

Daily Editorial Analysis 11 August 2026

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Do Not Write the Obituary of International Law Yet

Context

- Recurring conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza and West Asia have revived an old debate: **is international law losing its relevance?**
- Critics point to the failure of international institutions to stop these wars as proof that legal norms no longer restrain state behaviour.
- This article argues that such a conclusion is premature, and that international law continues to function quietly even as headline conflicts suggest otherwise.

Why Wars Do Not Disprove International Law

- Even states accused of violating international law rarely say the law itself is meaningless.
- Instead, they justify their actions using the very vocabulary of international law — the UN Charter, sovereignty, territorial integrity, self-defence and humanitarian law.
- This tendency to seek legal justification, rather than reject legality altogether, shows that the **framework still commands authority**.

- UN Secretary-General António Guterres captured this in July 2026 when he told the International Law Commission that ***international law is under pressure but will prevail***.
- Scholars offered a useful explanation for this behaviour: states often comply with international law not out of fear of punishment, but because of the pull created by the treaty regimes they belong to.
 - Compliance is thus less about coercion and more about embedded expectations.

The Quiet, Unnoticed Successes

- Compliance rarely makes news, while violations dominate it. Yet ordinary international life depends on legal cooperation working smoothly:
 - Aircraft cross borders safely because of international aviation regulations;
 - Ships sail the seas under international maritime law;
 - Diplomacy, trade and travel function through thousands of routine legal obligations;
 - Individuals rely on international law daily — passports, consular assistance, air travel and refugee protection are all governed by it.
- Even amid conflict, states keep negotiating new multilateral agreements — the **High Seas Treaty**, **pandemic preparedness** efforts and the **UN Convention against Cybercrime** are recent examples of continued faith in a rules-based system.

Relevance for India and the Global South

- Peace itself is built through legal instruments — ceasefires, peace agreements and negotiated settlements all rest on legal commitments.
- India's Indus Waters Treaty shows that legal frameworks can sustain engagement between states even during political discord.
- For **India** and the **wider Global South**, international law matters because it offers smaller and developing states a way to protect their interests through negotiation rather than raw power.
- Shared global challenges — climate change, pandemics, cyberattacks and economic instability — cannot be solved unilaterally and require cooperation rooted in agreed rules.

Acknowledging the Flaws

- International law was never a perfect system. It has long coexisted with **power politics** and has been criticised for reflecting **unequal structures**, including the limitations of the UN Security Council.
- But **imperfection is not the same as irrelevance** — no legal system guarantees full compliance.
- Its real value lies in providing standards against which state conduct can be judged.
- Historically, crises have driven the adaptation of international law, not its collapse.

Conclusion

- International law is strained but not extinguished.
- Its true strength lies not in preventing every violation, but in remaining the shared language states use to justify, contest and eventually resolve their conduct — a framework still indispensable for a just, cooperative

world order.

Do Not Write the Obituary of International Law Yet FAQs

Q1. Why does the article argue that international law remains relevant despite ongoing wars?

Ans: States accused of violations still invoke sovereignty, self-defence, territorial integrity, and humanitarian law, showing that international law continues to command authority.

Q2. What are the quiet successes of international law?

Ans: International law enables safe aviation, maritime navigation, diplomacy, trade, travel, consular assistance, refugee protection, and routine cooperation that rarely receives public attention.

Q3. Why is international law important for India and the Global South?

Ans: International law allows smaller and developing states to protect interests through negotiation and agreed rules rather than relying solely on economic or military power.

Q4. What does India's Indus Waters Treaty demonstrate about international law?

Ans: India's Indus Waters Treaty demonstrates that legal frameworks can sustain cooperation and engagement between states even when broader political relations remain strained.

Q5. Does the imperfection of international law make it irrelevant?

Ans: No. International law need not guarantee complete compliance; its value lies in establishing standards against which state conduct can be assessed and contested.

Source: **TH**

GeM at 10 - Transforming Public Procurement through Transparency and Digital Governance

Context

- The Government e-Marketplace (GeM), launched on **9 August 2016**, has completed a decade of operations.
- It has emerged as India's flagship digital public procurement platform, replacing the erstwhile Directorate General of Supplies and Disposals (DGS&D).
- There is the need to highlight GeM's contribution to transparent governance, **Ease of Doing Business (EoDB)**, MSME promotion, and Viksit Bharat 2047.

Government e-Marketplace (GeM) - An Overview

- GeM is a **one-stop digital platform** for public procurement by Central and State governments, PSUs and autonomous bodies.

