

Significance of the GCC Countries in India's Quest for Energy Security: Understanding the Trends and Challenges

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Abstract

The Gulf region has grown in importance as a strategic partner of India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This was brought to light in February 2024 when Modi visited the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar on his second last trip prior to India's national elections in April-May 2024. The Gulf is now a top focus for foreign and security policy under Modi, and it is a crucial component of India's "extended neighbourhood," where New Delhi has growing influence and interests. One of India's most important trading partners these days is the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council). Overtaking the European Union, the area accounted for 15.8 per cent of India's overall trade in FY 2022–2023. At the centre of this partnership are Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), India's third and fourth-largest commercial partners, respectively. Saudi Arabia and Qatar have donated \$3.2 billion and \$1.5 billion, respectively, to India, while the United Arab Emirates has already invested \$15.3 billion. Even if these investments show a strong economic alliance, the GCC and India have yet to finalise their 2022 proposal for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). This Progress has been halted by bureaucratic delays and differences among GCC member states. However, such a deal would be a significant step towards boosting bilateral trade and investment, especially as India looks to establish itself as a hub for investment and manufacturing in the face of changing global supply chains. The strategic alliance between India and the GCC nations is examined in this essay.

India's four-pronged energy security strategy-diversifying energy supplies, expanding India's exploration and production footprint, increasing the use of alternative energy sources, and addressing the energy transition through gas-based economies, green hydrogen, and electric vehicles-has helped the country navigate through the most difficult energy crisis the world has seen since the 1973 oil crisis. From 27 countries in 2006-07 to 39 in 2023-24, India expanded its crude oil supply base, adding new suppliers such as Columbia, Russia, Libya, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and others, while fortifying ties with nations like the US and Russia. However, the GCC countries continues to be India's primary source of imports, accounting for over 65 percent of our total imports, despite India's continuous efforts to diversify its economy and secure its growing energy needs from around the world. For this reason, energy plays a significant role in the relationship between India and the GCC countries. India's steady availability to energy supply is essential to its fast economic expansion. India's reliance on oil and hydrocarbon imports in general, which currently account for 37.5 percent of our total imports, would expand significantly in the future due to the country's growing use of fossil fuels, prompting it to look for more robust energy security. Thus, foreign diplomacy is an essential instrument for guaranteeing India's energy security. As a result, energy security is now a key component of Indian foreign policy. This essay examines India's

energy security strategies, interests, and obstacles in the region. It also looks at how much India's quest for energy security influences its policies in the Gulf. The role of the GCC nations in India's pursuit of energy security is examined in this essay. The four literature reviews that form the basis of this paper are: an overview of India's energy policy and Gulf region policy; the significance of energy cooperation with the GCC countries; India's energy security challenges; and an assessment of the role of energy in India's Gulf region policy.

Keywords: GCC Countries, Hydrocarbon Import, Energy Demand, Energy Crisis, Energy Security, Indian Economy, Indian Diaspora, Remittances, Renewable Energy

Introduction

The discovery of fire by ancient human being was considered as a milestone in the journey of its evolution and transformation. This source of energy made its life secure, easier and worth living. Since then, humans have endured to gain and utilise more and more energy for its socio-economic progress. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to state that all living things require energy to thrive and survive. It is also essential for a nation's socio-economic progress and general well-being. Although the term "energy security" might imply different things to different people, it basically refers to guaranteeing continuous energy supply to enable commercial and economic activity that is crucial for the economy's long-term growth. The political leadership of India has defined energy security as the ability to provide all of our population with a lifeline of energy and to effectively meet their need for convenient, safe, and reasonably priced energy. However, as one of the economies with the quickest rates of growth, India has faced formidable obstacles in fulfilling its energy demands and supplying customers with sufficient and diversified energy of the appropriate quality in a sustainable way and at affordable prices (Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas 2024, p. 1). Nevertheless, India's inability to meet its domestic energy demands is a more pressing fact than the country's soaring energy demands. For many years, India's energy demand has exceeded its domestic output. Therefore it should come as no surprise that India depends significantly on imports to meet its energy needs. Although fuel imports have always been a significant component of India's import basket, recent statistics show that they now account for over 37.5 per cent of all imports into the country, making them the largest imported commodity (Observer Research Foundation 2022, p. 10)

