

**The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE**

**Wednesday, 20 Nov , 2024**

**Edition: International Table of Contents**

<b>Page 04</b> <b>Syllabus : GS 2 : International Relation</b>	<b>India and Italy to negotiate defence industrial road map, focus on maritime sector</b>
<b>Page 04</b> <b>Syllabus : GS 1 &amp; 3 : Geography &amp; Disaster Management</b>	<b>Act fast to mitigate a disaster in Teesta Valley, groups urge PM, CMs</b>
<b>Page 10</b> <b>Syllabus : GS : 2 &amp; 3 – International Relations &amp; Indian Economy</b>	<b>Is imposing tariffs on Chinese imports a good idea</b>
<b>Page 10</b> <b>Syllabus : GS 2 : Social Justice : Health</b>	<b>The dangers of high-altitude sickness</b>
<b>Page 12</b> <b>Syllabus : GS 3 : Internal Security</b>	<b>How sustainable is India's path to net-zero with 45 years left</b>
<b>Page 09 : Editorial Analysis:</b> <b>Syllabus : GS 2 &amp; 3 : International Relations &amp; Indian Economy</b>	<b>How India could counter the CBAM</b>

India and Italy outlined their vision for deepening bilateral cooperation in the Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025-29. The document covers various key sectors, including defence, trade, energy and space. This Action Plan was issued after a meeting between PM Modi and his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni on the sidelines of G20 summit in Brazil.

## India and Italy to negotiate defence industrial road map, focus on maritime sector

**Dinakar Peri**  
NEW DELHI

India and Italy agreed to negotiate a defence industrial road map, and agreement for the mutual protection and exchange of classified information as also an agreement on cooperation in the maritime and port sector. This was stated in the Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025-29, which outlines their vision for the next five years.

“Negotiate a defence industrial road map, between the two Ministries of Defence and promote a Memorandum of Understanding between the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers and the Italian Industries Federation for Aerospace, Defence and Security,” the joint action plan said. “Welcome interactions between respective Armed Forces in the framework of Italy’s growing interest in the Indo-



The Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025-29 was released outlining both countries’ vision. ANI

Pacific Region, aimed at increasing interoperability and cooperation, including negotiations of any useful arrangement supporting such interactions.”

### On G-20 sidelines

The action plan was issued after the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni on the sidelines of the G-20 summit on Monday in Brazil. “Our talks centred

around deepening ties in defence, security, trade and technology. We also talked about how to boost cooperation in culture, education and other such areas,” Mr. Modi said on X after the meeting.

They also agreed to explore avenues of enhanced partnerships and dialogue among public and private stakeholders, focusing on “technology collaboration, co-production and co-development of defence platforms and equipment”.

In the last few years, there has been an increase in military-to-military visits between the two countries’ armed forces. In a historic maritime engagement, the navies of India and Italy carried out their maiden exercise by Carrier Strike Groups (CSG) off the Goa coast. The sea phase was led by *INS Vikramaditya* and *ITS Cavour* along with *INS Visakhapatnam* and *ITS Alpino*.

### India-Italy bilateral relation

#### Political Relation

- Political relations were established in 1947.
- In November 2020, during a Virtual Summit between PMs of India and Italy, 2020-2025 Action Plan was adopted.

No: 1521, Second Floor, H-Block, 5th Street, Anna Nagar, Chennai-80.

Ph: +91 8754543687, [www.gurukulamias.in](http://www.gurukulamias.in)

## Daily News Analysis

- PM Modi paid his first official visit to Italy in Oct. 2021 to attend the G20 Summit.
- During this visit, a Joint Statement announcing a Strategic Partnership on Energy Transition was issued.
- In March 2023, PM of Italy, Giorgia Meloni, paid a State visit to India. She was also the Chief Guest and Keynote Speaker at the 8th Raisina Dialogue, 2023.
- During this visit, India and Italy announced the elevation of the bilateral relationship to the level of strategic partnership.

### ➡ Economic Relation

- In 2023, bilateral trade between India and Italy amounted to €14.34 billion.
- India's exports to Italy were €9.16 billion, while imports from Italy stood at €5.18 billion, resulting in a trade surplus of €3.98 billion in India's favor.
- Italy is India's 4th largest trading partner in EU, after Germany, Belgium and Netherlands.
- Italy is the 18th largest foreign investor in India with a cumulative FDI inflow of USD 3.53 billion from January 2000 to December 2023.
- Indian investment in Italy is estimated around USD 400 mn.

### ➡ Defence

- India has a huge "footprint" on Italian soil because of the supreme sacrifice made by Indian Soldiers during the Second world war and for the sake of freedom in Italy.
- By 1945, a total of 5782 Indian soldiers died in Italy with as many as six of them receiving the VICTORIA CROSS.
- In February 2023, Italy deployed an official from its Embassy to the Information Fusion Center – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) to strengthen maritime security and support anti-piracy efforts in the Indian Ocean Region.
- India and Italy are also exploring joint productions in defence and aerospace sectors as well as technology transfers.
- India and Italy also have a Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism.

### ➡ Energy cooperation

- In 2021, Strategic Partnership on Energy Transition was inked to advance collaboration on areas like green hydrogen and bio-fuels.
- Cooperation in Science and Technology
- The first India-Italy Innovation Day was held virtually on 14th July 2021. Since then, both the countries are celebrating this event every year.

### ➡ Indian Community in Italy

- Estimated at 180,000 including PIOs, it is the third largest community of Indians in Europe after UK and the Netherlands.

## Key Highlights of Italy-India Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025-2029

### ➡ Political Dialogue

- Regular meetings between Heads of Government, Foreign, Trade, and Defence Ministers.
- Annual bilateral consultations between the two Foreign Ministries.

