

CUET · POLITICAL SCIENCE · CLASS XII · CODE 323

India's External Relations

CUET unit: Politics in India Since Independence — India's External Relations

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Snapshot

- Chapter 4 of **Politics in India Since Independence** shifts focus from domestic to external challenges, tracing India's foreign policy from Independence to the mid-1970s.
- It establishes the international context of the Cold War, the principle and practice of Non-Alignment, and Nehru's central role as both Prime Minister and Foreign Minister (1946–1964).
- It covers the history of India's relations with China (Panchsheel, Tibet, 1962 war) and Pakistan (1947 proxy war, 1965 war, 1971 Bangladesh war), and India's nuclear policy culminating in the 1974 "peaceful" nuclear test.
- CUET frequently tests treaties, dates, summits, key personalities and the "principles vs. realpolitik" tension that characterised India's early foreign policy.

Detailed Notes

2.1 Core concepts

- **International context at Independence.** India achieved independence in a "trying and challenging international context" — devastating world war just over, decolonisation accelerating, a new international body (UN) just established, and the Cold War just beginning (NCERT §International context, p. 55). India had to chart a foreign policy that protected sovereignty while engaging with these contradictory forces.
- **Constitutional principles.** Article 51 of the Constitution lays down Directive Principles on the **Promotion of International Peace and Security** — promote international peace and security, maintain just and honourable relations between nations, foster respect for international law and treaty obligations, and encourage settlement of international disputes by arbitration (NCERT §The Constitutional principles, p. 56). This idealist framing was to be carried into practice by the early generation of policy-makers.
- **Domestic-external interplay.** The foreign policy of a nation reflects the interplay of domestic and external factors. India's freedom-struggle ideals — anti-colonialism, anti-racism, anti-imperialism, support for Afro-Asian solidarity — shaped policy, but the prevailing **Cold War** (US–USSR confrontation) was the environment in which the policy had to operate (NCERT §The Policy of non-alignment, p. 56).

- **Nehru as PM and Foreign Minister, 1946–1964.** Nehru set three major objectives: **preserve sovereignty, protect territorial integrity, and promote rapid economic development** — and sought to do all three through the framework of **non-alignment** (NCERT §Nehru's role, p. 57). Parties like the **Bharatiya Jan Sangh** and the **Swatantra Party**, along with leaders like **Dr Ambedkar**, wanted a pro-US tilt, but Nehru had considerable leeway because of his personal stature and the Congress's dominance.
- **Distance from blocs.** India stayed away from **NATO** (US-led) and the **Warsaw Pact** (Soviet-led). It protested **Britain's 1956 Suez attack on Egypt** but did not condemn the USSR's **1956 invasion of Hungary** — illustrating the imperfect but largely independent balancing act of non-alignment (NCERT §Distance from two camps, p. 57). Both blocs sometimes saw India's positions as inconsistent, but India treated each issue on merit.
- **Pakistan factor in US relations.** Pakistan joined US-led military alliances (SEATO, CENTO); this caused unease in Indo–US relations through the 1950s, and the US also resented India's growing partnership with the **Soviet Union** (NCERT §Distance from two camps, pp. 57–58). The US–Pakistan alignment became a structural reason for India's tilt toward the USSR by the late 1960s.
- **Asian Relations Conference (March 1947).** India convened the conference **five months before independence**, signalling early Indian leadership in Afro-Asian affairs. India also convened an **international conference in 1949 to support Indonesia's freedom** struggle (NCERT §Afro-Asian unity, p. 58).
- **Bandung (1955) and NAM Belgrade (1961).** The **Bandung Conference (1955, Indonesia)** marked the zenith of India's Afro-Asian engagement and led to the establishment of the **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)**; the **First NAM Summit was held in Belgrade in September 1961**, and Nehru was a co-founder along with Nasser (Egypt), Tito (Yugoslavia), Sukarno (Indonesia) and Nkrumah (Ghana) (NCERT §Afro-Asian unity, p. 58).
- **Recognising communist China.** India was among the first countries to **recognise the communist government of China after the 1949 revolution**; **Vallabhbhai Patel** had warned about possible Chinese aggression, but Nehru thought an attack from China was "exceedingly unlikely" (NCERT §Peace and conflict with China, p. 58). The divergence between Patel's caution and Nehru's optimism would later be much debated.
- **Panchsheel — 29 April 1954.** **Panchsheel** — the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence — was jointly enunciated by **Nehru and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai on 29 April 1954** (NCERT §Peace and conflict with China, p. 58). The five principles were: (i) mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, (ii) non-aggression, (iii) non-interference, (iv) equality and mutual benefit, and (v) peaceful coexistence. The slogan "Hindi–Chini bhai bhai" captured the era's mood.
- **Tibet sequence (NCERT Tibet box, p. 59).** **1950:** China took over control of Tibet. **1954:** through the Panchsheel agreement, India formally conceded China's

claim over Tibet. **1958**: armed uprising in Tibet, suppressed by Chinese forces.