Since almost 80 percent of India's petroleum needs are met by imports, the Indian government's top goal, for a very long period time, has been to maintain friendly relations with hydrocarbon rich nations in order to maintain its energy security. The prospect of energy security is enticing, but for a nation that depends heavily on imports, such as India, it is not merely a wishful thinking but a vital necessity as it has got a robust economy that is nearing maturity and expansion. Keeping this fact in mind, the Indian government must make significant efforts to improve energy supplies for the future because India may face severe energy supply constraints due to several geo-political factors (Observer Research Foundation 2024, p 1). The importance of energy security in India's foreign and energy policies is becoming increasingly apparent. In addition to being a top priority on the international agenda, energy security has turned into a crucial element of India's strategic alliances with other powerful nations with abundant energy resources. The goal of India's current foreign energy security strategy is to secure exploration contracts first, negotiate bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral agreements, and ensure that our future energy security is safeguarded through all of this in order to mitigate the risks of our inevitable and growing dependence on imported hydrocarbons (NITI Aayog Energy Report 2024, p. 1). Thus, foreign diplomacy is essential to

guaranteeing India's energy security and addressing India's energy security issues requires a proactive and clearly defined foreign policy. One such location that is significantly utilising India's diplomatic efforts in terms of energy security is the Gulf region, an area with abundance of hydrocarbons. Energy security has emerged as a major foreign policy goal influencing India's approach to the Gulf area as a result of the country's rapid economic growth, especially in last three decades, which has made it a voracious energy user. Thus, comprehending India's gulf region policy and the extent to which energy influences it, became a very legitimate area of research.

In light of India's aspirational goals of pursuing energy security for the country, this study attempts to determine the extent to which energy influences India's West Asia policy in general and Gulf Area policy in particular. For a large portion of its independent history, India has relied on the geopolitically problematic Gulf region to meet its needs because it lacks substantial local oil and natural gas deposits. Since the region has the highest petroleum reserves and is geographically close to India, the cost of transportation is lower in comparison to imports from other regions of the world, making West Asia as India's main source of oil imports (Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas Energy Report 2024, p. 1). It would be necessary to examine the path that led Indian foreign policy towards the hydrocarbon-rich region in the present in order to fully comprehend the energy component of India's gulf region policy.

An Overview of India's Policy for the Gulf Region

Over the years, there have been major changes to India's gulf policy. India took a concrete political stance in favour of the countries of this area in the first decade itself following its independence in 1947. Building positive ties with the Gulf nations in order to offset any influence from Pakistan was one of the main factors influencing India's policy for the area. It was also one of the main reasons why India clearly distanced itself from having diplomatic ties with the state of Israel, the other, of course, being India's domestic vote bank politics. During this time, however, energy security was not a major factor in India's interactions with the area. At that time, India needed extremely little energy, despite being reliant on the Gulf region for its imports. Furthermore, as a result of India's colonial heritage, the majority of its refineries were subsequently owned by Western oil companies. These companies mostly imported oil from Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Beginning in the 1970s, India's political strategy towards the Gulf area was progressively supplanted by economic considerations and energy requirements (Ministry of External Affairs 2024, p. 1). India began to look diplomatically at the oil-rich GCC¹ nations as a result of the oil crisis of the 1970s and the ensuing economic boom in the Gulf.

