India in the New World Order

What is the issue?

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- India and France co-hosted the first International Solar Alliance (ISA) summit in New Delhi recently.
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- This is a significant event in defining India's place in the new global order.
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What is the International Solar Alliance?

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- The ISA was unveiled at the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Paris in 2015 by the Indian PM Modi and then French President Francois Hollande.
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- The idea is to form a coalition of solar resource-rich countries.
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- The aim is to collaborate on addressing the identified gaps in their energy requirements through a common approach.
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- Towards this, the ISA has set a target of 1 terawatt (TW) of solar energy by 2030.
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- The ISA is open to 121 prospective member countries, most of them located between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn.
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- This is the region worldwide with a surplus of bright sunlight for most of the year.
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- So far, however, only 56 countries have signed the ISA Framework Agreement.
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What is India's role?

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- India is a founding-member of the alliance.
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- Besides, it plays a significant role in terms of being a host as well as a major contributor to the achievement of the target.
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- The ISA is the first international body that will have a secretariat in India.
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- India, with a target to produce 100 GW of solar energy by 2022, would account for a tenth of ISA’s goal.
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- India will also provide 500 training slots for ISA member-countries and start a solar tech mission to lead R&D.
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Why is India's proposal unique?

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- The basis for ISA is global equitable sustainable development.
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- It suggests a ‘third’ way to the inequality and environmental damage characterising the current U.S. and China-led models.
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- This vision follows from India’s call for ‘climate justice’.
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- Notably, India's approach to climate justice reframes climate change as a social and not a physical problem.
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- The shift fills the gap in the thrust of the ‘Chinese dream’ and ‘America first’ both of which ignore sustainable development.
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- India is thus considered as a balancing factor in this regard, especially by countries in the South-east Asian region.
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- This is also why China and the U.S. are seeking to work with India.
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What is the way forward for India?

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- The inaugural International Solar Alliance (ISA) summit underlines India’s place in the new world order.
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- India has to take advantage of the **transforming global trends**.
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- The challenge at this juncture is to push infrastructure, e-commerce, human capital and technology **development**.
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- These are essential for India to position itself in the emerging global scenario, where economy, ecology and cyber space are defining the place.
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- In the new world order, India should give primacy to rules that will chart a path for its **own sustainable prosperity**.
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- This does not mean India should move away from **multilateral groupings.**
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- But rather, in 2018, India will have to make **hard choices**.
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- E.g. India should not reject collaboration in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which is the framework for a new order.
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- But existing political and economic order suggest that India should work with China to jointly set the **new multilateral rules**.
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- The two sides, India and China, have just recognised sensitivity to each other’s concerns, interests and aspirations.
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- Also, as part of this dynamics, India must consider longer-term and not immediate interests in Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.
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- This approach should reflect in other areas like the BRICS, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, etc, for establishing **non-hierarchical relations.**
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- In terms of maritime trade routes, India should organise platforms which include China and Japan.
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- This is to allow for the development of **Indian Ocean-centric rules** of engagement.
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