**No: 1521, Second Floor, H-Block, 5th Street, Anna Nagar, Chennai-80.**

**Ph: +91 8754543687, [www.gurukulamias.in](http://www.gurukulamias.in)**



## Daily News Analysis

- Intensify ministerial-level meetings to enhance sectoral cooperation.
- ➔ **Economic Cooperation and Investments**
  - Strengthen bilateral trade, investment, and joint ventures in high-potential sectors (e.g., green technologies, sustainable mobility, food processing, semiconductors).
  - Promote trade fairs, business forums, and industrial partnerships.
  - Advance collaboration in automotive, infrastructure, and advanced manufacturing.
- ➔ **Connectivity**
  - Collaborate on sustainable transport and climate action.
  - Enhance maritime and land infrastructure cooperation, including the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.
  - Finalize a maritime and port cooperation agreement.
- ➔ **Science, Technology, IT, Innovation, and Start-ups**
  - Expand partnerships in critical technologies like AI, telecom, and digital services.
  - Explore Industry 4.0, clean energy, and critical minerals initiatives involving academia and SMEs.
  - Enhance STEM research collaborations, scholarships, and joint projects.
  - Launch the Indo-Italian Innovation and Incubation Exchange Programme.
- ➔ **Space Sector**
  - Expand ASI-ISRO collaboration on Earth observation, heliophysics, and lunar exploration.
  - Promote peaceful outer space usage and commercial space partnerships.
  - Organize an Italian space delegation visit to India by mid-2025.
- ➔ **Energy Transition**
  - Organize "Tech Summits" to foster industrial partnerships.
  - Collaborate on green hydrogen, biofuels, and renewable energy solutions.
  - Support the Global Biofuels Alliance and International Solar Alliance.
- ➔ **Defence Cooperation**
  - Hold annual Joint Defence Consultative meetings and Joint Staff Talks.
  - Enhance interoperability and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.
  - Develop a Defence Industrial Roadmap and MoU between SIDM and AIAD.
  - Focus on maritime cooperation and defence research.
- ➔ **Security Cooperation**
  - Enhance cybersecurity, counterterrorism, and capacity-building efforts.
  - Hold yearly Joint Working Group meetings on international terrorism and crime.
  - Share best practices and conclude agreements on classified information protection.
- ➔ **Migration and Mobility**
  - Promote safe migration channels and labour training, with a pilot project for health professionals.
  - Enhance student, researcher, and academic mobility.
  - Counter irregular migration effectively.

**No: 1521, Second Floor, H-Block, 5th Street, Anna Nagar, Chennai-80.**

**Ph: +91 8754543687, [www.gurukulamias.in](http://www.gurukulamias.in)**

### ➡ Culture, Academia, Cinema, and Tourism

- Foster exchanges between universities and technical education institutions.
- Collaborate on exhibitions, heritage preservation, and restoration projects.
- Promote film co-productions and enhance tourism.
- Strengthen cultural bonds and implement the 2023 Executive Programme of Cultural Cooperation.



GURUKULAM  IAS

**No: 1521, Second Floor, H-Block, 5th Street, Anna Nagar, Chennai-80.**

**Ph: +91 8754543687, [www.gurukulamias.in](http://www.gurukulamias.in)**



The Teesta Valley, severely impacted by the 2023 Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) and subsequent dam breach, faces further risk from the 2025 monsoon.

## Act fast to mitigate a disaster in Teesta Valley, groups urge PM, CMs

Two community-based organisations, Save The Hills and the Darjeeling Himalaya Initiative, said the Teesta river poses serious threats to both Sikkim and West Bengal each monsoon season. However, the two States have limited their responses to within their borders instead of approaching disasters at a landscape level

Rahul Karmakar  
GUWAHATI

**T**he Teesta Valley has only six months before the 2025 monsoon aggravates the damage wrought by the disastrous glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) in October 2023, two community-based green Himalayan organisations have warned the government.

The 2023 GLOF and the subsequent NHPC, Ltd. power project dam breach claimed more than a hundred lives, disrupted livelihoods, and destroyed assets and critical military installations, apart from ecological devastation in its wake across Sikkim and West Bengal.

The two governments have allegedly been working in silos, concerned only about areas within their respective boundaries instead of treating it as a larger issue at a landscape level.

"With only six months remaining before the 2025 monsoon, there is an urgent need to implement both structural and non-structural mitigation measures throughout the Teesta Valley," a memorandum by the Kalimpong-based Praful Rao of 'Save The Hills' and Roshan Rai of the Darjeeling Himalaya Initiative (DHI) said on November 18. "The implementation of effective measures in Sikkim and West Bengal now can significantly reduce the impact of future floods."

A copy each was addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang, and his West Bengal counterpart Mamata Banerjee. The memorandum bears the signatures of 290 citizens working to raise awareness about landslides in the Darjeeling-Sikkim Himalaya.

"Central assistance will be imperative because the scale and complexity of the problem cannot be tackled at the State level," they said.

### Call for a joint committee

The duo lamented that the response from the State and Central authorities to the GLOF has been inadequate despite the scale of the disaster, especially for long-term rehabilitation and restorative interventions at the relief, infrastructure, and ecological levels.

They said the Teesta River poses serious threats to both Sikkim and West Bengal each monsoon season. The two States thus need to approach disasters at a landscape level instead of limiting their focus to within their respective boundaries.

"A Sikkim-West Bengal joint committee could address common issues and implement coordinated disaster management strategies that benefit both the States and areas beyond," Mr. Rao, also a member of the DHI, told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Rao and Mr. Rai suggested the formation of a task force of experts drawn



A view of Teesta Bazaar in West Bengal, which has been sinking further into the ground since the glacial lake outburst flood in 2023. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

from geo-hydrology, environmental science, engineering, and sociology to address the multiple challenges brought about by the GLOF. "This task force must develop a comprehensive action plan that includes technical, financial, and social solutions for restoring and fortifying the region," they said.

They cited the case of 65 families in the Teesta Valley, in the Kalimpong district of West Bengal, that were displaced by the GLOF-induced flash floods and continue to reside in relief camps.

"For these people who depended on the river for their survival, displacement has worsened their economic stability, and everyday existence becomes a struggle for survival. Prolonged uncertainty worsens their mental distress, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions to restore their houses and livelihoods," they said.

They added that several areas along the Teesta River have been sinking since the 2023 disaster. Among the most vulnerable is Teesta Bazaar in West Bengal.

"The NHI, the lifeline of Kalimpong and Sikkim, remains perilously unstable for much of the monsoon season and diversion of traffic via alternative routes adds avoidable burden on transport services, infrastructure as well as the communities along the route," they said. "These vulnerabilities were exposed again almost throughout the 2024

**The 2023 GLOF and subsequent power project dam breach claimed more than a hundred lives, disrupted livelihoods, and destroyed assets and critical military installations in its wake across Sikkim and West Bengal**

monsoon season and have severely reduced the tourist traffic to the region impacting the economy of the Sikkim and Darjeeling Himalayas."