However, India's foreign policy towards the West Asian region saw a dramatic transition as a result of the structural adjustments made during the post-Cold War era. India's West Asia policy became more realistic as a result of economic reforms and progress, with economic considerations now taking precedence over political rhetoric in determining the country's approach to the volatile region. Economic and energy security concerns trumped ethical and ideological ones during the post-Cold War era. Nevertheless, compared to a generation ago, India's connection with West Asia as a whole has changed significantly in the present times. It was in 2005 that India reoriented its policy towards the western neighbourhood to secure the growing interest in the area, from energy security to counterterrorism (Observer Research

¹ The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) is a regional organisation comprising of six members: The Kingdom of Bahrain, the State of Kuwait, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Set up in 1981, its objectives are to enhance coordination, integration and inter-connection among its members.

Foundation 2024, p. 1). This policy was called as the “Look West Policy,” and it prioritised economic energy-related issues over moral, political, and ideological considerations between India and Gulf states. India’s adoption of the Look West policy during the Manmohan Singh government was indicative of its growing interest in interacting with its neighbours in West Asia. The policy of increased cooperation with West Asia was further carried over with new zeal by PM Modi who came to power in 2014. There were apprehension as to how Modi would deal with West Asia due to his no prior experience in foreign policy. Yet, in the last decade, PM Modi has worked exceptionally hard in making India’s relations with West Asia strong, robust and multi-dimensional. His personal rapport with leaders of Gulf states has been a significant factor in boosting up ties with the GCC countries.

Increased collaboration in the areas of trade, business, politics, and security has made the Gulf region significant for India. The two sides have inked significant agreements on a variety of topics and exchanged several high-level visits. Similar views on piracy and terrorism have also contributed to the growth of bilateral collaboration. The Gulf nations, who recognise India’s potential as a sizable, democratic, stable nation and a rising political and economic force in Asia and the world, have welcomed India’s efforts to interact with the area more deeply (Observer Research Foundation 2024, p. 1).

The Gulf region also has a significant impact on India’s strategic thinking because, in spite of India's continuous efforts to diversify its economy and secure its growing energy needs by acquiring energy resources from other energy-rich regions such as Africa, Latin America, and Central Asia, the GCC nations still account for the majority of India’s energy imports. Given its reliance on the GCC for energy, a region going through a turbulent process of significant political and economic change, it is crucial to examine the trends, opportunities, and challenges that Indian foreign policy will face in the future as it attempts to procure its energy security (Pradhan 2010, p. 94). It is clear from examining the proportion of India's energy mix over time that the country's petrol need would rise in the future, and the GCC nations will be crucial in meeting these demands.

From the Indian point of view, West Asia is divided into two groups: the GCC nations and the remaining West Asian nations. The Gulf countries include Iraq, Iran and the six GCC states: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Yemen may also fall under this category for geopolitical reasons due to its population, land extent, and Arabian Peninsula location. Since it is the main source of India's hydrocarbon imports, this region serves as the focal focus of India’s West Asia policy. The energy connection between India and the GCC has changed significantly in recent years. At present, India is participating in these nations’ exploration and production efforts by acquiring assets and forming cooperative partnerships (Kumar 2020, p. 28). India’s advantageous location near natural gas resources like Iran and Qatar is one of the benefits from the perspective of energy security.

The Significance of Energy Cooperation with the GCC Countries

One of the most vibrant and diverse alliances in the world today is that between India and the nations of the GCC. This alliance, which crosses important industries including energy, defence, and healthcare, is based on strong cultural ties and key economic interests. In addition to India becoming an important partner in the Gulf's economic diversification and human resource development, the Gulf area has become an essential ally in India’s pursuit of energy security. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is an essential economic partner for India, since trade and investment between the two regions have increased to previously unheard-of levels (Kumar 2020, p. 30).

