues.

#### D. Build a Maritime India Strategy

India should adopt a comprehensive maritime strategy covering naval capability, ports, shipbuilding, island infrastructure, fisheries, seabed resources, undersea cables, coast guard capacity and Indian Ocean partnerships.

#### E. Accelerate Defence Indigenisation

India should focus on design, intellectual property, testing and exports, not only domestic assembly. Defence start-ups and private industry should be integrated into procurement pipelines.

#### F. Launch a Judicial Capacity Mission

A national mission should address pendency through more judges, better court management, technology, mediation, procedural reform and reduction of government litigation.

#### G. Deepen Federal Execution Compacts

The Union government should partner with states through measurable compacts in manufacturing, skilling, health, education, logistics, agriculture and urban governance.

#### H. Create a Strategic Technology Fund

India should fund mission-mode research in semiconductors, AI, quantum, energy storage, critical minerals, defence electronics, biotechnology and cybersecurity.

#### I. Expand Global South Development Partnerships

India should scale digital public infrastructure exports, training programmes, affordable health platforms, climate adaptation tools and concessional finance for partner countries.

#### J. Invest in Social Cohesion

Education, constitutional literacy, civic trust, rule of law and inclusive development should be treated as strategic investments, not merely social-sector objectives.

## XII. CONCLUSION

India's 2047 grand strategy must begin with a sober recognition: India is rising, but the international system is becoming more turbulent; India has scale, but not yet sufficient state capacity; India has

partnerships, but not permanent allies; India has demographic strength, but needs human capital; India has digital success, but must build technological sovereignty; India has civilisational confidence, but must preserve constitutional legitimacy.

The correct strategic doctrine is not isolation, dependence or ideological bloc politics. It is autonomous capability through networked power. India should engage all major centres of power, deepen issue-based partnerships, lead the Global South, secure the Indo-Pacific, modernise its military, build technological depth and transform governance capacity at home.

By 2047, India's success will not be measured only by GDP rankings or military platforms. It will be measured by whether the Indian state can deliver security, prosperity, justice, innovation, sustainability and dignity at continental scale while shaping a fairer international order. A rising India must therefore become not only a powerful state but a capable republic.

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