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Political Science & International Relations

PSIR Crash Course– 2025

Test 6

Time Allowed: 3 Hours **Max Marks: 250**

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Test Start Time	2:00 PM
Test End Time	5:05 PM
UPSC Roll Number	0309541
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SHUBHRA RANJAN
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Instructions:

1. There are EIGHT questions divided in TWO SECTIONS and candidate has to attempt five questions in all.
2. Question Nos. 1 and 5 are compulsory and out of the remaining, any three are to be attempted choosing at least ONE question from each section.
3. Answers must be written in the medium authorised in the admission Certificate, which must be stated clearly on the cover of the booklet in the space provided.
4. Content of the answer is more important than its length.
5. Any page or portion of the page left blank in the Question-Cum-Answer Booklet must be clearly struck off.
6. All parts of the question should be written at one place itself.
7. **Filling all the details in BLOCK LETTERS is mandatory.**

Marks Table (To be filled by Evaluators):

S. No.	a	b	c	d	e	Total
1						
2				X	X	
3				X	X	
4				X	X	
5						
6				X	X	
7				X	X	
8				X	X	
Grand Total						

For any issue related to PSIR Test Series, write only at psirtestseries@shubhraranjan.com

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Remarks by Evaluator:

1. Contextual understanding

2. Content

3. Structure & Flow

4. Introduction

5. Conclusion

6. Language

7. Presentation

Student's Queries: -

Evaluator's Feedback: -

Que 1 (a) तुलनात्मक राजनीति के प्रति नव-संस्थावाद दृष्टिकोण की आलोचनात्मक जांच कीजिए। (10 अंक)

Critically examine the Neo-Institutionalism approach to Comparative politics.

Neo-institutionalism approach by MARCH & OLSEN in their work Reinventing Government is the revival of school of institutionalism heralded by WOODROW WILSON.

The approach focuses on institutions as bridges of communication and establing peace and economic growth, against the realist tradition of focus on power struggle.

The concept of complex interdependence by Joseph Nye also finds as basis to it, where countries are made interdependent both economically and politically rendering any idea of power struggle to nullity.

This is an extension of the Michael Doyle's democratic peace theory as well as Ernst Haas Neo-functionalism approach of achieving peace by pieces..

The recent examples of calls of south-south cooperation with rise in minilateralism and calls for reformed multilateralism leading to engagements via institutions like BRICS+, G20 etc.

However, its spread has been limited and the Trump's upending of world order and retaliation against neo-institutes like BRICS threatens meaning progress.

Que.1 (b)

पूंजीवादी और समाजवादी अर्थव्यवस्थाओं में राज्य की विशेषताओं और बदलती प्रकृति की तुलना करें (10 अंक)

Compare the characteristics and changing nature of the State in capitalist and socialist economies

RG Gettel defines political science as study of states in the 'PAST, PRESENT and FUTURE'

The characteristics of state capitalist society is studied by Ralph Miliband, who says it has not brought any change to the lives of working class and the "managerial revolution is a farce"

However, the failure of Reaganism and Thatcherism's rolling back of state in capitalist societies, heralded by neoliberals led to the new-welfarism where capitalist societies are addressing the social concerns too, in order to contain legitimation crisis (Habermas)

In the socialist societies, are critiqued by dependency school for acting as the instrument of bourgeoise of core states of capitalist societies as highlighted by Immanuel Wallerstein and AG Frank / Samir Amin.

In his book Non-communist Manifesto: WW Rostow says the states no matter the ideology has led to similar types of societies. This can be seen from rise of technocratic societies manned by bureaucracy. as highlighted by Habermas's 'Technocratic Consciousness'

Ruchir Sharma while linking the ~~two~~ in his book What Went Wrong with Capitalism, says 'capitalism has become the socialism for the rich'

Que.1 (c)

अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा बनाए रखने की रणनीतियों के रूप में शक्ति संतुलन और निवारण पर चर्चा करें। (10 अंक)

Discuss the balance of power and deterrence as strategies for maintaining international security.

Balance of power and deterrence are both two important concepts given by Realist school of international politics.

Balance of power is the way national security is achieved by balancing the hegemon or rising power

(eg) China is balanced by QUAD'S India, Japan, US, Australia alliance

Thus, alliance formation, bandwagoning (Maldives balancing China and India), bait and bleed (Europe's support to Ukraine) or buckpassing (Trump shifting the security onus of ~~E~~ NATO on EU) are some examples of balance of power

Deterrence, on the other hand, according to Thomas Schelling (Game Theorist) that making use of causing pain to the adversary as an ideology to maintain security.