The foundation of India-Gulf relations continues to be energy cooperation. Among the biggest exporters

of crude oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) to India are Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. These countries offer a steady and dependable energy source that supports India's expanding economy. This energy partnership involves strategic investments in addition to trade. In turn, Gulf energy giants are looking for chances in India's energy industry, while Indian corporations are increasingly participating in Gulf energy projects (Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis 2024, p. 1). The alliance is expanding to include renewable energy projects too as India has been steadily moving towards cleaner energy, with a great deal of potential for cooperation in solar and wind energy projects. With a \$78 billion agreement extending India's gas imports from Qatar by 20 years till 2048, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar have continued to be vital suppliers of natural gas and crude oil to India, highlighting the long-term significance of Gulf energy supplies. India's ambition to play a major role in the world energy markets is further demonstrated by its expanding ambitions in global energy governance, such as its application to join the International Energy Agency (IEA) (Observer Research Foundation 2023, p. 1).

The India-GCC partnership now encompasses political and security aspects in addition to economic and energy. India's strategic alliances with Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia are becoming more and more important. Gulf states are now realising that India can be a useful partner for them not just in the form of its oil buyer, but also in terms of technology, pharmaceutical industries, food security etc. Stronger collaboration in fields like defence, marine security, and counterterrorism has been made possible by the personal relationships that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has built with Gulf leaders (Ministry of External Affairs 2024, p. 1). No wonder India's position on Kashmir dispute has become stronger than ever due to the change of attitude of the Gulf states towards India, who have traditionally been supporting Pakistan over this issue. Protecting sea routes of communication in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden is a key component of India's regional security goals. As part of its "mission-based deployments," the Indian Navy maintains a year-round presence in the area, demonstrating New Delhi's dedication to maintaining maritime security in the Gulf and beyond. Defence relations with the GCC nations have also increased. In recent years, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates have all started bilateral naval drills. With trilateral military cooperation between India, the UAE, and France signifying a higher degree of confidence, the UAE has become India's most significant regional defence partner. However, India's regional security interests are seriously threatened by the escalation of the Hamas-Israel conflict. India's energy security is at stake because of the conflict, which has already resulted in shipping attacks in the Red Sea. The intricacies of West Asian politics have become harder to deal, even as India maintains a balance in its relations with Israel, Iran, and the Gulf states (Kondepati 2023, p. 2).

A Joint Action Plan for carrying out various activities in diverse areas, such as health, trade, security, energy, agriculture, and food security, was adopted in 2024 as India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) discussed ways to strengthen cooperation between the two sides. The GCC as a whole has crucial importance for India and is the "extended" neighbourhood of India, according to External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar, who co-chaired the first India-GCC Joint Ministerial Meeting for Strategic Dialogue with Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman (NITI Aayog 2024, p. 4).

The commitment on both sides to improve the relations is also reflected by the fact that GCC Secretary General Jasem Mohamed Al-Budaiwi attended the Kochi Dialogue diplomacy conclave 2025, a Track 1.5 diplomacy event in Kerala's commercial centre, as part of a historic effort to deepen ties between India

and the GCC. “India's Look West Policy in Action: People, Prosperity, and Progress” was the theme of the two-day event, which was organised by the Centre for Public Policy Research (CPPR) in association with the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (The International Institute for Strategic Studies 2024, p. 10). It was the first event of its type and aimed to improve collaboration in important areas like energy, trade, education, and maritime security. Important decision-makers, corporate executives, and diplomats from both areas came together to discuss long-term answers to common problems in international trade, governance, and geopolitics. The event’s strategic focus has highlighted India’s expanding ties with the GCC, a region that is essential to India's energy security and is also home to more than 8 million Indian expats (Arab News 2025).

India’s Energy Security Challenges

There is no dearth of problems, issues and challenges for India in terms of maintaining its energy security and ensuring cheap and easy access to oil and gases. The most urgent challenge for India’s energy security is the continuous sporadic fighting in West Asia between Israel and other players in the region, which threatens regional stability and breeds terrorism, radicalisation and anarchy. India is reluctant to get engaged in the geopolitics of the region, even as it has always called for moderation and peaceful settlement of disputes in order to maintain the balance with all its friends in the regions. However, if the battle intensifies or props up again, India's ability to manage these issues would be tested severely. Another challenge for India to ensure its energy security is the delayed free trade agreement (FTA) between India and the GCC. The pact, which may significantly boost trade, has been delayed by disputes among GCC countries and changes in the organization’s trade leadership. The United Arab Emirates, with whom India inked a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement in 2022, is the only GCC nation with which it now has a free trade agreement. For the past 20 years, India has been working towards a free trade agreement with the entire bloc. Despite the signing of a Framework Agreement on Economic Cooperation in 2004, two rounds of negotiations in 2006 and 2008 failed to produce a definitive agreement.

