

VAJIRAM & RAVI Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

2nd July 2025

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South Asia's Power Politics: US, India & Pakistan



<u>CONTEXT</u>: In the ties between the United States, India and Pakistan, American policy now oscillates between idealism, realism and transactionalism

India-US Relations

Historical Background - 'rollercoaster ride'

Pre-Independence - Limited contact

Post-Independence (1947 onwards) -

- 'Cold War' effects
- Periods of Cooperation
 - US food aid
 - 1991 Gulf War.
- Points of Friction
 - 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak Wars
 - India's nuclear program

Post-Cold War Era (1990s onwards)

- End of Bipolarity
- Growing Convergence
- "Strategic Partnership" (2005) &
 "Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership" (2020)

Current Scenario

- 'Collaboration' yet 'Differences'
- Trump's Transactional Diplomacy



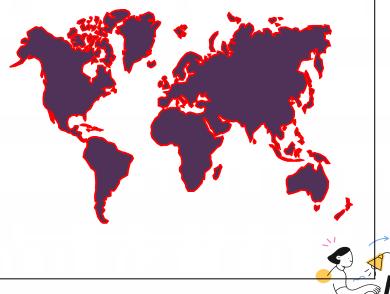
Why India Matters to the USA?

- India's geographical position
- Diversity in India's demography
- Democratic values
- Economic progress & market
- Indian diaspora & ever growing partnerships
- Dependable player in South Asia & IOR

Why the United States matters to

<u>India?</u>

- Critical 'stabilizing force'
- To prevent any hostile hegemon in Eurasia
- India's strategic interests
- India's economic success
- Its commitment to freedom of navigation
- Its technological prowess



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'A Triangular Power Play': Complex Intersection of 4 Factors

- The Trump Factor Return to Realpolitik: Meeting with Pakistan Army Chief 'Field Marshal' Asim Munir
 Cold War-style diplomacy; claim of brokering ceasefire; undermines the decades of U.S.-India trust
- U.S. Policy Shift towards Pakistan: Despite - "double game" on terror renewed military & financial engagement; \$397 million; "phenomenal partner"; Iran-Israel dynamics - Geographic & Intelligence leverage
- India's Assertive Response End of Strategic Restraint: 'Operation Sindoor' - doctrinal shift; "new normal" - readiness to retaliate; Emphasis on sovereignty and non-interference



- Pakistan's Strategy- Military
 Diplomacy & Geopolitical Leverage:
 Asim Munir military primacy;
 Pakistan 'dual-track approach';
 Trade Deals REE entice US
- U.S. Ambivalence: tariff diplomacy > strategic alignment in Indo-Pacific; India's Stance - consistent rejection of third-party mediation; U.S. risks "re-hyphenating" - undermines bipartisan consensus
- Why Pakistan Still Matters to Washington? Geopolitical location – strongest asset – Borders; Key to logistics and intelligence; "contradictory yet necessary"
- Conclusion Tightrope of Triangular Diplomacy: India and Pakistan - trying to instrumentalise U.S. policy; US - torn between realism, idealism, and transactionalism

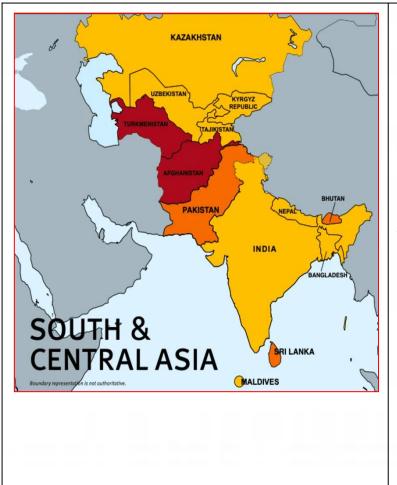
Way forward

- Acknowledging partnership is 'crucial'
- Scope of 'enormous opportunities'
- India's growing stature demands greater collaboration
- Indigenisation Tech Defence, Computing, etc.
- Multiple Alignments

South Asia's Power Politics: US, India & Pakistan



<u>CONTEXT</u>: In the ties between the United States, India and Pakistan, American policy now oscillates between idealism, realism and transactionalism



Mains Practice Question:

"The evolving triangular relationship between the United States, India, and Pakistan reflects shifting strategic alignments and emerging power politics in South Asia." Critically analyse this statement in the context of recent developments. How should India recalibrate its foreign policy to safeguard its strategic interests?