Deterrence is more about about posture than policy — says K. Subrahmanyam in view of Indian credible minimum deterrence.

Similarly, Bernard Brodie says for deterrance to work it has to be credible and communication of willingness to use it has to be established to the adversary.

Thus, both are dominant theories of realist approach and fire being deployed in the IR of today's world as well.

Que.1 (d) आलोचनात्मक रूप से जांच करें कि क्या वैश्वीकरण पीछे हट रहा है या पुनर्जागरण के दौर से गुजर रहा है। (10 अंक)
Critically examine whether globalisation is retreating or undergoing a renaissance.

"Globalisation is the shrinking of space and time leading to increased interconnection and interconnectedness" — defines Anthony Giddens

However, scholars around the world are discussing its destiny while some say it is retreating as seen with decreased globalisation, economic disintegration, increasing protectionism and inward looking policies. (eg) Make in India / Atma Nirbhar Bharat; Make America Great Again (MAGA) of Trump; or China's dual circulation theory – increasing domestic demand while reducing the supply to global value chains.

Discontents of Globalisation are highlighted by Joseph Stiglitz who says, there is circulation of capital without transfer of labour.

The cultural backlash thesis of Pippa Norris (or) Douglas Bawer in ~~[illegible]~~ his book strange death of Europe highlights the end of globalisation

However, scholars like DAVID HELD says, globalisation is only under transition and calling it end is too immature.

Similarly, in defence of Globalisation, Jadgish Bhagwati defends globalisation and says it is the "single most powerful tool of 21st century"

PM Modi calls for a globalisation that is based on 3Cs: cooperation, care and conservation which Stiglitz calls as progressive capitalism

Que.1 (e)

ब्रिटेन ने 2016 में यूरोपीय संघ छोड़ने के लिए मतदान क्यों किया और इसका ब्रिटेन और यूरोपीय संघ दोनों पर क्या प्रभाव पड़ा? (10 अंक)

Why did the UK vote to leave the European Union in 2016 and what impact has that had on both the UK and the EU?

The Brexit or Britain's exit from the european union is an indicator of its dicontent with globalisation and against the logic of "pooling of sovereignty"

Reasons for it include, the backlash against globalisation for its failure to provide employment due to holowing out of industrial base and the cultural backlash as highlighted by Bawer Douglas in his book "the strange death of europe"

Similarly, Dani Rodrik highlights in his globalisation trilemma that a state at once can have only two of three i.e globalisation, sovereignty and democratic politics

The impact on UK has been that it has led to independent economic decisions beyond the clutches of EU. Ⓔⓖ Recent INDIA-UK CETA, which it called as the template for the future.

However, critics point the post-truth politics employed by Brexiteer to abruptly end its ties with EU.

For EU, the impact has been that it has strengthen greater cooperation Ⓔⓖ. The schengen area. However, the increasing waves of deglobalisation has threatned the Brexit being a norm for others in EU.

Que.2(a)

"यद्यपि आने वाले वर्षों में विश्व में प्रतिस्पर्धा, भीड़भाड़ और प्रतिस्पर्धा बढ़ने की संभावना है, फिर भी प्रमुख शक्तियों के बीच सहयोग का तर्क अपरिहार्य बना हुआ है।" चर्चा कीजिए। (20 अंक)

"Although the world seems destined to grow more competitive, congested, and contested in the coming years, the logic of major power cooperation remains inescapable." Discuss.

Que.2 (b)

चर्चा करें कि उत्तर-औपनिवेशिक नारीवाद किस प्रकार रोजमर्रा के जीवन और स्थानीय लिंग आधारित संदर्भों और विचारधाराओं को पूंजीवाद की व्यापक, अंतरराष्ट्रीय राजनीतिक और आर्थिक संरचनाओं और विचारधाराओं से जोड़ता है। (15 अंक)

Discuss how Postcolonial feminism links everyday life and local gendered contexts and ideologies to the larger, transnational political and economic structures and ideologies of capitalism.

Que.2(c)

आलोचनात्मक रूप से परीक्षण करें कि कैसे वैश्वीकरण ने आतंकवाद के दायरे को बदल दिया है, लेकिन इसकी प्रकृति को नहीं। (15 अंक)

Critically examine how globalization has changed the scope of terrorism but not its nature.