### Stress on land-use planning

Mr. Rao and Mr. Rai suggested sustainable engineering solutions to protect low-lying areas from river overflow and re-channelising the Teesta River – disrupted by debris built up by the GLOF – to prevent further damage to urban areas and infrastructure. The NHPC's technical expertise can be instrumental in deepening, widening, and redirecting the river to safer channels, they added.

The duo underscored the need to repair and strengthen damaged roads and bridges that have cut off many communities, hindering both economic activity and disaster relief efforts.

They also suggested that the reinforcement of evacuation centres and relief camps with backup solar power to ensure they remain operational in the

event of future emergencies.

The duo stressed land-use planning and zoning as "certain low-lying areas will remain high-risk zones even with structural protections" in place. "These areas should be designated for potential evacuation and resettlement of at-risk communities. Adequate compensation as decided by the expert group should be provided to affected victims and necessary support given to those relocating," they said.

"Non-structural mitigation measures such as early warning systems and communication networks are no less important," Mr Rao said.

"Installing automated flood early warning systems that deliver real-time alerts through sirens and mobile networks is crucial. Backup communication methods, such as ham radios and walkie-talkies operated by trained personnel, should also be implemented to ensure effective communication during emergencies," he said.

Other measures suggested included awareness and risk management campaigns to build capacities and resilience during disasters, post-disaster financial recovery support, and an aggressive afforestation programme to restore the valley's ecosystem, prevent soil erosion, and help regulate the river's flow.

### THE GIST

The Sikkim and West Bengal governments have allegedly been working in silos, concerned only about areas within their respective boundaries instead of treating it as a larger issue at a landscape level

Kalimpong-based Praful Rao of 'Save The Hills' and Roshan Rai of the Darjeeling Himalaya Initiative said the Teesta River poses serious threats to both Sikkim and West Bengal each monsoon season

They added that several areas along the Teesta River have been sinking since the 2023 disaster. Among the most vulnerable is Teesta Bazaar in West Bengal

➡ Experts urge both Sikkim and West Bengal to implement coordinated disaster management strategies.

➡ A comprehensive approach, including structural and non-structural measures, is crucial for mitigating future risks.

### Warning for the Teesta Valley

No: 1521, Second Floor, H-Block, 5th Street, Anna Nagar, Chennai-80.

Ph: +91 8754543687, www.gurukulamias.in

## Daily News Analysis

- The Teesta Valley has only six months to prepare before the 2025 monsoon exacerbates the damage caused by the 2023 Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) and the subsequent dam breach by NHPC Ltd.
- The 2023 disaster claimed over 100 lives, disrupted livelihoods, destroyed assets and critical military installations, and caused significant ecological damage across Sikkim and West Bengal.

### Teesta River:

- **Location:** The Teesta River flows through the Indian states of Sikkim and West Bengal, and also passes through Bangladesh.
- **Origin:** It originates from the Teesta Khangtse Glacier in the Himalayas, near the Sikkim-Tibet border. Length: Approximately 414 kilometres long.
- **Course:** Flows southwards through the narrow mountain valleys of Sikkim, then through the plains of West Bengal before entering Bangladesh, where it eventually merges with the Jamuna River.
- **Tributaries:** Key tributaries include the Rangit, Mahananda, and Dikchu rivers.
- **Hydroelectric Potential:** Known for its potential in hydropower generation, with several hydroelectric projects along its course.
- **Controversies:** Disputes over water sharing between India and Bangladesh.

### Lack of Coordinated Response

- The governments of Sikkim and West Bengal have been working in isolation, focusing only on their respective areas instead of addressing the issue at a broader landscape level.
- The two states need to implement both structural and non-structural mitigation measures across the Teesta Valley before the next monsoon to reduce the future flood impacts.

### Call for Central Assistance and Joint Committee

- Central assistance is necessary due to the scale and complexity of the problem, which cannot be handled at the state level.
- A joint Sikkim-West Bengal committee is recommended to address common issues and develop coordinated disaster management strategies for both states.

### Urgent Rehabilitation and Infrastructure Repair

- The disaster has displaced numerous families, worsening their economic stability and mental distress.
- The NH10 road, crucial for transport, remains unstable, further burdening infrastructure and the local economy.
- Urgent repairs to roads and bridges, along with reinforcement of evacuation centres with backup solar power, are necessary.

### Sustainable Mitigation Measures

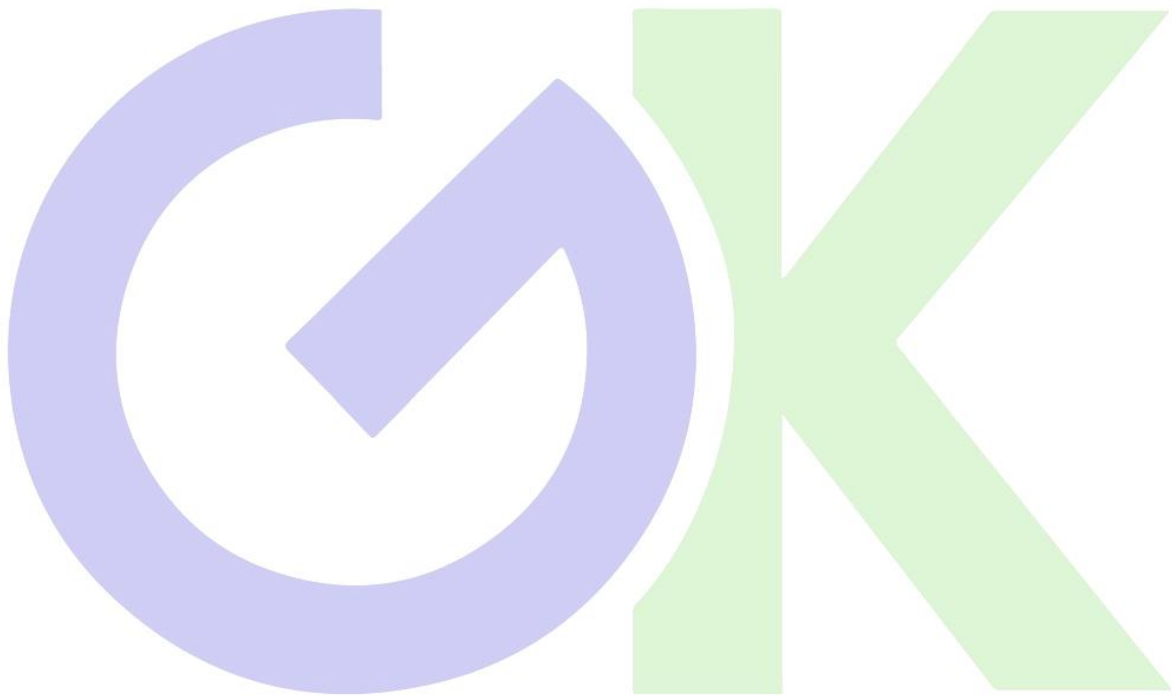
- Sustainable engineering solutions like re-channeling the Teesta River and strengthening land-use planning are vital to prevent future damage.
- Non-structural measures such as early warning systems, afforestation programs, and awareness campaigns are essential for long-term disaster resilience.