1959: the **Dalai Lama crossed into India** and was granted **asylum**. China protested India's grant of asylum.

- **Disputed territory.** China claimed two areas of Indian territory: **Aksai-Chin** in **Ladakh (J&K)** in the western sector, and much of **Arunachal Pradesh** (then **NEFA — North Eastern Frontier Agency**) in the eastern sector. Between **1957 and 1959**, China **occupied Aksai-Chin and built a strategic road** there (NCERT §The Chinese invasion, 1962, p. 62).
- **1962 War.** China launched a **swift, massive invasion in October 1962**, while world attention was on the **Cuban Missile Crisis**. Chinese forces moved through the eastern sector, occupying Tawang and pushing toward the Assam plains, before declaring a **unilateral ceasefire** and withdrawing from much of the eastern sector while retaining Aksai-Chin (NCERT §The Chinese invasion, 1962, p. 62).
- **Domestic fallout of 1962.** The 1962 war forced India to seek **US and British military assistance**; the **Soviet Union remained neutral**. Defence Minister **V. K. Krishna Menon** had to leave the cabinet; a **no-confidence motion** was moved against Nehru for the first time (which he survived). The **CPI split in 1964**, with the pro-China faction forming **CPI(M)** (NCERT §The Chinese invasion, p. 62; §Sino-Indian relations and CPI split, p. 63).
- **Restoration of Sino-Indian ties. Full diplomatic relations between India and China were restored only in 1976**; **Atal Behari Vajpayee** (as External Affairs Minister) was the first top leader to visit China in **1979**; **Rajiv Gandhi** was the first PM after Nehru to visit China (NCERT §Sino-Indian relations since 1962 box, p. 63).
- **Pakistan and Kashmir from 1947.** With Pakistan, conflict began over Jammu and Kashmir right after partition; the 1947 proxy war was referred to the UN. The **India-Pakistan Indus Waters Treaty** was signed by Nehru and General Ayub Khan in **1960**, mediated by the **World Bank** — it remained intact through later wars (NCERT §Wars and Peace with Pakistan, p. 64).
- **1965 War.** Pakistan attacked the **Rann of Kutch in April 1965** and then **J&K in August-September**; PM **Lal Bahadur Shastri** ordered a counter-offensive on the Punjab border, with Indian forces reaching close to **Lahore**. The **Tashkent Agreement** was signed by **Shastri and General Ayub Khan in January 1966**, brokered by the **USSR**. Shastri's sudden death in Tashkent that night cast a shadow over the agreement (NCERT §Wars and Peace with Pakistan, p. 64).
- **1971 Bangladesh War.** Pakistan's first general election (1970) produced a split verdict — **Zulfikar Ali Bhutto** in West, **Sheikh Mujib-ur Rahman's Awami League** in East. The army's crackdown on East Pakistan led to about **80 lakh refugees** fleeing to India, putting enormous economic and humanitarian strain (NCERT §Bangladesh war, 1971, pp. 64–66).
- **Indo-Soviet Treaty (August 1971).** To counter the US–Pakistan–China axis (signalled by **Kissinger's secret visit to China via Pakistan in July 1971**), India

signed a **20-year Treaty of Peace and Friendship with the USSR in August 1971** (NCERT §Bangladesh war, 1971, p. 66). The treaty assured India of Soviet diplomatic and military support if attacked.