Que.3(a) क्या आप इस बात से सहमत हैं कि जैसे-जैसे विश्व बहुध्रुवीयता की ओर बढ़ रहा है, गुटनिरपेक्ष आंदोलन (NAM) पुनः प्रासंगिकता प्राप्त कर सकता है? (20 अंक)

Do you agree that as the world moves towards increasing multi-polarity, NAM can again gain relevance?

Que.3(b) यूरोपीय एकीकरण की तुलना कम से कम एक अन्य महाद्वीप में क्षेत्रीय सहयोग की प्रक्रिया से कीजिए। (15 अंक)

Compare and contrast European integration with the process of regional cooperation in at least one other continent.

Que.3 (c) चर्चा करें कि सामाजिक आंदोलन किस हद तक राजनीतिक दृष्टिकोण को प्रभावित करते हैं। (15 अंक)

Discuss to what extent social movements impact political attitudes.

Que.4 (a)

यह कहना कहाँ तक सही है कि जन-संचालित और अहिंसक सामाजिक आंदोलन सत्तावादी समाजों में क्रमिक लोकतांत्रिक सुधारों को लागू कर रहे हैं? (20 अंक)

How far is it correct to say that People-Powered and Non-Violent Social Movements are forcing gradualist democratic reforms in Authoritarian Societies?

Social movements are collective behaviour that are premised on the collective objectives of people coming together. The rise of authoritarian societies as highlighted by Daniel Ziblatt and steven Livitsky in there book "Tyranny of Majority"

Scholars around the world have found overlapping consensus over the fact that there is a rise of authoriatarian regimes irrespective of the political ideology. Scholars like Larry Diamond call it as democratic slump, whereas Fukuyama calls it as democratic recession. The overall phenomena adds to the phenomena of democratic backsliding

Even S. Jaishankar calls that the reason for rise in NSA-non-state actors based terrorist attack because of terrorism from governed spaces - which he specifically pointed at the "military-terrorist complex" of Pakistan's authoritarian regime.

Steven Livitsky & Daniel Zibatt in their book how democracies Die show that autholian regime grow because of the lack of political sphere beyond elections. Fareed Zakaria calls such democracies as illiberal democracies and the phenomena as electorism, where people elect demogogues within the system itself who utilise the democratic spaces for asserting authoritarianism.

This is very similar to Hanah Arendt warning of danger of leaving the public sphere because of modernity.

However, as Jurgen Habermas says these can be reclaimed by reclaiming the public-sphere with communicative action i.e deliberation, participation and dissent through "New social Movements"

The New social movements that are non-violent and people powered against authoritarian regime can be witnessed in the recent examples of Srilanka - ousting the imperial Rajapakshe family in 2021-22.

Similar, the Bangladesh's student movement in 2024, with increasing perception of authoritarian regime by the Hasina-led govt, gave away to her ousting.

Similarly, the recent example of Japan's authoritarian unauthorised call for presidents Emergency to protect his regime is also case in point. (March 2025)

Similarly, the protests in Turkey during April 2025 against Tayyep Erdogan and his restrictions on nomination by opposition leader led to people taking the streets.

The authoritarian govts. in the european states of Belarus ~~is~~ ~~as~~ and Vicktor Orban in Poland are also highlighting the same.

However, these movements are either copted at best or repressed severely at worst, rendering them a no-changer in the longrun. The example of Arab spring turned to Arab summer is a case in point.

Thus, a consistent, well-collaborated, comprehensive movements are needed to counter the authoritarian tendencies.

Que.4 (b)

"आर्थिक और राजनीतिक घटनाक्रमों की एक श्रृंखला ने नई अंतर्राष्ट्रीय आर्थिक व्यवस्था (NIEO) आंदोलन को विश्व व्यवस्था की शक्ति संरचनाओं में निर्णायक समायोजन लाने से रोक दिया।" चर्चा करें (15 अंक)

"A series of economic and political developments prevented the New International Economic Order (NIEO) movement from bringing about conclusive adjustments to the power structures of the world order." Discuss

NIEO (or) New International economic order was the result of Algiers conference of 1973 and its endorsement under UNCTAD in 1975.

The NIEO's objective was to create a post-western order in the economic milieu because of the recognition of fact that the one led by Bretton Woods has only given marginal gains that too unequally.

