# International Relations · GS - II

**Critically analyse India's evolving diplomatic, economic and strategic relations with the Central Asian Republics (CARs) highlighting their increasing significance in regional and global geopolitics.**

| EXAM YEAR | PAPER | SUBJECT |
|---|---|---|
| 2024 | GS - II | International Relations |

| MARKS | WORD LIMIT |
|---|---|
| 10 | ~150 words |

## Answer Hint

**Central Asian Republics, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Connect Central Asia, INSTC, Chabahar, energy security, SCO, terrorism, connectivity, strategic autonomy**

## Model Answer

### Introduction

The Central Asian Republics—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan—occupy a strategically important position between Russia, China, South Asia and West Asia. India's engagement with them has expanded across diplomatic, economic and security domains.

### Evolving Relations

**Diplomatic:** India's **Connect Central Asia** policy has strengthened political engagement, including regular summits and institutional dialogues.

**Economic:** Central Asia offers opportunities in energy, uranium, pharmaceuticals, information technology and trade. Connectivity initiatives such as the **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** and India's engagement with Chabahar seek to overcome India's geographical disadvantage.

**Strategic:** Cooperation covers counter-terrorism, Afghanistan, defence and regional security. India's membership of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation** has also created a multilateral platform for engagement.

## Increasing Geopolitical Significance

Central Asia is important because of its energy and mineral resources, strategic location and proximity to Afghanistan. Growing Chinese economic influence and continuing Russian security interests have increased the region's geopolitical importance. India also seeks to diversify connectivity and strengthen its strategic autonomy.

## Challenges

Geographical isolation, limited direct connectivity, political instability in Afghanistan, competing external influences and relatively modest trade volumes constrain India's engagement.

## Conclusion

Central Asia has become important for India's **energy security, connectivity, counter-terrorism and strategic outreach**. Sustained high-level diplomacy, connectivity projects and economic partnerships can deepen India's presence while supporting regional stability.

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