- **December 1971 war.** War broke out in December 1971; within **ten days**, the Indian army surrounded **Dhaka** from three sides and a Pakistani army of about **90,000** surrendered. India declared a unilateral ceasefire. The **Shimla Agreement** was signed by **Indira Gandhi and Z. A. Bhutto on 3 July 1972**, formalising peace and committing both sides to settling disputes bilaterally (NCERT §Bangladesh war, p. 66).
- **Kargil Confrontation (1999).** Occupation of the Indian side of the LoC in **Mashkoh, Dras, Kaksar and Batalik** by forces claiming to be Mujahideen; conflict lasted **May–June 1999**; happened just one year after both India and Pakistan attained **nuclear capability** in 1998 (NCERT §Kargil Confrontation box, p. 66).
- **India's nuclear programme.** India's nuclear programme began in the late 1940s under **Homi J. Bhabha**; the **first nuclear explosion was conducted in May 1974** and was termed a "**peaceful explosion**" (NCERT §India's nuclear policy, p. 68).
- **NPT and CTBT.** India considered the **NPT of 1968** discriminatory and refused to sign it; it also opposed the **indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995** and refused to sign the **CTBT (Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty)** (NCERT §India's nuclear policy, pp. 68–69).
- **May 1998 Pokhran-II and doctrine.** In May 1998, India conducted a series of nuclear tests; Pakistan followed within weeks; India's nuclear doctrine is one of "**credible minimum nuclear deterrence**" with a "**no first use**" policy (NCERT §India's Nuclear Programme box, p. 69).
- **Shifting alliances.** The **Janata Party government (1977)** announced "**genuine non-alignment**", correcting the pro-Soviet tilt; post-1990, India has shifted to a more pro-US strategy as Russia lost global pre-eminence (NCERT §Shifting alliances in world politics, p. 69).

2.2 Definitions to memorise

Term	Definition	Page
Non-Alignment	Policy of keeping away from military blocs (NATO/Warsaw Pact) and maintaining friendly relations with all countries; advocated as ideal foreign policy by India	57
Article 51	Constitutional directive principle on promotion of international peace and security	56
Panchsheel	Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence jointly enunciated by Nehru and Zhou Enlai on 29 April 1954	58
Bandung Conference	Afro-Asian Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955; marked the zenith of India's engagement with newly	58

Term	Definition	Page
	independent Asian/African nations and led to establishment of NAM	
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement; First Summit held in Belgrade, September 1961; Nehru was a co-founder	58
Asian Relations Conference	Conference convened by India in March 1947, five months before Independence	58
Aksai-Chin	Area in the Ladakh region of J&K claimed by China; occupied by Chinese between 1957 and 1959, who built a strategic road there	62
NEFA	North Eastern Frontier Agency — old name for what was largely the state of Arunachal Pradesh, claimed by China	62
Hindi-Chini bhai bhai	Slogan capturing the mid-1950s Sino-Indian friendship; broken by the 1962 war	58, 61
Indus Waters Treaty	River-water sharing treaty signed by Nehru and General Ayub Khan in 1960, mediated by the World Bank	64
Tashkent Agreement	Agreement ending the 1965 war, signed by PM Lal Bahadur Shastri and General Ayub Khan in January 1966, brokered by the USSR	64
Treaty of Peace and Friendship (1971)	20-year treaty signed by India with the Soviet Union in August 1971 to counter the US–Pakistan–China axis	66
Shimla Agreement	Agreement signed by Indira Gandhi and Z. A. Bhutto on 3 July 1972, formalising return of peace after the 1971 war	66
Kargil Confrontation	May–June 1999 limited conflict on the LoC at Mashkoh, Dras, Kaksar, Batalik	66
Pokhran-I (1974)	India's first nuclear test, termed a "peaceful nuclear explosion"	68
Pokhran-II (May 1998)	India's series of nuclear tests demonstrating weapons capability	69
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968; considered discriminatory by India, which refused to sign it	68
CTBT	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; India refused to sign it	69
Credible Minimum Deterrence	Indian nuclear doctrine after 1998 — minimum but credible nuclear capability with "no first use"	69
Awami League	Political party led by Sheikh Mujib-ur Rahman that swept East Pakistan in 1970	64–66
Bangladesh Liberation War	December 1971 war that led to creation of Bangladesh after a 90,000-strong Pakistani surrender at Dhaka	66
Genuine Non-Alignment	Foreign-policy correction announced by the Janata government (1977) against the perceived pro-Soviet tilt	69

Term	Definition	Page
CPI(M) split	1964 split in the Communist Party of India; the pro-China faction formed CPI(M)	63

2.3 Diagrams / processes to remember

- Photograph of Nehru with Nkrumah, Nasser, Sukarno and Tito at a meeting of non-aligned nations, New York, October 1960 — these five comprised the core leadership of NAM (p. 54).
- Map illustration showing the disputed border with China and the areas of Aksai-Chin (western sector) and NEFA/Arunachal Pradesh (eastern sector), 1962 (p. 60).
- Map illustrations of the 1965 war (p. 65) and the 1971 war (p. 67) showing the western and eastern fronts.
- R. K. Laxman cartoon "1962 China rolled over evidence under construction" depicting the breakdown of Sino-Indian friendship (p. 61).
- **Tibet timeline arc:** 1950 China takes Tibet → 1954 Panchsheel → 1958 uprising → 1959 Dalai Lama enters India.
- **Pakistan war chain:** 1947–48 J&K conflict → 1960 Indus Waters Treaty → 1965 war → 1966 Tashkent → 1971 Bangladesh war → 3 July 1972 Shimla Agreement → 1999 Kargil.
- **Nuclear arc:** late 1940s Bhabha's programme → 1974 Pokhran-I → 1995 India opposes NPT extension → refuses CTBT → 1998 Pokhran-II → "no first use" doctrine.