The basis of it ideologically comes from the Marxist school of dependency scholars led by Emmanuel Wallerstein who gave WORLD SYSTEMS THEORY along with AG Frank & Samir Amin who gave concepts of "development of underdevelopment" because of the 'Imperial Rent' continued under Neo-colonialism. (Kwame Nkrumah)

However, the economic and political developments around the period led to lack of fruition of this idea.

For example, politically the detente phase of cold war ended and the world continued to be coopted by the either of the powerbloc.

Similarly, the end of history with the end of cold war and victory of liberalism as an idelogy led to resurgence of capitalists societies in the third world countries

eg INDIA in 1991. — via the SAPs — structural adjustment programme.

The NAM which was the foster parent of NIEO also became redundant post 1990s. and suffered from agenda deprivation (C. Raja Mohan).

The coming of WTO replacing GATT was a promise of an alternative similar to NIEO's objectives further led to its silent demise.

Thus, with the calls of reformed multilateralism and the growing angst against globalisation (Discontents of Globalisation) as highlighted by Joseph Stiglitz had renewed the ~~renew~~ debates around NIEO.

Que.4 (c) रचनावाद के मूल सिद्धांतों पर चर्चा कीजिए। क्या आपको लगता है कि विश्व राजनीति के बारे में सोचने के लिए रचनावाद एक उपयोगी दृष्टिकोण है? (15 अंक)

Discuss the core tenets of constructivism. Do you think constructivism is a useful approach to thinking about world politics?

Against the materialist and dominant ideology of REALISM in international politics, emerged an idealistically charged approach of CONSTRUCTVISM.

The core tenets are given by the scholars like Alexander Wendt and Nicholas Onuf in thiere work "Anarchy is what we make of it". They highlight that anarchy is true but to construct it as leading to necessarily conflict and power struggle by Realists is deterministic and reductionstic.

They advocate that anachary is what we makes of it —

meaning it can be constructed to be peaceful and cooperative with the propagation of ideas / debates in similar lines.

Similarly, in Anarchy Problematique Richard Ashley contends that Anarchy as problematic is constructed unnaturally by realists and not necessarily true.

From utility point of view, the constructivists had success at few levels. For example; Nina Tannenwald's construction of Nuclear war as Taboo helped in the creation of NPT, CTBT, PTBT and TPNW to address a proliferation and support peaceful use.

Similarly, securitisation theory by Copenhagen school scholar BARRY BUZAN is also an examples, that helped in securitising "human' and not just the state as propagated by Realists like Morgenthau & Meissheimer.

However, it is witnessing faultlines and drawback with the undoing of Nuclear Taboo by states like China which aim to increase arsenal by 1000 by 2030 and Russia's deterrence to Ukraine of Nuclear attack. This is called as Nuclear Rewarming by IAN BREMMER.

Thus, constructivism helped in breaking the ideational domination of Realism and gave a new perspective to IR.

Que.5 (a)

यद्यपि यह मानना उचित है कि भारत और नेपाल के बीच एक मज़बूत सांस्कृतिक बंधन है, फिर भी आत्मसंतुष्टि हानिकारक हो सकती है। चर्चा करें (10 अंक)

While it is reasonable to assume a strong cultural bond between India and Nepal, complacency could be detrimental. Discuss

India and Nepal share strong historic and cultural roots and forms an important player in India's Neighbourhood policy.

The cultural bond goes back to the historical period and has endured various stages of historical change. The treaty of Friendship finds the meeting point between the two diplomatically.

However, Nepal time and again forms the "toothache of Indian foreign policy". While India believes in its positive unilateralism (C. Raja Mohan), this is percieved as ingression to democratic politics in the Nepal camp under Oli Regime.

This is further worsened by the India's complacency, which only makes it easy for Beijing to make Casual inroads ~~into~~ ~~the~~ Kathmandu, complicating the diplomatic mix for India in the region.

This complacency has led to what Happymon Jacob calls India facing problem of 'dealing in pairs' i.e dealing with both Beijing and Kathmandu.

Thus, complacency should find no place in foreign policy making especially in a TUMULTOUS SOUTH ASIA. (Kishore Mahbubani)

~~While~~ India want to convert Nepal from the arc of uncertainty to arc of prosperity. (Rajiv Sikri)

Que.5 (b) वैश्विक दक्षिण और दक्षिण-दक्षिण सहयोग के प्रति भारत की प्रतिबद्धता की सराहना की गई है, विशेष रूप से अफ्रीका में, तथापि कभी-कभी इसे अनुपालन में कमतर भी देखा गया है। आलोचनात्मक परीक्षण कीजिए। (10 अंक)

"India's commitment to the Global South and South-South cooperation has been appreciated, particularly in Africa, it also has been seen as short on follow-through at times.". Critically Examine.