- It connects 1.37 lakh government buyers with 25 lakh sellers and service providers.
- It integrates the entire procurement cycle, for example, product discovery, e-bidding, contract award, digital payments, and audit trail.
- The erstwhile DGS&D was criticised for opaque and non-competitive procurement practices.

Key Achievements in a Decade

- **Enhancing transparency and accountability:**

- The entire procurement process has been digitised, reducing human discretion.
- Every transaction leaves a traceable digital audit trail, strengthening accountability.
- It minimises corruption, favouritism and procedural delays in government procurement.

- **Promoting EoDB:**

- Introduced a single-window digital marketplace for procurement, simplifying registration and standardised procurement procedures.
- **Policy reforms include:** Removal of Caution Money Deposit, rationalisation of transaction charges, and lower compliance costs have widened participation.

- **Boosting inclusive economic growth:**

- GeM has expanded market access for traditionally underrepresented groups, for example, MSMEs; Start-ups; women entrepreneurs; and businesses from Tier-II, Tier-III cities and rural areas.
- These enterprises can directly sell to government buyers without intermediaries, creating a more level playing field.

Performance Indicators

- **Contribution to 'Make in India' and Atmanirbhar Bharat:**

- Preference for domestic manufacturers and service providers strengthens indigenous production.
- Reinforces local value chains and reduces dependence on imports.
- MSEs account for nearly **60%** of total orders (by volume) and over 45% of Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) on GeM.

- **Other indicators:**

- Annual GMV has crossed ₹5 lakh crore in each of the last two financial years.
- Cumulative procurement value has reached around **₹20 lakh crore**.
- The platform now hosts approximately 10,644 product categories, and 350 service categories.
- These figures reflect GeM's growing role in India's public procurement ecosystem.

Improving Public Service Delivery and its Impact

- **Efficient procurement through GeM:**

- It has enhanced delivery across critical sectors, including healthcare (medicines and vaccines), defence procurement (including drones), infrastructure development, and rural public services.
- Transparent procurement ensures better utilisation of taxpayer funds while improving the quality and timeliness of public services.

- **Economic impact:**

- According to an IIT Delhi study, GeM generated an estimated ₹86,571.69 crore in monetised benefits over the last three financial years.
- Gains arose from lower procurement prices, greater process efficiency, reduced transaction costs and delays.

- **GeM and digital governance:**

- GeM exemplifies India's expanding Digital Public Infrastructure (**DPI**) model by combining e-governance, transparency, data-driven decision-making, competitive procurement, and inclusive participation.
- It advances constitutional principles of good governance, accountability and efficient utilisation of public resources.

Future Vision

- **Priorities as GeM enters its 2nd decade:**

- Adoption of emerging technologies for smarter procurement.
- Building a globally benchmarked digital procurement platform.
- Promoting green and sustainable procurement.
- Expanding participation of Start-ups, innovators, women entrepreneurs, youth, MSMEs, and entrepreneurs from smaller towns and disadvantaged communities.
- These objectives align with the broader vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

- **Way forward:** Despite its achievements, sustained reforms are necessary for –

- Improve digital accessibility and awareness among small suppliers.
- Strengthen **cybersecurity** and data privacy safeguards.
- Enhance procurement capacity at State and local government levels.
- Ensure timely payments to vendors.
- Expand **green procurement** standards and AI-enabled procurement analytics.

Conclusion

- GeM has transformed India's public procurement system by making it transparent, competitive, technology-driven and **inclusive**.
- Its success demonstrates how digital governance can simultaneously improve public service delivery, promote entrepreneurship, empower MSMEs, and ensure efficient use of public resources.
- Continued innovation and wider stakeholder participation will be crucial for making GeM a global benchmark in digital public procurement and advancing the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

GeM at 10 FAQs

Q1. How has the GeM enhanced transparency in public procurement?

Ans. By digitising the entire procurement lifecycle, creating auditable digital trails, etc.

Q2. What is the role of GeM in promoting inclusive economic growth in India?

Ans. GeM empowers MSMEs, startups, women entrepreneurs and businesses from smaller towns.

Q3. What is the contribution of GeM to the objectives of Atmanirbhar Bharat?

Ans. GeM prioritises domestic manufacturers, strengthens local value chains, and expands market opportunities for MSEs.

Q4. What are the major economic benefits of the GeM?

Ans. GeM reduces procurement costs, improves process efficiency, ensures better utilisation of public funds, etc.

Q5. Why is GeM regarded as an important DPI initiative?

Ans. It integrates end-to-end public procurement on a single digital platform.

Source: IE

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