



Chapter 4 — India's External Relations



1. International Context

India became independent in a difficult international environment:

- The Second World War had just ended, colonialism was declining, and many new countries were emerging.
- Newly independent countries faced major challenges of democracy, economic development and poverty.

At the same time, the Cold War divided the world into two camps led by the USA and USSR.

India's Basic Approach

India decided to conduct its foreign relations with the aim of:

Respecting the sovereignty of other nations
Maintaining international peace
Protecting India's national interests

2. Constitutional Principles — Article 51

Article 51 of the Indian Constitution deals with the promotion of international peace and security.

The State shall endeavour to:

- Promote international peace and security
- Maintain just and honourable relations between nations
- Respect international law and treaty obligations
- Encourage settlement of international disputes through arbitration



3. The Policy of Non-Alignment

India's foreign policy was shaped by both domestic and international factors. India's freedom struggle was closely connected with the struggle against colonialism and imperialism.

India became independent when the Cold War was beginning. The world was divided between the USA and USSR. India chose non-alignment instead of joining either military bloc.

Non-Alignment:

Non-alignment = maintaining an independent foreign policy without joining either Cold War military bloc.

India aimed to:

- Maintain an independent position
- Avoid military alliances
- Reduce Cold War tensions
- Take decisions according to its national interests



4. Nehru's Role

Jawaharlal Nehru played a crucial role in shaping India's foreign policy.

He was Prime Minister and Foreign Minister from 1946 to 1964. He therefore had considerable influence over India's foreign policy.

Three major objectives of Nehru's foreign policy:

Preserve
India's
sovereignty

Protect
territorial
integrity

Promote rapid
economic
development

Nehru believed these objectives could be achieved through **non-alignment**.

There were different opinions within India. Some leaders and political groups favoured closer relations with the US, while others had different views.

Despite this debate, Nehru had considerable **freedom** in formulating foreign policy.

5. Distance from the Two Camps

India maintained distance from both Cold War camps. Why?

To avoid military alliances | To reduce Cold War tensions | To maintain freedom to take independent decisions

The US-led bloc had NATO, while the Soviet-led bloc had the Warsaw Pact. India joined neither. Independent position. India did not blindly support either side.

During the Suez Crisis (1956), India strongly opposed the British and French intervention in Egypt.

During the Hungarian crisis (1956), India did not issue an equally strong public condemnation of Soviet action.

➔ **Thus, non-alignment did not mean complete neutrality. India took positions according to the particular international issue.**

6. Afro-Asian Unity

Nehru believed India should play an important role in Asia and Africa. India supported the decolonisation process. It opposed racism and apartheid. India worked for greater cooperation among newly independent Asian and African countries.

Bandung Conference — 1955

Held at Bandung, Indonesia. Brought together Asian and African countries. India played an important role. It became an important landmark of Afro-Asian unity.

First NAM Summit — 1961

Held at Belgrade. Nehru was one of the co-founders of the Non-Aligned Movement.

7. Peace and Conflict with China

Initially, India and China had friendly relations.

India recognised the communist government of China soon after the 1949 revolution.

Nehru strongly supported friendly relations with China.

However, relations later deteriorated mainly because of the Tibet issue and border dispute.

8. Panchsheel — 1954

India and China signed the Panchsheel Agreement on 29 April 1954.

It contained the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence:



Panchsheel was intended to strengthen peaceful relations between India and China.

9. Tibet

Tibet became an important source of tension between India and China. China took control of Tibet in 1950. Large sections of Tibetans opposed Chinese control.

Through the 1954 Panchsheel Agreement, India recognised China's claim over Tibet.

In 1959, an uprising took place in Tibet. The Dalai Lama crossed into India and was granted political asylum.

China became suspicious of India's intentions and accused India of supporting anti-China activities.

10. The Chinese Invasion — 1962

Main causes of tension: Tibet + Border dispute

China claimed: Aksai Chin in Jammu and Kashmir | Large parts of NEFA (now Arunachal Pradesh)

China had occupied Aksai Chin and constructed a strategic road there. Despite discussions between the two countries, the border dispute could not be resolved.

