India’s foreign policy challenges

Why in News?

As the 2024 comes to an end, 2025 looks to be even more uncertain for India’s foreign policy.

What were the developments in India’s external relations in 2024?

- **Disengagement at LAC** - The most difficult negotiation completed this year was for disengagement at the Line of Actual Control with China.
- **India China Formal meet** - First formal Modi-Xi Jinping meeting in five years was held at Kazan, on the sidelines of the 2024 BRICS summit in Russia.
- **India and France** - French President Emmanuel Macron was the guest on Republic Day and bilateral ties on defence, energy and maritime cooperation were reaffirmed.
- **European FTA** - India-European Free Trade Association signed a Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) in 2024.
- **Pakistan relation**- External Affairs Minister made the first visit in nearly a decade to Islamabad for the SCO summit.
- **Australia** - India and Australia sealed an ambitious renewable energy partnership for cooperation in priority areas such as solar energy, green hydrogen, energy storage.

What are the foreign relation challenges India faced in 2024?

- **Bangladesh turmoil** – The ouster of Sheikh Hasina, former Prime Minister of Bangladesh, is a significant setback for India’s security and regional policy.
- **Canada downturn** - Ties with Canada took a turn over the Nijjar killing case as Canadian authorities alleged the involvement of Indian officials in the case.
- **U.S. indictment** - Department of Justice of USA filed indictments against the Adani group and a new indictment against an Indian official for the alleged Pannun assassination plot.
- **Nepal & China** - Nepal has signed a framework agreement with China on the Belt and Road initiative, enhancing Chinese influence in South Asian region.
- **Israel Hamas war** – The escalation of Israel Hama’s conflict tested India’s position in the Middle East.

What are the major foreign policy challenges for India in 2025?

- **Neighbourhood engagement** – India has to build relationship with the new governments in Bangladesh, Srilanka and Maldives.
- **China influence** – Increasing Chinese engagement with Bhutan, Nepal and Srilanka.
- **USA relation** – Discussion on Trade tariffs, market access in areas like “agricultural exports from United States to India and differences over Iran policy could also return

with the new US government in 2025.

- **UK FTA** - Free Trade Agreement negotiations between India and United Kingdom will be relaunched in 2025.
- **Russia Ukraine Conflict** – Visit by President Vladimir Putin of Russia to India early in the new year will set the stage for a new phase of India's geopolitical balancing act.
- **CECA with Australia** – India and Australia will engage in negotiation on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA).
- **West Asian Initiatives** – India's engagement with West Asian countries for multilateral initiatives like IMEC (India-Middle East Europe-Economic Corridor) and I2U2 (India, Israel, UAE and U.S.) in trouble.

References

1. The Hindu | Tightrope walk of India's foreign policy

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