2.5 Key Articles / Treaties / Events

Reference	Source / Subject	NCERT cite
Panchsheel, 29 April 1954	Five principles of peaceful coexistence (India-China agreement)	leps204
Bandung Conference, 1955	Afro-Asian solidarity; precursor to NAM	leps204
NAM Belgrade Summit, 1961	First Non-Aligned Movement summit	leps204
Tibet annexation by China, 1950	Tibet-China issue	leps204
Dalai Lama enters India, 1959	After failed Tibetan uprising	leps204
Sino-Indian War, October–November 1962	Aksai-Chin (W) and NEFA (E) fronts; defeat for India	leps204
1965 India-Pakistan war	Ended by Tashkent Agreement	leps204
Tashkent Agreement, 10 January 1966	Ended 1965 war (Shastri–Ayub)	leps204
Indus Waters Treaty, 1960	India-Pakistan water sharing	leps204

Reference	Source / Subject	NCERT cite
Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace and Friendship, August 1971	20-year strategic agreement	leps204
Bangladesh Liberation War, December 1971	Created Bangladesh	leps204
Shimla Agreement, 3 July 1972	Ended 1971 war (Indira-Bhutto)	leps204
Pokhran-I nuclear test, 1974	"Smiling Buddha" — peaceful nuclear explosion	leps204
Pokhran-II tests, 11 & 13 May 1998	India became a declared nuclear-weapon state	leps204
CTBT	India refused to sign	leps204
Kargil War, 1999	India-Pakistan limited war	leps204
No First Use doctrine	Indian nuclear doctrine post-1998	leps204

2.4 Common confusions / NTA trap points

- Panchsheel was enunciated on **29 April 1954** — not in 1955 (Bandung) or 1961 (NAM Belgrade); these three are commonly mixed up.
- The Tashkent Agreement (1966) ended the **1965** war; the Shimla Agreement (1972) ended the **1971** war. Distractors swap these.
- The Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace and Friendship was signed in **August 1971** for **20 years** — before the December 1971 war, not after.
- The Dalai Lama crossed into India in **1959**, not in 1950 (when China took Tibet) or 1958 (the armed uprising). Asylum was granted in 1959.
- India's first nuclear test was in **May 1974** (termed "peaceful explosion"); the **May 1998** tests were a separate, weapons-capacity demonstration.
- The CPI split was in **1964** (after the 1962 China war), giving rise to CPI(M).
- The First NAM Summit was at **Belgrade, September 1961** — not Bandung (which was the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference).
- Aksai-Chin lies in the **western** sector (Ladakh/J&K); NEFA/Arunachal lies in the **eastern** sector — NTA likes swapping these in match questions.
- Tashkent Agreement was brokered by the **USSR**, not the USA; **Shimla** was a bilateral India–Pakistan agreement with no third-party mediator.
- Bangladesh refugee figure cited in NCERT is about **80 lakh**, not 8 lakh — a common distractor.
- The 90,000 Pakistani soldier surrender was at **Dhaka**, ending the 1971 war within **ten days** of fighting in December.

- The Janata government (1977) coined "**genuine non-alignment**" — the phrase implies the earlier policy was perceived as tilted; **not** an abandonment of non-alignment.

Practice MCQs

PYQ Alignment

This chapter is a high-yield topic in CUET Political Science, with ~10 MCQs/year across CUET 2023-25. NTA frequently tests dates of treaties (Panchsheel 1954, Indus Waters 1960, Tashkent 1966, Indo-Soviet 1971, Shimla 1972), match-the-following on NAM/ Bandung/Belgrade, the territory claimed by China (Aksai-Chin and NEFA), and assertion-reason items linking the 1971 Indo-Soviet treaty to the US-Pakistan-China axis. Passage-based questions on Nehru's foreign policy objectives and India's nuclear stance (NPT/CTBT/1974 peaceful explosion/1998 tests) are also recurring patterns.