The hosting of G20 by India in 2023 under the slogan of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is a zenith point of INDIA emerging as the voice of Global south

India's commitment stems for its call for reformed multilateralism and greater representation at the global governance.

India has emerged as the net security in the region and also as first responder. (Eg) operation Vaccine maitri and India's HADR during disasters. Along with this the recent expansion of Sagar to Mahasagar is also a watershed moment in this regard.

With Africa, it has engaged with 46 countries in 206 infrastructure projects and 12 bn$ of investment.

However, C. Raja Mohan calls the grouping of G20 as emotionally charged but not a real one. India's engaging though encouraging has fallen short, because of what Ashley Tellis calls 'India as delusional power' - with mismatch between its abilities and aspirations.

Similarly, India's engagement with Global North actively in QUAD and trade has reduced the energy of south-south cooperation.

Thus, as Teresita Schaffer says 'India's increasing multilateral personality' makes it the undisputed voice of Global South.

Que.5 (c) चर्चा करें कि किस प्रकार संयुक्त राष्ट्र शांति सेना अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संकट प्रतिक्रिया के एक उपकरण के रूप में महत्वपूर्ण रूप से विकसित हुई है तथा पिछले 75 वर्षों में वैश्विक शांति और सुरक्षा के लिए एक आवश्यक साधन साबित हुई है। (10 अंक)

Discuss how UN Peacekeeping has evolved significantly as a tool of international crisis response and proven itself an essential instrument for global peace and security over the past 75 years.

The UN Peacekeeping is the hallmark of Woodrow Wilson's institutionalism approach. It is based on the institutionalisation of balance of power.

The origin of UN peacekeeping goes back to the Suez crisis of 1956 with end of imperialism of Britain and France and the institutionalising of peace by USA under Roosevelt.

Since, then it has emerged as the peace propagator - Blue Helmets as they are colloquially known has been spread throughout the world in over 150 countries, since its inception.

The major successes can be seen in the lebanon crisis, Libyan crisis Sudan and Yemen crisis.

However, issues with the UN Peacekeeping remain with attacks against them in some regions and some even being held hostage

Other institutional issues include the lack of uniform contribution by different countries, while India remains 6th largest contributor, some countries are not actively engagement leading to asymmetry in distribution of responsibility

The notion of Responsibility to protect (R2P), finds the basis of it while fulfilling the SDG 17: Peace, justice and institutions

Que.5 (d) “अफगानिस्तान के प्रति भारत का दृष्टिकोण उसके ऐतिहासिक संबंधों, वहां के लोगों के साथ मैत्री और प्रासंगिक सयुक्त राष्ट्र प्रस्तावों द्वारा निर्देशित होता रहा है।” व्याख्या कीजिए। (10 अंक)

“India's approach to Afghanistan continues to be guided by its historical relations, friendship with its people and relevant UN Resolutions.” Explain

Recently, India's foreign secretary VIKRAM MICRI met the counterpart of Afghanistan @ DOHA, bringing active engagement with the Taliban after a brief interregnum post 2021 - US Fallout.

Afghanistan form part of the India's circle of neighbourhood, however according to Rajeev Sikri it forms the arc of instability & uncertainty.

The relationship recognises the ancient India historical ties of the and its trade engagements along with the numerous development projects viz. Zaranj-delaram Highway, Salma Dam, Indira Gandhi Children's hospital etc.

Afghanistan also remains the prism for India's engagement with Central Asian Region (CARs) and "Connect Central Asia paradigm".

However, the recent assignment to Pakistan as the Vice President of Taliban sanctions committee at the UN has irked New Delhi.

Similarly, the rise of new axis of Pakistan-China-Afghanistan adds a new axis to strategic depth doctrine of Pakistan and threaten's India's National security.

India needs to play the Realpolitik game here, by showing strategic maturity and awareness and win hearts not just headlines, as Nirupama Rao writes

Que.5 (e)

भारत-अफ्रीका संबंधों की पूर्ण क्षमता को उजागर करने के लिए, संवर्धित सहयोग और सहकारिता के माध्यम से पारस्परिक रूप से लाभकारी साझेदारी को बढ़ावा देना अनिवार्य है। टिप्पणी करें। (10 अंक)

"To unlock the full potential of India-Africa relations, it is imperative to foster a mutually beneficial partnership through enhanced collaboration and cooperation" Comment.

