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Alaskan Winds, India and the Trump-Putin Summit

Context

- The **Alaska Moment between U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin** on August 15, 2025 has been hailed internationally as a **potential turning point in the Russia-Ukraine conflict**.
- Yet, **for New Delhi, the meeting of two of India's closest partners produced few tangible benefits**.
- Instead, **it reinforced India's sense of vulnerability**, of having a great deal at stake in the outcome of U.S.-Russia talks, but little direct agency in shaping them.
- The **aftermath of the summit underscores not only the challenges in India's relations with Washington under Mr. Trump** but also broader lessons for India's foreign policy conduct.

The Outcome of the Summit: Limited Gains for India

- The **Modi government had hoped that a U.S.-Russia rapprochement might ease Washington's pressure** on New Delhi over its ties with Moscow.
- Specifically, **India sought relief from U.S. secondary sanctions** on Russian oil imports, the resumption of stalled India-U.S. trade talks, and a possible rollback of steep reciprocal tariffs.
- **These expectations proved misplaced**. Despite the warmth between Mr. Trump and Mr. Putin, no shift occurred in Washington's hard line against India.
- The **S. administration has instead doubled down**, with Senior Counsellor Peter Navarro framing the sanctions as **a two-pronged policy to punish both Russian imports and India's curbs on market access**.
- Simultaneously, **Trump's insistence on credit for mediating the India-Pakistan ceasefire during Operation Sindoor has clashed directly with New Delhi's own narrative**, deepening tensions rather than alleviating them.

The Reason Behind Trump's Secondary Tariff: Beyond Power Politics

- The rationale behind U.S. secondary sanctions appears **less about weakening Russia than about power politics and leverage over India**.
- Washington itself has **expanded trade with Moscow since Mr. Trump's return to office**, while China's oil imports from Russia dwarf those of India.

- **Targeting India selectively reflects more on Mr. Trump's desire for recognition**, particularly his fixation on being seen as a global peacemaker, than on any consistent policy principle.
- **Reports of Mr. Modi's refusal to endorse Mr. Trump's claims** or sit down with Pakistan under U.S. auspices have only worsened bilateral friction.

Lessons for New Delhi

- **Do Not Overinvest in Summitry**

- The **Alaska episode illustrates the perils of allowing diplomatic showmanship** to eclipse substance.
- For years, **Modi has emphasised personal rapport with world leaders**, from rallies with Mr. Trump to multiple meetings with China's Xi Jinping.
- **Yet such interactions have not prevented serious crises**, from the Galwan clashes with China to current strains with the U.S. India must reorient its diplomacy toward concrete agreements and institutional mechanisms, rather than optics.

- **Rebuild Bipartisan Engagement**

- India's tendency to be seen as favouring one U.S. political faction has repeatedly backfired.
- The **Modi-Trump camaraderie alienated Democrats in 2020**, while subsequent engagement with the Biden administration irritated Mr. Trump.
- **India's long-term interests require cultivating bipartisan goodwill** in Washington, just as it must balance competing political currents in neighbouring states such as Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

- **Uphold Strategic Autonomy**

- **Trump's sanctions highlight the dangers of India departing from its principle** of adhering only to UN-mandated sanctions.
- **Previous concessions to U.S. pressure**, on Iranian and Venezuelan oil, may have emboldened Washington to **demand similar compliance on Russian imports**.
- Resisting such pressures not only safeguards India's economic interests but also **strengthens its credibility as a leader of the Global South**.

- **Prepare Countermeasures**

- New Delhi **must also consider stronger responses to U.S. policies** that harm its economic and strategic interests.
- **These may include measures against reciprocal tariffs**, restrictions on U.S. manufacturing in India, or potential remittance taxes on Indian workers in America.
- **Restoring India's agency requires a readiness to respond firmly** rather than reactively to shifting U.S. policies.

The Way Forward

- India now faces **an important decision: whether to keep chasing Washington's approval or to diversify its diplomatic bets.**
- **Modi's upcoming engagements, in Japan, China, South Africa,** and with Russia, provide opportunities **to reinforce alternative partnerships.**
- Meanwhile, **the upcoming Quad summit will test the resilience of India-U.S. ties** and may reveal whether Mr. Trump is willing to visit India at all.

