



Diplomacy with a divine touch



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defined by 'confrontation and collaboration'. But India's addressal of border issues with China, controlling its Influence in the Indian Ocean region, and in forums like BRICS, RCEP, tactfully managing China's weaponisation of economic power are certainly examples of a strategy that doesn't resemble the earlier dharmic one. Daring acts like Balakot and surgical strikes, abrogation of Article 370, engagement with the Taliban, and strategic outreach to Gulf countries are proof that Modi left behind the foreign policy of Jawaharlal Nehru, ushering in a more dynamic and assertive foreign policy.

Current Foreign Policy of India

The current diplomatic milieu of India is interesting and Intriguing. India engages and trades with competing nations, maintaining a delicate balance. Today, India is being sought by the USA to help manage China's rare earth mineral policy, even as it wages a tariff war against the USA. India is not ready to decouple with China, and trade happens seamlessly between both the nations, but China's dominance in the Indian Ocean through the 'String of Pearls' is countered by our own 'Necklace of Diamonds'. There is indeed a strategy behind these interesting developments, and perhaps that is to be understood. It may have to be actually decoded. This current strategy is neither christened nor the contours defined. Therefore, thought leaders are free to explore some models. I believe that our current foreign policy can be compared to the 'Ardhanareeswara model', where everything is about 'balance and harmony'.

Let me elaborate.

The *Ardhanareeswara* principle is a core concept in Hindu philosophy represented by a half-male, half-female deity — the synthesis of Lord Shiva (the masculine principle of



consciousness) and his consort Parvati (the feminine principle of energy). This principle is about unity of opposites, interdependence of energies, and harmony over dominance.

Unity of opposites: This principle symbolises the inseparability of dualistic forces in the universe. Creation and existence require a harmonious, dynamic balance between them.

Interdependence of energies: The masculine (static potential) is inert without the feminine (dynamic force), and the masculine cannot create without the feminine's active power. Their union is the root of all creation.

Harmony over dominance: The philosophy teaches that wholeness is achieved through the integration of

complementary forces, not through the domination of one over the other. It is a lesson in balancing all aspects of life, both internal and external.

Let's see how our recent diplomatic moves fit into this model.

India is artfully navigating a complex multipolar world, balancing its strategic partnership with the USA, China, and Russia. These countries are pitted against one another in trade and tech wars.

In 2025, though Trump is causing economic pressure, India managed to deepen cooperation in defence with America. Both nations are partners in strategic initiatives like Quad, INDUS-X (India-US Defense Acceleration Ecosystem to foster a defense

innovation bridge between the two countries), and iCET (United States-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology).

And with China, despite our historical conflicts, India continues to seek Chinese investment in key sectors and depends on Chinese imports. India also uses its position in BRICS, SCO, and other forums to cooperate with China on global issues like climate change and the reform of international financial institutions.

In 2024, both sides reached an agreement on patrolling rights in Depsang Plains and Demchok, signalling a de-escalation. In 2025, tourist visas were reinstated and the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage was resumed, marking a shift toward normalising relations. Though India is part of US-led alliances like the Quad,

seen as a counter to Chinese expansion in the Indo-Pacific, it engages in China-led forums like the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and BRICS to participate in Eurasian regional dialogue and showcase its strategic autonomy.

India's approach to the Russia-Ukraine war is defined by a pragmatic framework prioritising its national interests over aligning with Western pressure groups. Despite continued geopolitical pressure and trade tensions from the US and Europe, India maintains its autonomy through diplomatic balancing, military ties with Russia, and advantageous energy purchases.

Today's diplomacy of India is characterised by interdependence, creation, and balance.

Realpolitik and the *Ardhanareeswara* principle represent opposing philosophies regarding power and governance. While realpolitik is defined by the amoral, pragmatic use of power to achieve national interests, the *Ardhanareeswara* principle emphasises a universal balance of complementary forces to achieve harmony and creation.

Interestingly, three academics. Joel Mokyr, Philippe Aghion, and Peter Howitt share this year's Nobel Prize for economics. Their work is based on 'creative destruction' for Economic Expansion. This Creative destruction for expansion and growth is what the '*Ardhanareeswara*' model stands for.

India is surging ahead, and our diplomatic strategy is evolving continuously with changing times as per 'Yuga Dharma'. A transition from a purely dharmic version to the current 'Harmony and Balance' model. This divinely driven strategy is indeed helping the nation navigate deftly, a multipolar and turbulent world.

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