In his recent visit to Ghana Namibia and Nigeria, PM Modi said "Africa is a top priority of India and the priority is not just Africa but Africans"

India-Africa form the base of South-south cooperation and this was witnessed by inclusion of African union in the G20 in 2023.

Similarly, India has long backed a demand-driven development approach, that is based on Africans interests rather than supply-driven approach as practiced by China.
[Harsh. V. Pant]

Even, S. Jaishankar remarked that "India's policy of Africa is one based on mutual benefit not an extractive one like others"

While India can provide Africa with teaching, training, health, vaccine, education, skilling, green energy, climate resilient agriculture,

Africa can provide India with Rare earth Minerals (REE), precious metals like Gold & Diamond etc.

The diaspora provides a multiplier effect in the background (C. Raja Mohan).

Thus, this will lead to a mutually beneficial relationship, that is fair, equal, just, inclusive and equity.

Although, challenges like China's debt trap diplomacy exists, India needs to be consistent in its Africa approach to make Africa emerge as continent of hope from the notion of lost continent.

Que.6 (a)

दक्षिण एशिया में क्षेत्रीय सहयोग को आगे बढ़ाने के विकल्प के रूप में बिम्सटेक कितना व्यावहारिक है? क्या सार्क और बिम्सटेक एक-दूसरे के प्रतिस्पर्धी हैं या वे एक-दूसरे के प्रयासों के पूरक हैं? (20 अंक)

How workable is BIMSTEC as an option for pursuing regional cooperation in South Asia? Are SAARC and BIMSTEC competitors or do they complement each other's efforts?

Que.6 (b)

चर्चा कीजिए कि बहु-पक्षीय अंतरिम अपील मध्यस्थता व्यवस्था (एमपीआईएएए) के अनिश्चितकालीन जारी रहने से भारत पर क्या प्रभाव पड़ेगा। क्या आपको लगता है कि इससे विश्व व्यापार संगठन के विवाद निपटान तंत्र की अखंडता और प्रभावशीलता को खंडित करने की संभावना है? (15 अंक)

Discuss how the indefinite continuation of the Multi-Party Interim Appeal Arbitration Arrangement" (MPIAAA) has implications for India. Do you think that it has the potential to fragment the integrity and effectiveness of the WTO dispute settlement mechanism?

Que.6 (c)

यह कहना किस हद तक सही है कि यूक्रेन युद्ध ने भारत को अलग-थलग करने के बजाय बेहतर नेटवर्क वाला बना दिया है? (15 अंक)

To what extent it is correct to say that the Ukraine war has made India better networked rather than isolated?

Que.7 (a) "बांग्लादेश के राजनीतिक परिवर्तन के बीच वर्तमान पहलों को बनाए रखना और नए सहयोगों की खोज करना भारत-बांग्लादेश संबंधों के लिए महत्वपूर्ण है" चर्चा करें (20 अंक)

"Maintaining current initiatives and exploring new collaborations in the midst of Bangladesh's political transition is crucial for India-Bangladesh relations" Discuss

August 2025 marks one year to the ousting of Sheikh Hasina regime and the relations between ~~the~~ Delhi and Dhaka ~~as~~ since then has become delicate. The interim govt.'s headed by Md. Yunus's closeness to Beijing makes it even complex.

Bangladesh has been the biggest beneficiary of Indias Neighbour-hood Policy (NFP). It has been India's largest trading partner in the region with investments in hydropower, railways like Akhaura-Agartala link, electricity exchange and people to people ties.

In this regard, maintaining current initiatives is the minimum and constructing new collaborations in the midst of flux which RAJEEV SIKRI calls as arc of uncertainty and arc of instability in the region.

This can be done by showing strategic maturity and securing India's National interests by actively engaging with regime in place whilst at the same time advocating a return of democratic peace in the region. (Michael Doyle)

Also, India should ensure the existing initiatives continue to be maintained that it so strenuously built over the decades. Any loss of support of Dhaka will make India suffer from Peripheral Deterrence as KM Pannikar calls it. Meaning it will create security challenges at the border which span 1643 kms.

However, the increasing axis of Bangladesh-China as seen in Yunus' comments prior to BIMSTEC summit made in China that India's NE states remain landlocked and Beijing should capitalise on it drew ire of Delhi.