**No: 1521, Second Floor, H-Block, 5th Street, Anna Nagar, Chennai-80.**

**Ph: +91 8754543687, [www.gurukulamias.in](http://www.gurukulamias.in)**



Ques : How will the melting of Himalayan glaciers have a far-reaching impact on the water resources of India?



GURUKULAM IAS

No: 1521, Second Floor, H-Block, 5th Street, Anna Nagar, Chennai-80.

Ph: +91 8754543687, [www.gurukulamias.in](http://www.gurukulamias.in)



Donald Trump, as U.S. President-elect, proposed tariffs of up to 60% on Chinese imports to address the U.S. trade deficit with China and counter China's subsidisation of domestic production.

➔ A 10% import tariff was also threatened on European Union imports.

## Is imposing tariffs on Chinese imports a good idea?

What will be the impact of the move on the U.S. economy as well as the Chinese economy? Will the imposition of such tariffs trigger another global trade war?

**B. Bhagwan Das**

**The story so far:**

Donald Trump, the President-elect of the U.S., has promised to impose tariffs of up to 60% on Chinese imports to correct the huge trade deficit the U.S. has with China and also as a punitive measure to make China reduce the subsidisation of its domestic production, which make Chinese goods cheaper and attractive to American consumers as compared to locally produced American goods. He has also threatened to impose 10% import tariffs on imports from European Union.

**What will be the impact?**

The imposition of tariffs by the U.S. will raise the domestic price of such products in U.S. markets. If the tariffs are across the board and cover a large part of consumer

goods sold in the U.S., then it will increase domestic inflation. However, if it helps to reduce the overall trade deficit of the U.S., it may improve the value of the U.S. dollar and moderate domestic inflation. If the tariffs shift consumption away from Chinese goods and other imported goods, it will boost domestic production and increase domestic supply of consumer goods and help moderate inflation.

However, if China and other countries which are threatened by U.S. tariffs, respond with appropriate tariffs of their own on American goods, triggering another round of global trade wars, the intended policy impact of the action on the trade balance between the U.S. and its major trading partners, may not materialise to the desired extent.

On the contrary, it could have a debilitating impact on global commodity prices, and worsen inflation in most countries.

**How will it materially translate?**

Consider the following hypothetical example: Assume a shirt costs 724 Chinese yuan in China and is sold in the U.S. market for a \$100, based on the current U.S. dollar-Chinese yuan exchange rate of \$1:CN¥7.24. Let us also assume, that the same shirt can be supplied by U.S. manufacturers domestically for \$105 or 760.2 Chinese yuan. Since they are overpriced, Chinese producers capture the U.S. market and set the domestic price of a shirt in the U.S. at \$100. At this price, U.S. producers are unable to compete with Chinese producers in supplying U.S. markets.

Now if the U.S. imposes a 10% import tariff on imported Chinese shirts, under its America First policy, the price of a shirt in the American market will rise to \$110 or 796.4 Chinese yuan, based on the above-mentioned dollar-yuan exchange rate. At 796.4 yuan per shirt, Chinese

imports are no longer attractive to American buyers. The American producers are happy as they make a profit of \$5 as their cost of producing a shirt is \$105 while the tariff-inclusive price in the U.S. market is \$110. The Chinese exporters will have to bear the 10% import tariff on their exports, which in Chinese currency is equal to 72.4 yuan at the prevailing Dollar-Yuan exchange rate. If the Chinese government decides to support its textile exporters, it can adopt any one of the following policy measures: provide a State subsidy of 72.4 Yuan per shirt; devalue the yuan by 10%; or lower its Central Bank interest rate and increase stimulus spending in the economy, so that the dollar-yuan exchange rate depreciates by 10% to reach \$1 equals 7.964 yuan.

At this exchange rate, the Chinese garment exporters will receive 796.4 Chinese yuan per shirt, pay the U.S. import tax of 72.4 Chinese yuan and retain 724 Chinese yuan per shirt as their export earnings, the amount they got per shirt prior to the 10% import tariff. The risk to the Chinese economy could be in the form of a rise in its domestic rate of inflation due to a devalued or depreciating currency. But if these policy interventions help in boosting domestic production and exports, the risk may be offset by increased GDP growth.

*Bhagwan Das is former head and associate professor of economics, Loyola College, Chennai.*

**THE GIST**

Donald Trump, the President-elect of the U.S., has promised to impose tariffs of up to 60% on Chinese imports to correct the huge trade deficit the U.S. has with China.

The imposition of tariffs by the U.S. will raise the domestic price of such products in U.S. markets. If the tariffs are across the board and cover a large part of consumer goods sold in the U.S., then it will increase domestic inflation.

If China and other countries, which are threatened by U.S. tariffs, respond with appropriate tariffs of their own on American goods, it will trigger another round of global trade wars.

### Proposed Tariffs and India's Position

- ➔ India's exports to global markets face potential tariff hikes, especially in sectors like textiles, steel, and electronics.
- ➔ Protectionist policies by nations like the U.S. and EU aim to correct trade imbalances but create challenges for Indian exporters.
- ➔ Indian manufacturers face stiff competition from heavily subsidised foreign goods, making local products less competitive.

### Impact of Tariffs on India

- ➔ **Inflationary Pressures:** Increased import tariffs on Indian goods could make exported items more expensive, reducing demand.
- ➔ **Trade Balance Issues:** Tariffs imposed on Indian exports may widen the trade deficit, especially with large trading partners like the U.S. or EU.
- ➔ **Domestic Boost:** Shifts in global trade due to tariffs could encourage India to strengthen domestic manufacturing and reduce reliance on imports.
- ➔ **Global Trade Wars:** Retaliatory tariffs from India and other affected nations could escalate trade conflicts, destabilising global markets and impacting commodity prices.