To fulfil the political and economic objectives of all parties, this agreement will require skilled diplomacy on the part of all sides. Additionally, India's efforts to strengthen regional cooperation through initiatives like the India-Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC) and the I2U2 grouping (India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States) have been hampered by the protracted crisis (Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis 2024, p. 1). The confrontation between Israel and Hamas has delayed important conversations and the progress of these efforts. Ensuring that these commercial routes remain operational throughout the conflict would be a significant diplomatic challenge for India.

Although India has made a noteworthy transition to renewable energy, the country still primarily depends on fossil fuels. Since it imports 85 per cent of its oil supply and is the third-largest oil user in the world, it is especially susceptible to changes in the market (International Energy Agency Report 2024, p. 40). Any unrest in West Asia is extremely concerning because the region supplies over 60 per cent of India’s oil. The conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza is the type of situation that has the potential to destabilise oil output and impact global oil prices (Down to Earth 2024, p. 6). Although India’s sizable customer base may protect Delhi from any harsh action by the Gulf oil states, yet India’s recent closeness with Israel could have an impact on Delhi's economic connections with Arab countries and could also endanger its oil imports. To make matters more complicated, term contracts account for over 70 per cent of the oil imported by India’s public sector refineries, with the remaining portion coming from spot purchases. This

indicates that although supply is guaranteed, sellers benefit from favourable pricing and other factors (Observer Research Foundation 2024, p. 4).

As long as the battle doesn't drag on past India's term contracts with suppliers, everything ought to be alright. But even though it would have time on its side, India might have to come up with alternatives to imports if the Gaza conflict stretches on like the Russia-Ukraine war or props up again (Italian Institute for International Political Studies 2024, p. 3). For the purpose of securing energy supply in an emergency, many nations have their own strategic reserve plans. For approximately 9.5 days, India's strategic petroleum reserve can supply crude oil. The cumulative reserve capacity of private firms, however, is 64.5 days. With a stated reserve capacity of 727 million barrels, or around 60 days' supply, the US has the greatest capacity in the world. Japan has 324 million barrels, whereas China has 475 million. In the case of an oil shock, all members of the International Energy Agency, of which India became an associate member, must keep an emergency oil reserve that can be released to stabilise prices.

India-Israel Relations

The bilateral commercial and economic ties between Israel and India, which started in 1992, are currently valued at approximately \$11 billion. Israel's second-largest trading partner in Asia is India, with \$2.3 billion in imports and \$8.4 billion in exports in 2022-2023 (NITI Aayog 2024, p. 2). As a result, any protracted battle may harm Israel's economy and, consequently, India's balance of payments. India has gained from the US-mediated Abraham Peace Accords, which were signed in September 2020 by Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain and paved the way for several multilateral accords with other countries (Observer Research Foundation 2024, p. 4). Along with the US and the UAE, Israel and India are also members of the I2U2 group. Joint investments and collaboration on water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security are the group's main priorities. India, the United States, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, France, Germany, and Italy also signed an agreement during the September 2023 G20 meeting in New Delhi to establish the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC), which would pass through Saudi Arabia to the port of Haifa in Israel and then on to Greece. Through a maritime route and a subsequent rail network that connects the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Israel, the corridor would link the ports of Mumbai and Gujarat with the United Arab Emirates (The International Institute for Strategic Studies 2024, p. 4). Because of its connections to Greece and the rest of Europe, Haifa is strategically significant. Regional energy security might be greatly improved by this suggested network. All of these multinational efforts are strained by the fighting in Gaza.

