



DAILY EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

TOPIC

**THE 'BOARD OF PEACE' FOR GAZA:
INDIA'S APPROACH**

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Context

- The recent invitation by the US President to several countries including India to join the Board of Peace for Gaza aiming to establish a comprehensive framework for peace, security, and development in Gaza and the wider West Asian region.
- India is expected to respond after a comprehensive evaluation of both the opportunities and implications.

About the Board of Peace For Gaza

- It is a proposed international governance and reconstruction body reportedly initiated under US President Donald Trump's 20-point Roadmap For Gaza, announced in early 2026.
- It has received endorsement 'in principle' from the UN Security Council (UNSC), though China and Russia abstained during the vote, signaling their reservations about the structure and mandate.
- India, which has consistently supported a two-state solution and the unconditional release of prisoners, welcomed the plan earlier as a 'viable pathway' to long-term regional stability.

Purpose and Vision

- The Board of Peace for Gaza is envisioned as a multi-nation coordination mechanism to:
 - Oversee post-war reconstruction and rehabilitation in Gaza;
 - Facilitate a political settlement between Israel and Palestine;
 - Ensure long-term peace, stability, and development in Gaza and the broader West Asian region;
 - Manage humanitarian assistance and rebuilding efforts, including infrastructure, governance, and aid distribution.
- Trump presented it as the core implementation arm of his '20-point roadmap', a comprehensive US - driven initiative to stabilize Gaza following years of conflict.

Structure and Membership

- The Board reportedly includes 50–60 invited world leaders, representing major powers, regional actors, and development partners. It has a three-tier structure:
 - Founding Executive Council: Chaired by Donald Trump himself, with veto powers;
 - Main Board of Peace: Comprising invited heads of government, including India;
 - Gaza Executive Board: Responsible for on-ground implementation and coordination with humanitarian agencies.
- Membership requires a financial contribution; nations can secure 'permanent membership' by committing US\$1 billion to the Board's trust fund.

Funding Mechanism

- The Board is designed to function somewhat like an international reconstruction consortium:
 - The initial funding pool is expected to exceed US\$50 billion, sourced from voluntary national contributions, Gulf states, and private donors.
 - Countries contributing US\$1 billion or more can gain permanent board seats beyond the initial three-year term.
 - Russia is reportedly considering using frozen Russian assets to make its contribution.
- The funding model risks blurring humanitarian goals with political influence, effectively allowing wealthy states to 'buy' decision-making power.

Global Participation

- Accepted or Supportive nations: Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Pakistan, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Belarus, and some Central Asian republics.

- **Declined or Skeptical:** France, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden.
- **Undecided:** Russia and China; India is still evaluating.
- **Israel's position:** It agreed to join after objecting to the inclusion of Turkey and Qatar.

Why Should India Join the 'Board of Peace' For Gaza?