(15 Marks, 250 words)



The Analyst Handout ^{2nd} july 2025

Industrial & Chemical Disasters



<u>CONTEXT</u>: Industrial & Chemical disasters continue to remain one of the most serious threats to human life & property.

'Industrial Chemicals'

- 7% to India's GDP

Chemical Catastrophes

- 'Relatively avoidable'
- Cause significant loss

NDMA ~ 130 Chemical Disasters

- 1861 MAH Units across 301 districts
- In addition thousands Registered & Hazardous factories and Unorganised sectors

<u>Causes of Chemical Disasters in</u> India

- Technical Failures
- Human Errors
- Hazardous Waste Processing/Disposal
- Induced Effect of Natural Calamities
- Poor Response Systems
- Terrorist Attack/Sabotage

Major Chemical Disasters in India

- Bhopal Gas Tragedy
- Chasnala Mining Disaster
- Korba Chimney Collapse





Incident	Year	Key Details
Bhopal Gas Tragedy	1984	Worst chemical disaster globally; 40+ tonnes of MIC leaked from Union Carbide; ~15,000 deaths (official), lakhs affected
Vizag LG Polymers Gas Leak	2020	Styrene gas leak killed 11, injured over 1,000
Chhattisgarh Bhilai Steel Plant Blast	2018	13 deaths; gas pipeline blast
Nagaram (ONGC) Gas Leak	2014	Andhra Pradesh; 22 people killed
Unnao Ammonia Leak	2020	Leakage from cold storage unit; dozens hospitalised

Industrial & Chemical Disasters



2nd july 2025

CONTEXT: Industrial & Chemical disasters continue to remain one of the most serious threats to human life & property.

Legal & Regulatory Framework in India

- **Explosives Act, 1884**
- Petroleum Act, 1934
- Factories Act, 1948
- Insecticides Act, 1968
- **Environment Protection Act, 1986**
- Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991
- NGT Act, 2010
- Disaster Management Act, 2005

<u>Rules</u>

- MSIHC Rules, 1989
- Chemical Accident Rules, 1996
- Hazardous Waste Rules
- Gas Cylinder Rules

NDMA Guidelines on Chemical Disaster <u>Management</u>

- Provides overall direction •
- Based on Proactive & Participatory approach
- NAP-CIDM

Way forward to avert & mitigate such Disasters

- Implementation & Efficacy of laws -• Unified command - National Chemical Safety Authority - NITI Aayog
- Buffer Zones around factories zoning regulations
- **Regular Safety Drills & Training**
- Training, Capacity Building & Awareness - Local Population
- Safety Audits & Compliance
- Retrofitting Industrial equipment & storage
- Victim Compensation Mechanism



Mains Practice Question:

"Despite having a robust legal and institutional framework, industrial/chemical disasters continue to pose serious risks in India." In light of this statement, critically examine the causes and challenges in managing chemical disasters. Suggest a comprehensive strategy for prevention, preparedness, and mitigation.

(15 Marks, 250 words)

Using Tech to Empower Women



2nd july 2025

SYLLABUS: GS 1: Women **Newspaper:** The Hindu **Page No:** 9

mpowerment begins with access – access to rights, to services, to protection, and to opportunity. Over the past decade, this access has been redefined and democratised through the focused commitment of the Modi government to build a more inclusive and digitally empowered India. The Ministry of Women and Child Development has been at the forefront of this transformation. Guided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat@2047. the Ministry has integrated technology into its programmes, ensuring that benefits reach the last mile swiftly, transparently, and efficiently.

What was once aspirational is now operational thanks to the government's emphasis on digital public infrastructure, real-time data systems, and responsive governance. With steadfast focus on care, protection, and empowerment, the Ministry has strengthened access to nutrition, education, legal safeguards, and essential entitlements, ensuring that women and children lead healthier, more secure lives, and also emerge as confident leaders and change makers of Amrit Kaal. **Transformative initiatives** A cornerstone of this transformation is the Saksham Anganwadi initiative, designed to modernise and empower over 2 lakh Anganwadi centres across India. These centres are being upgraded with smart infrastructure, digital devices, and innovative learning tools, enabling more effective delivery of nutrition, healthcare, and pre-school education services.