### Material Impact: A Hypothetical Example

No: 1521, Second Floor, H-Block, 5th Street, Anna Nagar, Chennai-80.

Ph: +91 8754543687, www.gurukulamias.in

## Daily News Analysis

- If a textile product from India costs ₹7,000 and is sold abroad for \$100 (₹8,000), a 10% tariff raises the cost to \$110.
- The price hike makes Indian goods less competitive, giving an advantage to domestic producers in the importing country.

### India's Potential Responses

- Incentivizing Exporters: Subsidies or tax rebates could offset the tariff burden on Indian exporters.
- Currency Adjustments: India could consider a controlled depreciation of the rupee to make exports cheaper and more attractive.
- Policy Reforms: Strengthening "Make in India" initiatives and improving ease of doing business can bolster India's global competitiveness.

### Conclusion

- India must adopt targeted strategies to mitigate tariff impacts while leveraging global challenges to enhance domestic production and trade resilience.

### UPSC Mains PYQ : 2017

**Ques : 'China is using its economic relations and positive trade surplus as tools to develop potential military power status in Asia', In the light of this statement, discuss its impact on India as her neighbour.**



The article discusses the challenges posed by high-altitude sickness (AMS) in the Himalayan regions, where inadequate healthcare infrastructure and rapid ascents lead to fatalities.

It highlights the importance of preventive measures, early interventions, and improved medical facilities in reducing risks associated with AMS.

# The dangers of high-altitude sickness

How does high-altitude sickness occur? How will a mandatory registration system for tourists visiting the Himalayas improve measures to tackle the illness? How can the sickness be treated? What are some preventive measures one can take before embarking on scaling the Himalayas?

## EXPLAINER

**Tikender Singh Panwar**  
**Malay Sarkar**

### The story so far:

In September, a trekker from Idukki, Kerala, died in Uttarakhand while attempting to scale Garur Peak due to respiratory failure. Every year, numerous tourists like this succumb to the effects of high-altitude sickness in the pristine but challenging inner Himalayas. These regions present hidden dangers due to their extreme altitudes, where thinner air and reduced oxygen can lead to potentially fatal conditions.

### What is high-altitude sickness?

High-altitude sickness, or Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), occurs when the body cannot acclimatise to high elevations, typically over 8,000 feet (2,400 metres). As altitude increases, the air pressure and oxygen levels decrease, leading to hypoxia – a shortage of oxygen in the body's tissues. Early symptoms of AMS include headache, nausea, fatigue, and shortness of breath. If left untreated, it can escalate into high-altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE), a life-threatening condition where fluid accumulates in the lungs, or high-altitude cerebral edema (HACE), where fluid collects in the brain. Both conditions require immediate medical intervention, and descent to lower altitudes is often the only way to prevent fatal outcomes.

At higher altitudes, the body tries to adjust by increasing the breathing rate, which can cause hyperventilation, and produce more red blood cells to carry oxygen, which thickens the blood and strains the heart. In cases of HAPE, fluid accumulation in the lungs exacerbates breathing difficulties, while HACE causes symptoms like confusion, hallucinations, and even coma.

**What are the infrastructural issues?**  
While the Himalayan States witness a



**Adequate precautions:** A view of the snow covered Himalayas mountain range, as seen from Shimla, on January 7, 2022. PTI

steady stream of tourists, healthcare facilities beyond major towns like Shimla are inadequate to handle cases of high-altitude sickness. Leh, in the Union Territory of Ladakh, serves as a model, having developed specialised facilities for high-altitude ailments. Yet, most high-altitude regions lack this kind of infrastructure. Immediate and preventive health measures are also lacking. Basic preventive screenings or health checks at entry points for tourists venturing into high-altitude areas could save lives. Such protocols could mirror the erstwhile "Inner Line Permit" system, whereby tourists entering high-altitude zones such as Kinnaur or Lahaul-Spiti undergo screenings at base hospitals.

**What about a registration system?**  
To better manage high-altitude tourism, it

is essential to implement a mandatory registration system for tourists entering remote mountain areas. Registrations, stored in a State government database, would allow authorities to monitor tourist movement and respond swiftly in case of emergencies. Such records would also support research on high-altitude illnesses by tracking demographic patterns and risk factors, helping scientists better understand how altitude impacts various populations.

### What about early intervention?

The primary cause of high-altitude sickness is rapid ascent without allowing the body time to acclimatise. Gradual ascent, which allows the body to adapt to lower oxygen levels, is the best way to prevent high-altitude illnesses. According to the Wilderness Medical Society,

travellers ascending above 3,000 meters should take a rest day every 3-4 days and avoid increasing their sleeping elevation by more than 500 metres per day.

For travellers at moderate to high risk of AMS, doctors recommend medications like Acetazolamide, which aids acclimatisation by promoting better oxygenation, or Dexamethasone, a steroid that reduces inflammation in severe cases. Those with a history of HAPE may take Nifedipine as a preventive measure, starting a day before ascent. However, no prophylactic medication guarantees complete immunity, and anyone travelling to high altitudes with pre-existing health conditions should first consult with a doctor familiar with altitude-related risks.

### What are the treatment strategies?

When high-altitude sickness does develop, the most effective treatment is immediate descent to lower altitudes. Symptoms usually improve significantly with a descent of 300-1,000 metres. Supplemental oxygen or a portable hyperbaric chamber, if available, can also help alleviate symptoms of AMS and HACE in emergencies. Pharmacological treatments, such as acetazolamide and dexamethasone, may provide short-term relief, but descent remains the cornerstone of treatment.

### What are some policy proposals?

The following steps are recommended – establish state-of-the-art medical facilities in high-altitude regions of the Himalayas; create research centres dedicated to studying high-altitude illnesses; equip Himalayan States with air-ambulance services for rapid medical evacuation in emergencies; and provide health and safety information on government websites and at check-in points.

*Tikender Singh Panwar is former deputy mayor of Shimla and is working in the Himalayan region for sustainable development. Dr. Malay Sarkar is Head of the Department of Pulmonary Medicine, IGMC, Shimla*

## THE GIST

While the Himalayan States witness a steady stream of tourists, healthcare facilities beyond major towns like Shimla are inadequate to handle cases of high-altitude sickness.

