

Trump's Board of Peace: Why India Joined as an Observer

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Board of Peace Latest News

- The US President Donald Trump's "Board of Peace" held its first meeting in Washington to discuss Gaza's reconstruction, with India participating as an observer.
- New Delhi said it supports the Gaza Peace Plan and efforts aligned with **UNSC Resolution 2803**.
- Initially announced to end the Israel-Gaza war, the board's expanded mandate to address "global conflict" has drawn criticism for potentially sidelining the UN.
- While 27 countries joined the body, India chose not to become a member. By attending as an observer, India signalled cautious engagement—supporting diplomatic efforts without fully endorsing a controversial initiative, especially amid evolving ties with the US.

Composition of the Board of Peace

- The 27-member board includes key West Asian nations such as Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Turkey, and Bahrain.
- Other members include Argentina, Hungary, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Pakistan, whose Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif attended the inaugural meeting.

Observer Participation

- Twenty-two countries joined as observers, including the UK, Germany, Italy, Norway, Switzerland, Poland, the Netherlands, Japan, Oman, and the European Union.
- India participated as an observer, represented by its Deputy Chief of Mission in Washington, Namgya Khampa, after weighing diplomatic considerations.

Financial Commitments Announced

- **Pledges from Members** – President Trump announced that nine member countries had collectively pledged \$7 billion for Gaza’s relief and reconstruction efforts.
- **US Contribution** – The United States pledged an additional \$10 billion for the Board of Peace, though specific allocations were not detailed. Trump described the funding as an investment in regional stability and harmony.

Observer Status as a Strategic Off-Ramp

- India initially stayed away when President Trump unveiled the Board of Peace in Davos, choosing to assess its membership and direction.
- With the first meeting held, the board’s composition has become clearer—featuring key West Asian states, Trump’s ideological allies, and countries seeking closer ties with the US, but notably **excluding** permanent UN Security Council members such as Russia, China, France, and the UK, which limits its legitimacy.
- New Delhi is also weighing the initiative’s durability, viewing it largely as Trump’s personal project that may lose relevance after his term.
- Concerns about policy unpredictability further shape India’s cautious approach.
- By participating as an observer, India maintains diplomatic engagement while preserving flexibility and an exit option.

Balancing Multilateral Commitments

- India is cautious that the Board of Peace could evolve into a parallel platform that sidelines the United Nations.
- Although Trump has said the board will work “in conjunction with the UN,” its broad mandate and vague charter raise concerns in New Delhi.
- While initially framed around Gaza’s reconstruction, the board’s charter does not explicitly limit its scope.
- Trump has described it as a body “for the world,” prompting worries that it could intervene in other conflicts.

India-Pakistan Factor

- **Trump's Mediation Claims** – Trump reiterated claims that he prevented escalation between India and Pakistan, including alleged tariff threats—assertions India has consistently rejected.
- **Why Observer Status Matters** – With Pakistan a board member, India sees value in maintaining observer status to monitor discussions and prevent any attempts to internationalise the India-Pakistan issue. Staying completely out could risk being excluded from potential decisions.

Regional Diplomacy and Strategic Interests

- **Upcoming Diplomatic Engagements** – India's participation comes ahead of the Prime Minister's visit to Israel and ongoing ceasefire negotiations. India continues to support a two-state solution and seeks regional stability.
- **Economic Stakes** – Peace in West Asia would advance initiatives such as the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor. Observer status provides India a strategic vantage point without committing to formal negotiations.

Calibrated Outreach to Trump

- As India and the United States work to stabilise ties—finalising an interim trade deal framework and cooperating on initiatives like Pax Silica—New Delhi is mindful of President Trump's unpredictability.
- Joining the Board of Peace as an observer allows India to avoid signalling disengagement or slighting Washington, while still limiting formal commitment.
- The move reflects a cautious diplomatic balance: maintaining goodwill with the US without fully endorsing a controversial initiative.

Source: **IE** | **TH**

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