The integration of services provided by 14 lakh Anganwadi centres across the nation with the Poshan Tracker has enabled real-time data entry, performance monitoring, and evidence-based policy interventions. Over 10.14 crore beneficiaries, including pregnant women, lactating mothers, children under six, and adolescent girls, are now

Further, to reduce leakages in the Supplementary Nutrition Programme, a facial recognition system has been introduced to ensure that eligible beneficiaries alone receive nutrition support.

Beyond nutrition, the Ministry is ensuring safety and support for women through technology-led platforms. The SHe-Box portal provides single-window access to every woman to lodge complaints under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. It enables online redressal and tracking. Meanwhile, the Mission Shakti dashboard and mobile app provide integrated assistance to women in distress, connecting them to the nearest one-stop centre, now operational in nearly every district. These interventions exemplify how technology is being used not just for efficiency, but for justice, dignity, and empowerment.

registered on Poshan Tracker. By equipping Anganwadi workers with smartphones and comprehensive training, the initiative ensures quality service delivery at the last mile.

At its core, Poshan Tracker is driving the national vision of a Swasth Bharat, Suposhit Bharat. It reimagines Anganwadi centres as digitally empowered community hubs that bridge the urban-rural divide. Recognised with the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration (2025), it also supports Poshan Bhi, Padhai Bhi, providing digital training modules to Anganwadi workers for early childhood education.

The Modi government has also operationalised the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) – a game changer in maternal welfare. Under the PMMVY Rules, 2022, pregnant women receive ₹5,000 for their first child. Under Mission Shakti, the benefit extends to ₹6,000 if the second child is a girl promoting positive reinforcement for daughters. Delivered through a paperless Direct Benefit Transfer system, about ₹19,000 crore has

reached over 4 crore women beneficiaries since its inception.

PMMVY is a fully digital programme – leveraging Aadhaar-based authentication, mobile-based registration, doorstep assistance from Anganwadi/ASHA workers, and real-time dashboards. A dedicated grievance redressal module and citizen-facing portal ensure transparency, trust, and accountability, strengthening the government's commitment to Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao.

Using Tech to Empower Women



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Tangible outcomes These targeted efforts are

delivering tangible outcomes. The latest reports from the Health Management Information System of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) reveal that the Sex Ratio at Birth has increased from 918 (2014-15) to 930 (2023-24). The Maternal Mortality Rate has declined to 97 per 1,000 births (2018-20) from 130 per 1,000 births (2014-16).

Digital transformation has played a key role in child protection and welfare. Under the **Juvenile Justice Act (Care and** Protection of Children) Act, 2015, the Ministry has strengthened the adoption ecosystem through the **CARINGS** portal (Child Adoption **Resource Information and** Guidance System). This ensures a more transparent, accessible, and efficient adoption process.

Digitisation has also improved monitoring of child care institutions, foster care placements, and statutory support structures under the Act. Platforms developed by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights are tracking violations of child rights. The Mission Vatsalya dashboard strengthens convergence and coordination among various child welfare stakeholders.

This is New India where governance meets technology, and policy meets purpose. Over the last decade, the Ministry has not only adapted to digital change, but championed it.

ö 1. Saksham Anganwadi & Poshan 2.0

Overview:

- Launched in 2021 by merging:
 - Anganwadi Services
 - POSHAN Abhiyaan
 - Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG)
 - National Crèche Scheme
- It is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD).

Objectives:

- Focus on nutrition, early childhood care, and women's empowerment.
- Promote convergent action among ministries and departments.
- Includes the use of digital tools like the Poshan Tracker.

Features:

- · Upgradation of 2 lakh Anganwadi centres into Saksham Anganwadis.
- Focus on 0-6 years children, pregnant and lactating mothers, and adolescent girls.
- Emphasis on real-time monitoring, efficiency, and transparency.

2. POSHAN Tracker

What is it?

• A mobile application + web portal used to monitor delivery of nutrition services to beneficiaries under ICDS.