This is further complicated by the new axis / trio of Islamabad-Beijing and Dhaka — an "axis of upheaval" indeed. This can potentially undo the success of little success that BIMSTEC seeked to do and the India's Neighbourhood first policy.

The Chinese footprint in the region will or may increase if Delhi doesn't proactively step in and engage strategic going beyond principles and chase pragmatism

Adding to the misery, India recently disallowed Bangladesh access to its shipment facility at Kolkata.

Thus, India should be cautious in managing the fragile neighbours in Bangladesh and be sensitive in handling the differences and concerns of Dhaka by accomodating and addressing them at bilateral level.

Que.7 (b) क्वाड ने अपनी साझेदारी का दायरा बढ़ाने के लिए सभी संशय दूर कर लिए हैं और एक केंद्रित रणनीतिक एजेंडा भी निर्धारित किया है। आलोचनात्मक परीक्षण करें (15 अंक)

QUAD has overcome sceptics to widen its ambit of partnership and also set a focused strategic agenda. Critically examine

2025 marks two decades of QUAD being born first; first as an ideology and later as an institution.

However, sceptics for long doubted its existence and continuance because of its narrow agenda which was unclear, undetermined and unregulated. while another set of critics, saw it as a merely anti-China agenda strengthened during the times of COVID-19.

However, QUAD has emerged as a body with active engagement of vibrant democracies of India, USA, Japan and Australia. The agenda too has widened with areas like security, maritime awareness, supply chain resilience and forum to undo the democratic backsliding.

The recent Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness framework adds a definitive stance to its agenda & objectives.

Similarly the supply chain resilience initiative (SCRI) highlight what PARAG KHANNA said in his book connectography that the world is moving from "just in time to just in case type of infrastructure connectivity"

The renewed focus on cybersecurity and joint military exercises in Indo-Pacific show the renewed focus acknowledging the find that the centre of gravity of geopolitics has shifted from Atlantic to Indo-Pacific.

However, concerns remain as the QUAD summits are irregular and have absentees showcasing the lack of consistency and trust in the organisation

Similarly, India for long has averted the calls of QUAD being a security alliance only and not military alliance and also voicing that it shouldn't been viewed as merely ANTI-CHINA institution.

Thus, QUAD serves the agenda of the time. It should be pursued democratically and with wide objectives.

Que.7 (c)

ब्रिक्स समूह के अपने मूल सदस्यों से आगे विस्तार ने उभरते बाजारों में डॉलर की प्रमुख भूमिका को कम करने में समूह की दीर्घकालिक रुचि पर पुनः ध्यान केंद्रित किया है। (15 अंक)

The expansion of the BRICS bloc beyond its original members has reignited focus on the group's long-standing interest in reducing the dollar's dominant role across emerging markets. Discuss

Que.8 (a) यह कहना कितना सही है कि भारत की पड़ोसी प्रथम नीति के परिणाम अब तक मिश्रित रहे हैं? (20 अंक)

How far it is correct to say that the outcome of India's Neighbourhood First Policy so far has been mixed?

The neighbourhood first Policy is the extension and reimagination of IK GUJRAL's policy dealing with the neighbours. The policy's central tenet is the "principle of Non-reciprocity" backed by mutual trust and respect.

The philosophical and strategic thought behind this policy is from Chanakya's Arthashastra, where he gives the concept of Mandala theory. and how the Vijigishu (India) needs to find a balance between Dharma and Danda in handling it.

The outcome has been a mix of both, strangely. The positives is the increasing India's investment in the region. For instance, India has strived to be the net security provider in the region and also the first responder during Humanitarian assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)

This can be seen during COVID - India as the VISVamitra & Vishwabandhu heralded the Vaccine Maitri campaign in the neighbourhood. showing that it is a benevolent brother eshewing the perception of BigBrother Attitude.

Similarly, for Srilanka to help ease past the economic conundrum and crisis, India helped with 3.00 bn dollar currency swap agreement and a promise to build back its economy by increasing trade and tourism.

Similarly, the converting of India out anti-India campaign into a Welcome India ~~to~~ in Maldives and the recent 4850 cr investment in the island nation is also a case in point.

The aid during Afghanistan's earthquake to Pakistan's flood to recent Myanmar's Earthquake in March 2025 also highlight some of its successes.