Conclusion

- Ultimately, **the Alaska Summit demonstrates that India cannot afford to let its foreign policy be swayed** by the pageantry of high-level meetings abroad.
- Instead, **New Delhi must ground its strategy in substance,** principle, and balance.
- **Only then can it navigate the turbulent currents of U.S. unpredictability** while safeguarding its autonomy and long-term national interests.

Alaskan Winds, India and the Trump-Putin Summit FAQs

Q1. What was India hoping to gain from the Alaska Summit?

Ans. India hoped that the U.S.-Russia rapprochement would reduce pressure on New Delhi, ease secondary sanctions on Russian oil imports, and revive stalled trade talks with Washington.

Q2. Why did these expectations not materialize?

Ans. Despite the cordiality between Mr. Trump and Mr. Putin, Mr. Trump maintained a hard stance against India, using sanctions and trade leverage for his own political goals.

Q3. What lesson does the Alaska Summit teach India about summit diplomacy?

Ans. It shows that India should not overinvest in personal rapport and diplomatic showmanship, but instead focus on substantive agreements and institutional mechanisms.

Q4. Why is bipartisan engagement in U.S. politics important for India?

Ans. Because leaning too closely toward one party creates long-term friction, India must maintain ties with both Republicans and Democrats to safeguard its interests.

Q5. How can India reclaim its strategic autonomy in foreign policy?

Ans. India must resist unilateral U.S. sanctions, diversify its trade and diplomatic partnerships, and prepare countermeasures against policies that harm its core interests.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

India's Role in Ending Global Hunger

Context:

- Global undernourishment is showing signs of decline after years of increase.
- According to the **UN's State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2025**, around 673 million people (8.2% of the global population) were undernourished in 2024 — an improvement from 688 million in 2023.
- Though levels remain above pre-pandemic figures (7.3% in 2018), this reversal marks a crucial turning point in the fight against hunger.
- This article highlights India's decisive role in reducing global hunger by transforming its Public Distribution System, strengthening nutrition-focused initiatives, and leveraging digital and agrifood system reforms.

India's Achievements

- Through targeted policy measures, digital tools, and improved governance, India has significantly advanced food security and nutrition outcomes.
- Revised estimates using new National Sample Survey data reveal that **undernourishment in India fell from 14.3% in 2020-22 to 12% in 2022-24**.
- In real terms, this translates to 30 million fewer people living with hunger — a remarkable achievement considering India's vast population and the severe disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Transformation of India's Public Distribution System (PDS)

- India's Public Distribution System (PDS) has undergone a major transformation in recent years.
- Through **digitalisation, Aadhaar-enabled targeting, biometric authentication, and real-time inventory tracking**, the system has become more efficient and transparent.
- The **One Nation One Ration Card** scheme has made food entitlements portable across the country, which is crucial for migrant workers and vulnerable households.
- These reforms allowed India to rapidly scale up food support during the pandemic and continue providing subsidised staples to over **800 million people**.

Shift from Calories to Nutrition

- While India has made remarkable progress in ensuring calorie sufficiency, the bigger challenge now is **nutrition security**.
- A healthy diet still remains unaffordable for more than **60% of the population**, largely due to high prices of nutrient-rich foods, weak cold chain infrastructure, and inefficient market linkages.
- Recognising this, the government has introduced initiatives like:
 - the **Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN)** school feeding programme and
 - the **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)** with a focus on **dietary diversity and nutrition sensitivity**, particularly for children.

Progress and Structural Challenges

- According to new UN data, India has made progress in making healthy diets relatively more affordable despite inflationary pressures.

- However, a **larger structural challenge** persists: even as hunger levels decline, issues like **malnutrition, obesity, and micronutrient deficiencies** are on the rise, especially among **poor urban and rural populations**.
- This underscores the need for policies that go beyond hunger eradication to address broader health and nutrition outcomes.

Transforming India's Agrifood System

- India can meet the challenge of ensuring both food security and nutrition security only by transforming its agrifood system.
- This involves boosting the **production and affordability of nutrient-rich foods** like pulses, fruits, vegetables, and animal-based products, which are still unaffordable for many low-income households.
- At the same time, investment in **post-harvest infrastructure** such as cold storage, warehouses, and digital logistics is vital to reduce the nearly 13% food loss that occurs between farm and market, directly affecting food prices and availability.
- Equally important is support for **women-led food enterprises, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), and local cooperatives**, especially those cultivating climate-resilient crops.
- These initiatives not only enhance access to nutritious foods but also improve rural livelihoods.
- Finally, India must continue to leverage its digital edge. Tools like **AgriStack, e-NAM, and geospatial data systems** can significantly improve market access, strengthen agricultural planning, and enable more effective delivery of nutrition-sensitive policies.
- Together, these steps can help build a more resilient, equitable, and nutrition-focused agrifood system.