Purpose:

- Improve service delivery at Anganwadis.
- Enable real-time tracking of:
 - · Beneficiary-wise data
 - Nutrition status
 - Supplementary nutrition supply
 - Attendance of children and workers

Launched by:

Ministry of Women and Child Development in March 2021

Using Tech to Empower Women



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SYLLABUS: GS 1: Women Newspaper: The Hindu Page No: 9

🙆 3. Mission Shakti

Launched:

- 2021, revamped and operational from 2022–23 onwards.
- Aim:
- Integrated women empowerment mission.
- Converges existing schemes under two sub-schemes: Sub-Scheme Focus Sambal Safety and security of women

Samarthya

- Key Components:
- One Stop Centre, Women Helpline (181), Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Ujjwala, Swadhar Greh, Working Women Hostels, etc.

Empowerment and support services (e.g., skilling, nutrition)

🕺 4. SHE-Box (Sexual Harassment Electronic Box)

What is it?

Online complaint portal for reporting sexual harassment at workplace, launched in 2017.

Who can use it?

Women employees (government & private sector) facing sexual harassment.

Features:

- Can file complaints from anywhere in India.
- · Automatically directed to the concerned Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) of the employer.

Implemented by:

· Ministry of Women and Child Development

🄱 5. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)

Objective:

· Provide cash incentive to pregnant and lactating mothers for wage loss compensation and better nutrition.

Target Group:

• First pregnancy of a woman (18 years and above), except for government employees.

Benefits:

- ₹5,000 in three instalments for institutional delivery and early care.
- Now under:
- Subsumed into 'Samarthya' component of Mission Shakti.

Employment Linked Incentive Scheme



2nd july 2025

SYLLABUS: GS 3: Indian Economy Newspaper: Indian Express Page No: 15

AANCHAL MAGAZINE NEW DELHI, JULY1

WITH AN objective to boost employment generation in formal sectors, especially in manufacturing, the Union Cabinet approved Employment Linked the Incentive (ELI) scheme on Tuesday. The scheme, which was announced in the Union Budget for 2024-25, presented in July 2024, has an outlay of Rs 99,446 crore and aims to create 3.5 crore jobs over a period of two years.

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the ELI scheme to "support employment generation, enhance employability and social security across all sectors, with special focus on the manufacturing sector", an official statement said. Information & Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the ELI will be focused on the

The employers will get incentives for employees with salaries up to Rs 1 lakh. "The government will incentivise employers, up to Rs 3,000 per month, for two years, for each additional employee with sustained employment for at least six months. For the manufacturing sector, incentives will be extended to the third and fourth years as well," the statement said. For EPF wage slab of additional employee up to Rs 10,000, an incentive of Rs 1,000 will be given to the employer, for wage slab of over Rs 10,000 and up to Rs 20,000, a benefit of Rs 2,000 will be given and for wage over Rs 20,000 (up to salary of Rs 1 lakh/month), an incentive of Rs 3,000 will be provided.

manufacturing sector and will have two parts - part A for first timers and part B for sustained employment.

Part A of the scheme focuses on first-time employees by providing them a wage subsidy of up to one month's wage, up to a maximum amount of Rs 15,000, while Part B of the scheme has incentives for employers to create additional employment. Out of the total 3.5 crore employees expected to benefit from the scheme, around 1.92 crore persons are seen to be first timers entering the workforce.

Targeting first-time employees registered with the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), Part A will offer one-month EPF wage up to Rs 15,000 in two installments. "Employees with salaries up to Rs 1 lakh will be eligible. The first installment will be payable after six months of service and



Linked Incentive (ELI) scheme, the government intends to catalyse job creation, particularly in the manufacturing sector. The push is aimed towards formalisation of the country's workforce.

the second installment will be payable after 12 months of service and completion of a financial literacy programme by the employee. To encourage the habit of saving, a portion of the incentive will be kept in a savings instrument of deposit account for a fixed period and can be withdrawn by the employee at a later

Establishments, which are registered with EPFO, will be required to hire at least two additional employees (for employers with less than 50 employees) or five additional employees (for employers with 50 or more employees), on a sustained basis for at least six months, it said.

All payments to the first-time employees under Part A of the scheme will be made through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode. Payments to the employers under Part B will be made directly into their PAN-linked accounts. The duration of the scheme will be for two years from August 1, 2025 to July 31, 2027.

The ELI scheme was first announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Budget 2024-25 as part of the Prime Minister's Package for **Employment and Skilling that** had a Budget outlay of Rs 2 lakh crore.