CUET 2023 — Actual PYQs from this chapter

Q.7 (CUET 2023) Arrange the following agreements in chronological order: A. The Tashkent Agreement B. The Panchsheel Agreement C. Treaty of Peace and Friendship with the Soviet Union D. The Shimla Agreement Options:

- A) D, A, C, B B) C, D, A, B C) A, B, C, D D) B, A, C, D **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.8 (CUET 2023) The Afro-Asian Conference of 1955 is popularly known as:

- A) The Shimla Agreement B) The Tashkent Agreement C) The Paris Accord D) The Bandung Conference **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.23 (CUET 2023) Match List I with List II (NAM Summit – Year) A. 5th Summit of the NAM B. 1st Summit of the NAM C. 2nd Summit of the NAM D. 3rd Summit of the NAM I. 1961 II. 2019 III. 1970 IV. 1964 Options:

- A) A-II, B-I, C-IV, D-III B) A-IV, B-I, C-III, D-II C) A-III, B-II, C-I, D-IV D) A-I, B-III, C-II, D-IV **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.41 (CUET 2023) Why did Lal Bahadur Shastri resign from the post of Railway Minister?

- A) Accepting moral responsibility for a railway accident B) He was forced to resign C) His party lost the election D) He was not healthy **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.42 (CUET 2023) Who coined the famous slogan “Jai Jawan Jai Kisan”?

- A) Lal Bahadur Shastri B) Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan C) Jawaharlal Nehru D) Mahatma Gandhi **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.43 (CUET 2023) What was the tenure of Lal Bahadur Shastri as Prime Minister of India?

- A) 1964–1967 B) 1964–1966 C) 1963–1967 D) 1965–1967 **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.44 (CUET 2023) During which period did Lal Bahadur Shastri serve as Prime Minister?

- A) 1964–1967 B) 1964–1966 C) 1963–1967 D) 1965–1967 **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.45 (CUET 2023) Lal Bahadur Shastri passed away in which year?

- A) 1964 B) 1965 C) 1966 D) 1967 **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.46 (CUET 2023) The Tashkent Agreement between India and Pakistan was signed in:

- A) 1964 B) 1965 C) 1966 D) 1967 **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.47 (CUET 2023) The Prime Minister of India who signed the Tashkent Agreement was:

- A) Jawaharlal Nehru B) Lal Bahadur Shastri C) Indira Gandhi D) Morarji Desai **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.48 (CUET 2023) Which war led to the Tashkent Agreement?

- A) Indo-China War 1962 B) Indo-Pak War 1965 C) Indo-Pak War 1971 D) Kargil War **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.49 (CUET 2023) Lal Bahadur Shastri died in:

- A) Delhi B) Moscow C) Tashkent D) Karachi **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.50 (CUET 2023) Lal Bahadur Shastri was the Prime Minister of India after:

- A) Jawaharlal Nehru B) Indira Gandhi C) Rajendra Prasad D) Gulzarilal Nanda **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key

CUET 2024 — Actual PYQs from this chapter

Q.10 (CUET 2024) Which of the following treaty was rejected by India as discriminatory as it prevented only non-nuclear countries from acquiring nuclear weapons?

- A) Intermediate Range Nuclear Force Treaty B) Non-Proliferation Treaty C) Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty D) Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.11 (CUET 2024) Where was the first summit of the NAM (Non-Aligned Movement) held?

- A) Bengaluru B) Belgrade C) Belgium D) Belarus **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.12 (CUET 2024) The Shimla Agreement of 1972 was signed between India and:

- A) Nepal B) Pakistan C) China D) Bangladesh **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key

CUET 2025 — Actual PYQs from this chapter

Q.9 (CUET 2025) Which provision of the Constitution deals with promoting international peace and security?

- A) Article 51 B) Article 21 C) Article 25 D) Article 44 **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.10 (CUET 2025) Who played an instrumental role in India's foreign affairs and establishing contacts with newly independent states of Asia and Africa?

- A) Jawaharlal Nehru B) Indira Gandhi C) Lal Bahadur Shastri D) Rajiv Gandhi **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.11 (CUET 2025) With which country did India sign the 20-year Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1971?

- A) China B) Pakistan C) Soviet Union D) Bangladesh **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.25 (CUET 2025) Arrange the following in chronological order: (A) China occupies Aksai-Chin (B) Diplomatic relations restored between India and China (C) Atal Bihari Vajpayee visits China (D) China's massive invasion Options:

- A) (A), (B), (C), (D) B) (B), (C), (A), (D) C) (A), (D), (B), (C) D) (C), (B), (D), (A) **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.29 (CUET 2025) In which year did India and Pakistan sign the Shimla Agreement?

- A) July 1966 B) July 1972 C) July 1976 D) July 1987 **Tests:** India's external relations / foreign policy **Answer:** Not in extracted key