India's Role as a Global Symbol of Hope

- India's progress in transforming its agrifood system is not just a national achievement but a global contribution.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) highlights that India's advances in digital governance, social protection, and data-driven agriculture can serve as a model for the Global South.
 - It can demonstrate how hunger reduction is possible at scale when backed by political will, smart investments, and inclusive policies.
- With only five years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including **SDG 2: Zero Hunger**, India's recent success offers optimism for the global fight against hunger.
- However, sustaining this momentum will require a shift from ensuring food security to ensuring nutrition security, while also focusing on resilience and opportunity for vulnerable populations.

Conclusion

- The **"hunger clock" is ticking**, and India's leadership is now crucial for the world.
- No longer just feeding itself, India stands as a **pathway to ending global hunger**, proving that progress in one nation can inspire and support change worldwide.

India's Role in Ending Global Hunger FAQs

Q1. How has India contributed to the recent decline in global undernourishment?

Ans. India reduced hunger through targeted policies, digital governance, and nutrition programs, cutting undernourishment from 14.3% to 12%, impacting 30 million people positively.

Q2. What reforms have transformed India's Public Distribution System (PDS)?

Ans. Digitalisation, Aadhaar-enabled targeting, biometric authentication, and One Nation One Ration Card reforms improved efficiency, portability, and transparency, supporting over 800 million people.

Q3. Why is there a shift from calorie sufficiency to nutrition security in India?

Ans. While hunger has declined, over 60% still cannot afford healthy diets, requiring focus on nutrient-rich foods and child nutrition programs.

Q4. What steps are needed to transform India's agrifood system?

Ans. Boosting nutrient-rich food production, investing in cold storage, supporting FPOs and women-led enterprises, and leveraging digital tools like AgriStack and e-NAM are essential.

Q5. Why is India considered a global symbol of hope in ending hunger?

Ans. India's digital and agrifood innovations showcase scalable solutions for the Global South, proving hunger reduction is achievable with inclusive policies and smart investments.

Source: TH

PM Modi's 12th Independence Day Speech - A Roadmap to Viksit Bharat

Context:

- On August 15, Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi delivered his 12th Independence Day speech from the Red Fort.
- The address was described as unprecedented for its **visionary scope, bold reforms, and long-term roadmap** aimed at transforming India into a **Viksit Bharat by 2047**.
- The focus was on **next-generation reforms** in the digital economy, energy security, critical minerals, national security, healthcare, taxation, and employment generation.
- Below, we will try to analyse key highlights of the PM's speech.

Digital Sovereignty and Technological Leadership:

- **Digital India Stack:** Unified Payment Interface (UPI) accounts for 50% of global real-time digital transactions.
- **Semiconductor push:** First Made-in-India chip to be rolled out by year-end. This is nothing less than **digital Swaraj** — India's assertion of **sovereignty over critical technologies**.

Energy Security and Hydrocarbon Exploration:

- **Reduction of “No-Go” zones in Exclusive Economic Zones by 99%:**

- Freeing 10 lakh sq. km. for exploration and production (E&P).
- Coupled with Open Acreage Licensing Policy (**OALP**), this has opened a vast canvas to Indian champions and global majors alike for E&P.

- **National Deepwater Exploration Mission:**

- Announced from the ramparts of the Red Fort, **it aims to unlock 600-1,200 million metric tonnes (MMTs) of oil and gas reserves** through the drilling of nearly 40 wildcat wells.
- For the first time, India will systematically open up its complex offshore frontiers — from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea — with a framework that **de-risks investment** by allowing recovery of up to –
 - **80%** of costs in the case of dry wells, and
 - **40%** upon commercial discovery.
- **Broader blueprint:**
 - **Triple domestic oil and gas output** to 85 million tonnes by 2032 and double national reserves to between one and two billion tonnes.
 - **Build an Atmanirbhar E&P ecosystem** where the share of local supply chains rises from today's 25-30% to over 70%.