However, it is not without any hiccups. The increasing perception of Big Brother unilatealism among the smaller states like Nepal and Bhutan are some faultlines that New Delhi needs to correct. as pointed by Amitash Mattoo

Similarly, the increasing instability and democratic backsliding in Myanmar's coup since 2021 (or) the rise of Taliban in Afghanistan to anti democracy protests in Nepal and the ousting of Hasina regime along with Pakistan's bleeding India through 1000 cuts (Zia doctrine) are challenges to India's Policy

Rajeev Sikri calls this as neighbourhood having arc of uncertainty and instability. This is exacerbated by China's increasing footprint in the region.

India should tread cautiously by reenerging SAARC and BIMSTEC and continue to believe in its principle of non reciprocity and confidence building measure (CBMs) to make South Asia a pole in the changing world order.

Que.8 (b) "हालांकि बीजिंग की बढ़ती आक्रामकता के बारे में चिंताएं साझा करते हुए, नई दिल्ली हमेशा से वाशिंगटन के साथ बहुत अधिक निकटता बनाने से सावधान रही है।" टिप्पणी (15 अंक)

"Though sharing concerns about Beijing's growing aggression, New Delhi has always been wary of aligning too closely with Washington." Comment

While acknowledging the fact the Chinese Middlekingdom doesn't want India to be a new pole in the region and box it up in South Asia (Happymon Jacob), New Delhi though recognises the need for engaging with Washington to counterbalance China — doesn't want to be reduced to a swing state in the process.

The chinese aggression at the borders and the economic entanglement with a rising and choke trade deficit has been a paradox as said by Nirupama Rao.

In this regard, the underlying feature of Cold War 2.0 brewing between USA-China "Destined for war" as Graham Allison calls it, makes

Washington use New Delhi as an ideal swing state and offshore balancer in the region. This can be seen with USA's renewed interest in Asia-Pacific or Indo-Pacific in particular.

However, Delhi seems to be both happy and reluctant in aligning too closely with Washington. The reasons are aplenty. For example, while India is happy to be part of QUAD as a counter to China but doesn't want to reduce it to just an anti-China front.

New Delhi while actively engaging with Washington on defence pacts like GSOMIA, COMCASA, BECA and the recent SOSA along with iCET, it is also wary of not trading its sovereignty and hindering its strategic autonomy

- The hesitations of past has been overcome (PM Modi), but New Delhi doesn't forget the increasing biasness of USA to Pakistan as seen during the Munir's invitation to White House!

Therefore, India while trying to avert and defend China's acts of aggression, wants to do it with its own strategic mettle and not be a pawn in the new great game of Thucydides Trap b/w China-USA.

India values its sovereignty more than anything and Washington needs to acknowledge this and respect it.

Que.8 (c) चर्चा करें कि वैश्विक भूराजनीति के वर्तमान परिदृश्य में भारत और लैटिन अमेरिका के बीच संबंध किस प्रकार एक निर्णायक मोड़ पर खड़े हैं, जो अन्वेषण और विस्तार के लिए तैयार हैं। (15 अंक)

Discuss how in the current landscape of global geopolitics, the relationship between India and Latin America stands at a pivotal juncture, poised for exploration and expansion.

Whilst India and the Latin American states have featured in each others' foreign policy but it would be honest to acknowledge that they have at the periphery, historically. However, the Trumpian upending of world order and the changing global order has brought them closer than ever.

Both have been victims of colonial imperialism and have shared concerns of making a mark in the world with strategic autonomy as the tool.

The calls of reformed multilateralism would not be possible without the participation of Latin America and New Delhi

Both seek their rightful place in renewed multilateral institutions undedoing the cold war legacy and making them totally representative.

The calls of South-South cooperation too will based on close cooperation between the two. with NIEO-new international economic order 2.0 that is based on equity & inclusivity needs active engagement between the two.

The need for climate justice and just energy transition (JET) and a need for technical and financial support to enable equity and justice, the states of Latin America and India must sing the same song!

PM Modi recent visit to Argentina marks a significant shift in India's Latin American policy. The calls of greater engagement and to address the Trumpian tariff tantrums Lula and Modi needs to engage strategically – with both being penalised 50% and 40% tariffs.

Similarly, India's engagement with the Lithium Triangle countries of ABC i.e argentina, Bolivia, Chile also highlight increasing friendshoring and diversifying the supplychain.

Thus, India and latin america must engage across trades, people, culture, technology and climate justice in a world that is becoming a multiplex (Kishore Mahbubani)

Space for Rough Work

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