- **Strengthening India's Global Diplomatic Profile:** India's inclusion underscores its rise as a '**balancing power**', not just in Asia, but globally and reinforces **India's image as a responsible global actor and a credible advocate of peace**.
 - ◆ Participation would align with **India's long-standing commitment to a two-state solution**, humanitarian relief, and conflict mediation under international law.
 - ◆ Being part of a high-level global mechanism signals **strategic maturity and global ambition**, echoing India's role in the **G20, BRICS, and SCO**.
- **Influence Over Gaza's Reconstruction Agenda:** As a Board member, India could **shape policy decisions** on project priorities; **secure reconstruction contracts** for Indian companies (construction, renewable energy, digital governance, pharmaceuticals); and strengthen **India's economic footprint in West Asia** through sustainable development initiatives.
- **Strategic Leverage in West Asia:** Since **Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, and Bahrain** have joined the Board, India's membership would:
 - ◆ Cement ties with key Gulf partners;
 - ◆ Enhance cooperation under the **India-Israel-US-UAE (I2U2) grouping**;
- Balance China's growing influence through the **BRI** and **Global Development Initiative (GDI)** in the region.
 - ◆ India's participation would expand its influence in **West Asia and the Gulf**, a region vital for:
 - **Energy security** (India imports over 55% of its oil from the region);
 - **Diaspora welfare** (over 8 million Indians live in Gulf countries);
 - **Trade and investment partnerships** with GCC nations.
- **Diplomatic Engagement with the US:** Trump's invitation is a **symbolic gesture of trust and recognition** of India's global stature. Joining the Board could:
 - ◆ **Reset strategic momentum** with the USA.
 - ◆ Open the door to **trade and technology negotiations** stalled due to tariffs and sanctions;
 - ◆ Improve India's standing in future US-led coalitions on security and economic issues.
- **Humanitarian Leadership and Global South Solidarity:** India's participation would reaffirm its role as a **voice of the Global South**, advocating for justice, development, and equitable peace (India's **soft power leadership**).
 - ◆ Through the Board, India can push for **non-partisan humanitarian relief** in Gaza; champion **capacity-building** and **vocational training programs** for Palestinian youth; lead efforts in **digital public infrastructure** and **healthcare partnerships**, modeled on India's G20 initiatives.
- **Balancing Major Power Politics:** By joining the Board, India can act as a **bridge between competing blocs** of **US-led coalition** backing the Board; and **Russia-China Axis** of unilateral mechanisms.
 - ◆ India's pragmatic participation, with conditions on transparency and inclusiveness could:
 - Prevent the Board from becoming a purely U.S.-dominated tool;
 - Ensure **multilateral legitimacy** by advocating coordination with **UN agencies** (UNRWA, UNDP, WHO).
 - ◆ It aligns with **India's foreign policy doctrine of multi-alignment**, preserving its strategic independence while maximizing global influence.
- **Precedent for Future Peace Roles:** Participation would revive India's tradition of peace diplomacy — echoing its historical roles in:
 - ◆ The **Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission** (Korea);
 - ◆ The **International Commission for Supervision and Control** (Vietnam);

- The **Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism** (2014).
- **Exit Clause and Flexible Participation:** The **Board's design allows for optional participation** at the level of:
 - A **high-ranking official** (not necessarily the Prime Minister);
 - A **defined exit clause** after the initial three-year period.
 - It ensures that India's participation remains **conditional and reversible**, allowing policymakers to **reassess the situation** without long-term commitments.

Why Should India Not Join the 'Board of Peace' for Gaza?

- **Undermines Palestinian Sovereignty:** Any governance or 'peace' mechanism for Gaza created **without the free consent of the Palestinian people** cannot be considered peace, it is **an imposed trusteeship**.
 - For India, joining the Board of Peace Board would betray its **anti-colonial legacy** and the **principle of self-determination** that underpins its own independence story.
- **Erosion of India's Strategic Autonomy:** India's foreign policy rests on a core principle: **strategic autonomy**, the ability to engage with all powers without aligning as a subordinate.
 - Accepting an invitation tied to **financial inducements and geopolitical expectations** risks converting India from a neutral actor to an **instrument of external strategy**.
- **Risk on India's Global South Credibility:** India has built deep trust across the **Global South**, from Africa to Latin America, as a nation that understands colonialism, occupation, and injustice for decades.
 - India risks **fracturing that trust** by joining a board viewed as **a legitimisation of post-conflict management without justice**.

Conclusion & Way Forward

- **India Can Help Gaza, Without Joining the Board:** India can play a **constructive, independent role**:
 - **Provide humanitarian assistance** through **UNRWA** and other international agencies.
 - **Support Palestinian-led reconstruction** efforts that prioritise consent and dignity.
 - **Advocate for accountability and restraint** in international forums.
 - **Use diplomatic channels** to push for a political process grounded in justice, not management.
- India is expected to respond after a **comprehensive evaluation** of both the opportunities and implications.
 - The inclusion of **exit clauses** and the option for **representation at a senior official level** provide flexibility in engagement.
- India's decision will ultimately hinge on how the board aligns with **India's principles of multilateralism, strategic autonomy, and commitment to UN-centered peacebuilding**.

Source: IE

Daily Mains Practice Question

[Q] Discuss how India's approach for a US-backed 'Board of Peace' for Gaza reflects the balance between its strategic autonomy and moral responsibility as a leader of the Global South.