The primary cause of high-altitude sickness is rapid ascent without allowing the body time to acclimatise. Gradual ascent, which allows the body to adapt to lower oxygen levels, is the best way to prevent high-altitude illnesses.

To better manage high-altitude tourism, it is essential to implement a mandatory registration system for tourists entering remote mountain areas.

## Infrastructural Challenges

**Healthcare Facilities:** Many Himalayan regions lack adequate healthcare facilities to manage AMS cases, particularly beyond major towns.

- While some areas like Leh have specialised facilities, most regions lack basic preventive health screenings at entry points for tourists.

No: 1521, Second Floor, H-Block, 5th Street, Anna Nagar, Chennai-80.

Ph: +91 8754543687, www.gurukulamias.in



## Daily News Analysis

- **Health Screening Proposal:** Implementing health screenings, similar to the old "Inner Line Permit" system, could help save lives by identifying at-risk tourists before they venture into high-altitude areas.

### High-Altitude Sickness (AMS)

- **Definition:** High-altitude sickness, or Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), occurs when the body cannot acclimatise to high elevations, usually above 8,000 feet (2,400 metres).
- **Symptoms:** Early symptoms include headache, nausea, fatigue, and shortness of breath. Without treatment, AMS can escalate into high-altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE) or high-altitude cerebral edema (HACE), both of which are life-threatening conditions requiring immediate medical attention.
- **Causes:** At high altitudes, the body struggles to get enough oxygen, which can lead to hypoxia. The body increases breathing and red blood cell production, which can strain the heart.

### Registration System

- **Mandatory Registration:** A mandatory registration system for tourists would help authorities track tourist movement, respond quickly to emergencies, and support research on high-altitude illnesses.

### Prevention and Treatment

- **Gradual Ascent:** Gradual ascent is crucial to acclimatise the body to reduced oxygen levels.
- **Medications:** Acetazolamide and Dexamethasone may help with acclimatisation and symptom relief, but descent remains the primary treatment.
- **Immediate Descent:** Descending to lower altitudes is the most effective treatment for AMS, HAPE, and HACE.

### Policy Proposals

- **Healthcare Infrastructure:** Establish state-of-the-art medical facilities in high-altitude regions and create research centres for AMS.
- **Air Ambulance Services:** Equip regions with air-ambulance services for rapid evacuations.
- **Information Dissemination:** Provide health and safety information at check-in points and on government websites.

WhatsApp plans to appeal the Competition Commission of India's (CCI) ruling imposing a \$25.4 million fine for anti-competitive practices related to its 2021 privacy policy.

- ➔ The policy, requiring user data sharing with Meta-owned apps for advertising, sparked concerns over competition and privacy, with allegations that WhatsApp exploited its dominant position to enforce the terms.

### Competition Commission of India (CCI)

#### ➔ About

- It is a statutory body established in March 2009 under the Competition Act, 2002.

#### ➔ Objectives:

- Eliminate practices having adverse effect on competition
- Promote and sustain competition
- Protect the interests of consumers
- Ensure freedom of trade in the markets of India

- ➔ **Members:** It consists of one Chairperson and six members who shall be appointed by the Central Government.

### Functions of CCI

- ➔ The commission is a quasi-judicial body who also gives opinions to statutory authorities.
- ➔ It is also mandated to undertake competition advocacy, create public awareness and impart training on competition issues.
- ➔ In order to fulfil its objectives, the commission may:
  - conduct an enquiry into certain kinds of agreements and dominant position of enterprise,
  - determine whether an agreement has AAEC (appreciable adverse effects on competition).

### WhatsApp's 2021 privacy policy

#### ➔ About

- In January 2021 WhatsApp rolled out a new privacy policy and had given users time till 28 February 2021 to accept and update.
- The 2021 update introduced significant changes, particularly in sharing user data between WhatsApp and Meta's platforms like Facebook and Instagram.
- It allowed the sharing of user data, including phone numbers, contacts, and transaction details, for advertising and business-related purposes.
- WhatsApp claims the update was necessary to improve business features. It assures users that private messages remain encrypted and secure.
- The policy primarily concerns data shared with businesses and third-party apps for targeted ads and customer service integration.

## Meta to appeal CCI's ₹213-cr. fine on WhatsApp privacy policy change

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Meta, the parent company of WhatsApp, on Tuesday said it would appeal against the ₹213.14 crore penalty imposed by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) over the messaging app's 2021 privacy policy update.

"We disagree with the CCI's decision and plan to appeal. As a reminder, the 2021 update did not change the privacy of people's personal messages and was offered as a choice for users at the time. We also ensured no one would have their accounts deleted or lose functionality of the WhatsApp service because of this update," a Meta spokesperson said in a statement.

"The update was about introducing optional business features on WhatsApp, and provided further transparency about how we collect and use data," the spokesperson added.

"Data protection laws apply universally to all entities handling personal data," the CCI had observed in its order on Monday, on Meta's stance that both competition law and privacy law should not simultaneously apply to WhatsApp. "In contrast, Section 4 of the [Competition] Act specifically applies only to dominant entities, imposing additional obligations to prevent abuse of market power" the CCI noted.

No: 1521, Second Floor, H-Block, 5th Street, Anna Nagar, Chennai-80.

Ph: +91 8754543687, www.gurukulamias.in

### ➔ Concerns raised

- WhatsApp's 2021 privacy policy sparked global controversy, particularly in India, over concerns about undue control over user data and limited consumer choice, with non-compliance risking app access loss.
- While WhatsApp claimed the update aimed to enhance business-user communication, critics feared it would commercialize personal data.
- The absence of comprehensive data protection laws in India heightened the backlash, prompting legal scrutiny and the CCI investigation.

### Have other countries raised objections?

- WhatsApp has faced global legal challenges over its 2021 privacy policy.
- **European Union:** In September 2021, Ireland's data regulator fined WhatsApp GBP 225 million for failing to meet transparency requirements under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). WhatsApp has appealed the decision.

### WhatsApp-CCI dispute

#### ➔ About

- The WhatsApp-CCI dispute involves an investigation into WhatsApp's 2021 privacy policy, which mandated user data sharing with Meta, raising concerns about anti-competitive practices and data privacy violations.

#### ➔ CCI's probe against WhatsApp

- The CCI initiated its probe in 2021 to assess whether the policy harmed competition by unfairly exploiting user data.
- The CCI has now fined Meta \$25.4 million and directed WhatsApp to stop sharing user data with Meta-owned apps for advertising purposes for the next five years.
- This investigation is crucial in India, where data protection laws are still evolving. It has also sparked broader discussions about data privacy and competition law.