Diversifying energy supply options is a more practical approach if geopolitical concerns like war have an impact on energy security. India's nationally determined contributions, the announcement of Net Zero at CoP26, the development and execution of EV policies, and the creation of the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) to advance energy efficiency and renewable power all demonstrate that decarbonisation has received enough attention in Indian policymaking (Ministry of Power 2024, p. 2). However, total reliance on solar, wind, and other renewable energy sources to supply India's massive and growing power demand seems unrealistic due to the inherent instability in renewable energy generation. India's energy transformation with an emphasis on renewable energy is not without its difficulties. The primary one is India's reliance on China for vital raw commodities (such rare earth elements) and renewable technology (Ministry of Renewable Energy Report 2024, p. 4).

In the absence of domestic technological advancement, India's shift to renewable energy will only result in a shift from its reliance on foreign oil to foreign renewable technologies and raw materials. The market

for renewable technology and associated raw resources is also highly concentrated, which might pose a serious danger to energy security in the event of geopolitical unrest. Nevertheless, those problems might be resolved by concentrating on green hydrogen and cross-border electrical trading (CBET). Although green hydrogen technology is still in its early stages, CBET is currently underway with Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh (Ministry of Power 2024, p.1). However, substantial infrastructure development and a number of other cross-border standard laws are necessary to fully profit from CBET.

An Assessment of the Role of Energy in India's Gulf Region Policy

India still gets the majority of its electricity from West Asia. 75 per cent of India's energy demands are met by imports, primarily from the unstable Gulf region. By 2025, this percentage is expected to rise to 85 to 90 per cent. Furthermore, India, with its fastest-growing economy, increasingly urbanising population, and significant unmet energy needs, has become a desirable destination for the Gulf region's oil-selling nations as oil prices decline and oil-rich nations fiercely vie for market share. Few recent facts are particularly interesting in this context (Observer Research Foundation 2024, p. 1). The Indian government has claimed that in September 2024, the country's fuel consumption grew at the quickest rate in ten years.

For the time being, the oil market is a buyer's market due to the current glut and price decline. It is expected that India will surpass China as the primary source of the growing demand for oil by 2040. Now that it has the upper hand, it is time to start protecting its interests in the Gulf region. After discussing the energy element and its primary significance in India's relations with the GCC nations, let's examine the opposing viewpoint, which will provide further context and help us comprehend the problem a little better.

Geographical proximity, cultural ties, the greater presence of the Indian diaspora, and economic complementarity-defined by India's need for oil and the GCC countries' need for human capital and food products-have all contributed to the natural economic relationship between India and the GCC countries (Kumar 2020, p. 29). Among other things, cross-border investment and trade flows are essential components of India's relationship with West Asia. India's reputation in the area has also been enhanced by its long-standing policy of not meddling in the domestic affairs of other nations and the apolitical behaviour of the Indian diaspora there. Aside from energy, another reason the Gulf region is significant is the presence of a sizable and affluent Indian population. The region is home to more than 10 million Indian citizens.

Although just making up 17.5 per cent of the Indian Diaspora, West Asia is responsible for about 60 per cent of all remittances sent to India (Rajeev 2023, p. 9). Nearly 14 per cent of India's exports go to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, two of the country's main oil suppliers. India's first priority is the safety of its oil sources from the Persian Gulf. Because of these factors, India has a vested interest in the security of the Gulf and the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC), which include the Straits of Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb (Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis 2024, p. 4). From these locations, over 85 per cent of the crude oil shipped to Asian nations like China, India, Japan, and South Korea comes from West Asia, which includes Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), around 17 million barrels per day (bpd), or almost 30 per cent of all oil moved by sea, passed through this channel in 2013, making it the most significant oil transit route in the world. Therefore, India's maritime diplomacy is necessary to guarantee consistent and safe energy supplies from the region (Italian Institute for International Political Studies 2024, p. 5). As a result, the Indian Navy has visited more ports in the area

in recent years.