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Narcotics Control Bureau



<u>SYLLABUS</u>: GS Paper 2: Statutory Bodies Newspaper: The Hindu Page No: 14

LSD (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide) What is it?

- **LSD** is a **hallucinogenic drug** known for altering perception, mood, and cognitive processes.
- It is synthetically derived from lysergic acid, found in a fungus (*Ergot*) that grows on rye.

Effects

- Onset in 30–90 minutes, lasts 8–12 hours.
- Causes:
 - Visual hallucinations
 - Altered sense of time
 - Synesthesia (e.g., "hearing" colors)
 - Euphoria or anxiety, depending on dose and mental state
- Can lead to **"bad trips"** and **psychological distress**.

Is it Addictive?

- Not physically addictive, but can lead to **psychological dependence**.
- Tolerance builds quickly, but also fades with abstinence.

Risks

- Hallucinogen Persisting Perception Disorder (HPPD) – flashbacks
- **Psychosis**, especially in predisposed individuals
- Impaired judgment can lead to accidents or risky behavior

Legal Status

- Banned in most countries, including India, under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS), 1985
- Classified as a **Schedule I drug** in the U.S. (no accepted medical use + high abuse potential)

NCB busts top darknet-based drug vendor, seizes drugs

The Narcotics Control Bureau has busted a top darknet-based drug vendor named 'Ketamelon', which had been operating for the past two years. The vendor had established a wide network for shipping lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) to major cities such as Bengaluru, Chennai, Bhopal, Patna, and Delhi, and in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The agency suspects that over the past 14 months, 600 shipments were delivered by the vendor. "This high-impact operation, codenamed 'Melon', was led by the NCB Cochin zonal unit and culminated in the seizure of large quantities of LSD (1,127 LSD blots) and ketamine (131.66 g) as well as digital assets worth ₹70 lakh," the agency said.





<u>SYLLABUS</u>: GS Paper 2: Statutory Bodies Newspaper: The Hindu Page No: 14

About Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB):

- It is the nodal drug law enforcement and intelligence agency under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.
- It was constituted on 14th November, 1985, under the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS Act).
- · It has its headquarters located in Delhi.
- · The NCB exercises the powers and functions of the Central Government for taking measures with respect to:
 - **Co-ordination of actions by various offices**, State Governments, and other authorities **under the N.D.P.S. Act, Customs Act, Drugs and Cosmetics Act**, and any other law for the time being in force in connection with the enforcement provisions of the NDPS Act, 1985.
 - Implementation of the obligation in respect of countermeasures against illicit traffic under the various international conventions and protocols that are in force at present or which may be ratified or acceded to by India in the future.
 - Assistance to concerned authorities in foreign countries and concerned international organisations to facilitate coordination and universal action for prevention and suppression of illicit traffic in these drugs and substances.
 - Coordination of actions taken by the other concerned ministries, departments, and organizations in respect of matters relating to drug abuse.
- It also functions as an enforcement agency through its zonal offices.
- The zonal offices collect and analyse data related to seizures of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, study trends, modus operandi, collect and disseminate intelligence, and work in close cooperation with the Customs, State Police, and other law enforcement agencies.



Competition Commission of India



2nd july 2025

SYLLABUS: GS 2: Statutory Bodies Newspaper: Indian Express Page No: 15

MANUKAUSHIK NEW DELHI, JULY1

THE COMPETITION Competition of India (CCI) has ordered an investigation against Asian Paints for alleged abuse of its dominant position in the decorative paints market, following a complaint by Birla Opus Paints, the paints division of Aditya Birla Group. The competition watchdog said it

prima facie found violations of the various sections of the **Competition Act by Asian Paints** and ordered the director-general (investigation) to probe the matter in detail.

"Asian Paints, by way of restraining its dealers from dealing with its competitors like Birla Opus Paints by enforcing exclusivity upon such dealers is imposing unfair conditions upon them, which is found to be in the nature

of exploitative conduct," the CCI said. In December last year, Birla Opus had filed an interlocutory application with CCI seeking urgent intervention as the anticompetitive conduct of Asian Paints was significantly impacting its business operations. In its defence, Asian Paints told CCI that "no other paint company has been able to scale up in the manner that the Birla Opus has since its entry in March 2024". FE

भारत सरकार **GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**



भारतीय प्रतिस्पर्धा आयोग **Competition Commission of India**



The Competition Act

The Competition Act, 2002, as amended by the Competition (Amendment) Act, 2007, follows the philosophy of modern competition laws. The Act prohibits anti-competitive agreements, abuse of dominant position by enterprises and regulates combinations (acquisition, acquiring of control and M&A), which causes or likely to cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition within India.