Energy Transition and Clean Power:

- **India has reached the 50% clean-power mark in 2025** – five years ahead of the 2030 target.
- **Biofuels and green hydrogen** are moving from pilots to production; ethanol blending and CBG scale-up are building a new rural-industrial backbone; LNG infrastructure continues to expand.
- **The civilian nuclear sector** has been opened to private participation.
 - Currently, 10 new nuclear reactors are operational, and India aims to **increase its nuclear energy capacity tenfold** by the 100th year of its independence.

National Critical Minerals Mission:

- Recognising the **strategic importance** of lithium, rare earths, nickel, cobalt, India has launched exploration at 1,200+ sites.
- It is structuring partnerships, processing and recycling so that renewable power, semiconductors, EVs and advanced defence are **never hostage to external choke-points**.

National Security and Defence:

- **Operation Sindoor:** It displayed India's military prowess in real time, ending the era of nuclear blackmail and sending a message that aggression will be met with swiftness and sophistication. **Reversal of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT):** It is a bold assertion of sovereignty.
- **Unveiling of Mission Sudarshan Chakra:**

- Inspired by Lord Krishna shielding Arjun on the battlefield, **it is a multi-layered indigenous security shield** that will protect India's critical institutions from cyber, physical and hybrid threats.
- It is a blend of civilisational symbolism and advanced technology.

Healthcare and Biopharma:

- **Achievements:** Pharmacy of the world, as it produces 60% of global vaccines. Push towards biopharma innovation under **BioE3 policy**.
- **Ambitions:** To patent and produce medicines that are affordable and world-class, and lead the world in new medicines, vaccines, and devices.

Tax and Legal Reforms:

- **New Income Tax Bill:**
 - **Replaced the Income Tax Act of 1961**, reducing complexity, abolishing 280 redundant sections, and offering relief up to Rs 12 lakh.
 - **The introduction of faceless assessment** has made the system transparent, efficient, and incorruptible.
- **GST 2.0:** To be launched by Diwali, it will further rationalise rates and boost compliance.
- **Decriminalisation drive:** Abolition of over 40,000 unnecessary compliances, repealing more than 1,500 outdated laws, and strengthening the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).
- **Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) success:** Touching over 25 crore beneficiaries (embedded accountability into welfare), and lifting 250 million Indians out of poverty.

Employment and Economic Growth:

- **PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana:** Launched with an outlay of Rs 1 lakh crore, the programme aims to reach about 3.5 crore young Indians, incentivising –
 - Newly employed youth (will receive Rs 15,000 per month),
 - Companies (that generate fresh jobs).
- **Task Force for Next-Generation Reforms:** A body designed to re-engineer the ecosystem of economic activity, its mandate is –
 - **To slash compliance costs** that weigh down startups and MSMEs,
 - **To liberate enterprise** from the shadow of arbitrary action, and
 - **To streamline a thicket of laws** into a framework that is simple and predictable.

Conclusion:

- The Independence Day roadmap is **not about immediate political mileage but a long-term civilisational project**.
- India is transforming from an ancient civilisation into a modern power by **integrating its heritage with next-gen reforms**.

- The blueprint aims at Viksit Bharat by 2047, with **India emerging as a technological, economic, and strategic powerhouse.**

PM Modi's 12th Independence Day Speech FAQs

Q1. What is the significance of “Digital Swaraj” in India’s development journey?

Ans: Digital Swaraj signifies India’s technological sovereignty through innovations like UPI and the launch of the first Made-in-India semiconductor chip, reducing dependence on global supply chains.

Q2. How does the National Deepwater Exploration Mission aim to address India’s energy security?

Ans: The Mission seeks to unlock 600–1,200 MMT of oil and gas reserves, triple domestic output by 2032, and build an Atmanirbhar exploration and production ecosystem.

Q3. Why is the National Critical Minerals Mission a strategic necessity for India?

Ans: It ensures supply of key minerals like lithium and rare earths for renewable energy, EVs, semiconductors, and defence, reducing vulnerability to external chokepoints.

Q4. What role do Operation Sindoor and Mission Sudarshan Chakra play in India’s national security?

Ans: They strengthen defence preparedness by showcasing military prowess and establishing a multi-layered indigenous shield against cyber, physical, and hybrid threats.

Q5. How does the PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana aim to tackle unemployment?

Ans: With a ₹1 lakh crore outlay, the scheme incentivises companies to create jobs and supports 3.5 crore youth with monthly employment-linked benefits.

Source: IE

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/daily-editorial-analysis-19-august-2025/>

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