Additionally, the Indian Navy frequently exercises with the fleets of a number of neighbouring nations, which helps Indian diplomacy by extending India's influence in the area. The military security of the region has been and will remain tightly tied to the protection of West Asian natural gas and oil supplies. The establishment of the Islamic State (IS), its consequences on other nations in the area, and the spread of extremism to other parts of the world are significant challenges facing the region. India has to increase the extent of its involvement in the region for a number of reasons, including the region's geographic proximity and the effects of religious extremism (Observer Research Foundation 2024, p. 11). An integral component of India's foreign policy, the West Asian region supports shared interests, fights terrorism and extremism, and opens up investment opportunities (The International Institute for Strategic Studies 2024, p. 6). The foundation of this fantastic relationship is provided by the Indian Diaspora, which is the source of enormous remittances, geographical closeness, cultural ties, military diplomacy in the Indian Ocean, counterterrorism, and opposition to China's string of pearls policy in the Indian Ocean. India has a range of very good to great connections with West Asian nations, especially the big ones like Iran, Iraq, and Israel (Kumar 2020, p. 31).

Conclusion

The Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi has called for making India as 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047, the hundredth year of India's independence. In simple terms it means that in the next twenty five years India has aspired to be a developed country with a sustainable economic growth that is inclusive, people-centred, and raises living standards of all its citizens without endangering the public health or raising carbon emissions. It means that country's energy security and climate goals must also be followed on the way to achieve the goal of 'Viksit Bharat'. Energy is the most important lever for social and economic growth in India and is responsible for over three-quarters of its greenhouse gas emissions. An integrated energy planning method is therefore, necessary to strike a balance between growth and emissions, which will result in a low-cost transition route for sustainable development. Ensuring energy efficiency and conservation, boosting the proportion of renewable energy sources to meet the growing demand for power, and lowering energy poverty by closing the urban-rural energy divide through a people-centric strategy are the keys to accomplishing these interconnected goals.

A significant component of Indian foreign policy is energy politics, which has dominated international affairs since the 1990s and is currently a contentious topic. Maintaining positive relationships with its energy partners and establishing positive relationships with new partners are top priorities for India today. However, it is important to remember that India's foreign policy must strike a balance between its diplomatic bilateral relations and its economic concerns in order to develop practical answers to the issues and problems that India's energy diplomatic strategies are encountering in the field of energy politics. Regarding the relationship between India and West Asia, it is now common knowledge that the Gulf and West Asia are crucial to India and have a direct impact on its security and prosperity. It is vital as a source of energy, as a destination for our exports, and as a destination for the remittances that our 7 million-strong diaspora in the Gulf sends home. The unfortunate aspect of India's present West Asia policy is that it is just as disjointed as the region itself.

The fact is that India handles each West Asian nation independently, failing to recognise the necessity to have a single, regional policy that does not view West Asia in pieces, in order to protect our own interests related to the region. India's West Asia policy must advance beyond the buyer-seller dynamics and must

create a more comprehensive and cohesive environment that incorporates complementary interests. One thing to keep in mind in this situation is that we cannot expect a country to maintain its interest in us if it starts to believe that we have nothing to offer in return. Therefore, in international relations, the idea of mutuality of interests is crucial. Therefore, if we want this connection to grow and develop for the benefit of our future, India's West Asia strategy should be built on the complementary interests of the two regions. The future of the cooperation is bright as India and the Gulf nations continue to deepen their relationship. There are a lot of chances for improved connectivity and economic collaboration through initiatives like the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). Trade and investment could be further increased by the possible signature of new trade agreements, such as the current negotiations for a bilateral CEPA with Oman. Apart from energy buyer-supplier relations, India and GCC can work together on other areas like AI, critical technologies, climate change, skill enhancements and healthcare. India's relation with GCC can become the most defining relations of contemporary times, if handled delicately.

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