Competition Commission of India

The objectives of the Act are sought to be achieved through the Competition Commission of India, which has been established by the Central Government with effect from 14th October 2003. The Commission shall consists of a Chairperson and not less than two and not more than six other Members to be appointed by the Central Government.

It is the duty of the Commission to eliminate practices having adverse effect on competition, promote and sustain competition, protect the interests of consumers and ensure freedom of trade in the markets of India.

The Commission is also required to give opinion on competition issues on a reference received from a statutory authority established under any law and to undertake competition advocacy, create public awareness and impart training on competition issues.



Indo-French 'Shakti-2025'

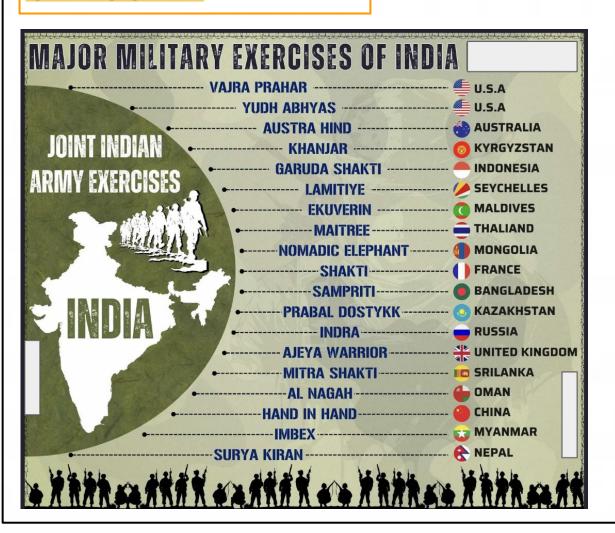


2nd july 2025

SYLLABUS : Prelims: Defense Newspaper: The Hindu Page No: 14

Indo-French Army exercise 'Shakti 2025' concludes

The eighth edition of the Indo-French Army exercise, 'Shakti 2025', that started on June 18 concluded in France on Tuesday. The French Embassy in New Delhi said that the exercise involved more than 500 legionnaires and military personnel from various units of the French Army, the Foreign Legion, the French Air and Space Force, and the French Navy. The Indian contingent of 90 personnel comprised a battalion of the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles, besides personnel from other services. Exercise Shakti was a vital opportunity for Indian and French military personnel to boost joint operational preparedness, the statement said.



Daily Quiz



2nd july 2025

Q1. Consider the following pairs:

Military Exercises	Participating Countries
Vajra Prahar	India and Australia
Nomadic Elephant	India and Mongolia
Shakti	India and United Kingdom
Surya Kiran	India and Nepal

How many of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) Only Three
- d) All Four

Answer: b

Q2. Which among the following statements regarding the Competition Commission of India is NOT correct?

- a) It operates under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
- b) It was established under the Competition Act, 2002.
- c) Its headquarters are located in Mumbai.
- It was set up in response to the economic d) liberalisation of 1991.

Answer: c

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the Narcotics Control Bureau:

- 1. It functions under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
- 2. It was constituted under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985.
- 3. Its headquarters are located in Delhi.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 Only
- 2 and 3 Only b)
- c) 2 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: d

Q4. Consider the following pairs:

Initiatives	Objectives	
SHe-Box Portal	Lodging sexual harassment complaints	
Poshan Tracker	Monitor the delivery of nutritional services under ICDS	
Mission Shakti	Monetary support to pregnant women	

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

- a) 1 and 2 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) 2 and 3 Only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: a

Q5. Which of the following statements regarding the Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991, are correct?

- It was enacted in response to the 1. Bhopal Gas Tragedy.
- 2. Compensation under this Act is payable only if the company is proven negligent.
- 3. Victims can file claims within five years of the accident.

Select the correct answer using the code below.

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: c





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