#### ➔ Timeline of WhatsApp-CCI dispute

- **January 2021:** WhatsApp announced an update to its privacy policy, mandating users to accept terms that included sharing data with Facebook and its subsidiaries.
- **March 2021:** The CCI launched a suo moto investigation into the update, citing concerns over potential abuse of dominance and anti-competitive practices.
- **April 2021:** WhatsApp and Meta challenged the CCI's jurisdiction in the Delhi High Court. The Delhi High Court dismissed the petitions, allowing the CCI to proceed.
- **August, 2022:** A division bench of the Delhi High Court upheld the single judge's decision, reaffirming the CCI's authority.
- **October 2022:** The Supreme Court dismissed appeals by WhatsApp and Meta, permitting the investigation to continue.
- **November 18, 2024:** The CCI fined Meta \$25.4 million and ordered WhatsApp to stop sharing user data with other Meta-owned apps for advertising purposes for five years.
- **November 19, 2024:** Meta announced its intention to appeal the CCI's decision.

**No: 1521, Second Floor, H-Block, 5th Street, Anna Nagar, Chennai-80.**

**Ph: +91 8754543687, [www.gurukulamias.in](http://www.gurukulamias.in)**



# How India could counter the CBAM

**P**rotectionism is a threat to the collaboration required between the developed and developing world in addressing climate issues. Innovative protectionist ideas, such as the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (EU-CBAM), the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, and the EU Deforestation Regulation, have led to concerns in developing nations. India has criticised the EU-CBAM, in particular, as being "arbitrary".

## A 'discriminatory' tool

The CBAM is meant to ensure that imported products bear a carbon emission cost comparable to the cost imposed on goods produced within the EU. Exporters will be mandated to provide information on the quantity and emissions of their goods and buy certificates to match those emissions. The definite phase of the CBAM will enter into force on January 1, 2026. This may pose significant risks to India's international trade. The EU comprises 20.33% of India's total merchandise exports, of which 25.7% are affected by CBAM. During the last five fiscal years, iron and steel have accounted for 76.83% of these exports, followed by aluminium, cement, and fertilizers.

In recent editions of the Conference of the Parties (COPs), India has said that CBAM is "discriminatory" and called on developing countries to establish a coordinated response to what it considers as an unjust transfer of responsibilities. The CBAM is attracting considerable attention at COP29 in Baku. However, under-prepared arguments presented at COP29 could undermine India's credibility as a leading voice of the Global South.

It is important to recognise that not all developing economies share the same economic aspirations as India, nor will they be equally affected by the impacts of climate change. Therefore, perceptions regarding CBAM are



**Suvajit Banerjee**  
Fellow at NCAER, New Delhi. Views are personal



**Sovini Mondal**  
Research Associate at NCAER, New Delhi. Views are personal

It is apparent that through CBAM, the EU wants to intimidate non-EU nations into adopting its self-proclaimed position as climate leader

complex even within the developing world. Issues related to multilateral and bilateral trade and cultural ties between developed and developing economies influence the tone of their arguments. The current production-based accounting principle practiced under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) includes the emissions resulting from the production of exportable commodities within the emission inventory of the exporting nation. The exporting nation is held accountable for the reduction of these emissions, even though these products are not consumed within its domestic market. As a result, many developing economies with less stringent emission reduction measures are accused of climate change when they export more.

## The proposed arguments

Therefore, India's arguments should also align with other developing countries' agenda, if India wishes to speak like a leader. The following could be some of the arguments. First, on the time for preparing for CBAM. With administrative deftness, the EU set a target to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 20% compared to 1990 levels by 2020; this is outlined in the EU Climate Action and Renewable Energy Package in 2008. Following the accomplishment of these targets, the European Green Deal was unveiled in 2019, extending the emission reduction target to 55% below the 1990 levels in a Fit for 55 Package. Does the CBAM offer developing economies a matchable time to adapt?

The second is on empowerment. The EU has decided to keep the revenues generated from the CBAM as its resources, which will be used to fund the NextGenerationEU recovery tool and operate the CBAM. Depending on the mechanism's ultimate design, the anticipated additional money generated by CBAM for 2030 is

estimated to be €5 to €14 billion annually. Is it appropriate for the EU not to share this revenue with non-EU trading partners? Doing so may contribute to capacity building and technology transfer in developing economies.

Third, there is the issue of quantifying emission reduction responsibilities. India can justifiably advocate for an alternative called Equity-based Accounting (EBA) of Nationally Determined Contributions, which emphasises a collective obligation for emission reductions among trade partners based on the ideas of horizontal intra-generational equity and vertical inter-generational equity. In the context of the EU-CBAM, India can introduce the concept of EBA to the developing world concerning retaliation measures. Using the EBA, a formula can be proposed to calculate the tariff base on imports from the EU, which considers factors such as relative per capita GDP, relative per capita emissions, relative gains from trade, and relative avoided emissions through trade. By expressing the actual emissions embedded in imports in a way that reflects the developmental and historical heterogeneities between trade partners, any developing economy can be better positioned under these new rules of the game, which provide an unbiased evaluation of climate initiatives.

Even the PBA adheres to the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities, which is significantly compromised under the CBAM framework. CBAM does not acknowledge compensatory justice or distributive justice. Consequently, the allocation of emission responsibilities is not equitably assigned to countries based on their historical contributions to climate change or their capacity to mitigate its effects. It is apparent that through CBAM, the EU wants to intimidate non-EU nations into adopting its self-proclaimed position as climate leader.

**GS Paper 02 : International Relations,**

**GS Paper 03 : Indian Economy**

**UPSC Mains Practice Question: The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) raises concerns about equity and fairness in global climate policies. Discuss its implications for developing nations like India and suggest equitable alternatives to ensure climate justice in international trade. (250 Words /15 marks)**

## Context :

- The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) aims to align imported goods with EU carbon standards, targeting emissions-heavy sectors like steel and cement.
- Criticised by developing nations, including India, as discriminatory, CBAM shifts emission accountability to exporters without considering historical emissions or development disparities. It raises concerns over global trade and climate equity.

## Introduction

- Protectionist measures like the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (EU-CBAM) are creating friction between developed and developing nations in tackling climate issues.
- India has criticised the CBAM as "arbitrary," raising concerns over its discriminatory nature and potential economic impacts.

## What Is the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (EU-CBAM)?

### Objective:

- Ensures imported goods meet carbon emission costs comparable to EU-produced goods, promoting fair competition and reducing carbon leakage.
- The EU-CBAM is a tax on carbon emissions embedded in certain imported goods into the EU.
- It aims to ensure a level playing field for EU industries and prevent "carbon leakage".
- It applies to specific carbon-intensive products like iron, steel, cement, aluminium, fertilisers, electricity, and hydrogen.
- Importers will need to purchase CBAM certificates to cover the carbon emissions embodied in their imported goods.
- The EU-CBAM is expected to encourage non-EU producers to reduce their carbon emissions to avoid the tax.

## The CBAM Mechanism and Its Impacts

- **Purpose of CBAM:**

**No: 1521, Second Floor, H-Block, 5th Street, Anna Nagar, Chennai-80.**

**Ph: +91 8754543687, www.gurukulamias.in**

## Daily News Analysis

- Aims to ensure imported goods bear carbon emission costs comparable to EU-produced goods.
- Exporters must report emissions and purchase certificates matching those emissions.
- CBAM's definitive phase will begin on January 1, 2026.

### ➡ **Impact on India:**

- The EU is a major trade partner, accounting for 20.33% of India's total merchandise exports, of which 25.7% are CBAM-affected.
- Key affected exports include iron and steel (76.83%), aluminium, cement, and fertilizers.
- India sees CBAM as discriminatory and has called for a united response from developing nations.

### **Complex Perceptions and Challenges**

#### ➡ **Diverse Perspectives:**

- Developing countries have differing aspirations and vulnerabilities to climate change, influencing their views on CBAM.
- Multilateral trade and cultural ties also affect their responses to CBAM.

#### ➡ **Accountability for Emissions:**

- Under UNFCCC's production-based accounting, emissions from exported goods are counted in the exporting country's inventory.
- This often results in developing nations being blamed for climate change despite exporting to developed countries.

### **India's Proposed Arguments Against CBAM**

#### ➡ **Insufficient Time for Adaptation:**

- The EU has had decades to implement emission reduction targets, such as reducing GHG emissions by 20% by 2020 under the 2008 Climate Action Package and 55% under the 2019 European Green Deal.
- Developing nations require comparable timelines for adaptation.

#### ➡ **Revenue Sharing for Empowerment:**

- The EU plans to retain CBAM revenues (€5-14 billion annually by 2030) to fund domestic recovery tools like NextGenerationEU.
- India suggests that sharing these funds with trading partners could help in capacity building and technology transfer.

#### ➡ **Alternative Emission Accounting Frameworks:**

- India proposes Equity-based Accounting (EBA), which allocates emission responsibilities among trade partners based on equity principles.
- EBA would consider per capita GDP, emissions, trade benefits, and avoided emissions to ensure fairness.

### **Criticism of CBAM**

**No: 1521, Second Floor, H-Block, 5th Street, Anna Nagar, Chennai-80.**

**Ph: +91 8754543687, [www.gurukulamias.in](http://www.gurukulamias.in)**

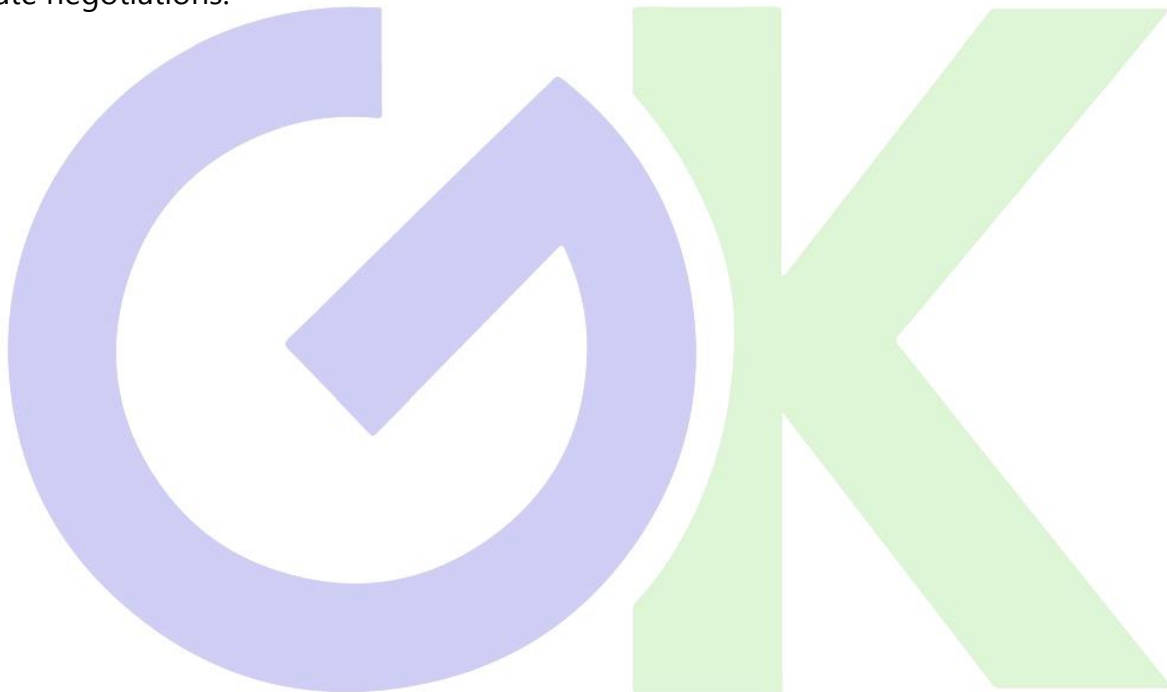


## Daily News Analysis

- ➡ CBAM undermines principles of compensatory and distributive justice by disregarding historical emissions and developmental disparities.
- ➡ India views CBAM as an attempt by the EU to impose its climate leadership agenda on non-EU nations.

### Conclusion

- ➡ India advocates for collaborative and equitable climate policies, urging developing nations to align their arguments for fairer trade and environmental accountability.
- ➡ Frameworks like EBA can help balance emission responsibilities and promote justice in international climate negotiations.



GURUKULAM  IAS

**No: 1521, Second Floor, H-Block, 5th Street, Anna Nagar, Chennai-80.**

**Ph: +91 8754543687, [www.gurukulamias.in](http://www.gurukulamias.in)**