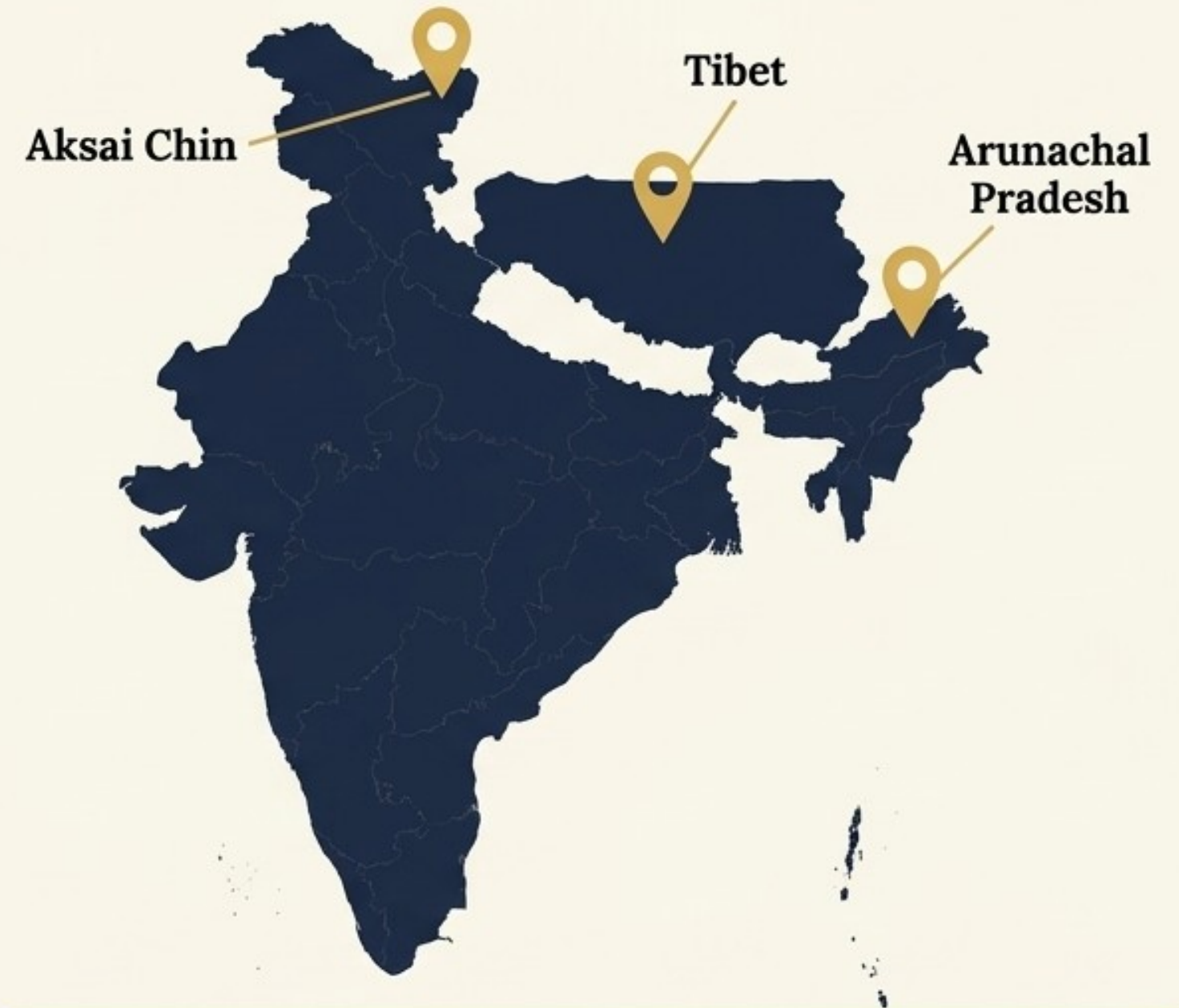
1962 War: China launched a major invasion in October 1962. Fighting took place on both the eastern and western fronts. Chinese forces advanced in Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh. China later announced a unilateral ceasefire and withdrew to positions held before the invasion.

Impact on India

India's image was damaged at home and abroad. The war exposed weaknesses in military preparedness. India sought military assistance from the US and Britain. It created a sense of national humiliation but also strengthened nationalism.

V. Krishna Menon resigned as Defence Minister. Nehru's China policy came under severe criticism. The Congress lost some key

Lok Sabha seats later. The war also contributed to divisions within the Communist Party of India, which split in 1964 into CPI and CPI(M).



Impact on Northeast

The war highlighted the problems of the Northeast, particularly its isolation and underdevelopment.

Nagaland was granted statehood.

Manipur and Tripura, then Union Territories, were given the right to elect their own legislative assemblies.

11. Wars and Peace with Pakistan

Kashmir Conflict — 1947–48:

Soon after Partition, India and Pakistan fought over Jammu and Kashmir.

Indian and Pakistani forces fought in Kashmir. The conflict did not develop into a prolonged full-scale war.

The United Nations became involved. Kashmir became a major factor in India's relations with Pakistan and later with China.

India-Pakistan War — 1965:

Pakistan launched an attack in the Rann of Kutch in April 1965.

It later launched a larger offensive in Jammu and Kashmir.

India responded with a counter-offensive towards the Punjab border. The war ended with UN intervention.

Bangladesh War — 1971:

In 1970, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League won the elections in Pakistan. The military leadership refused to accept the democratic verdict and launched repression in East Pakistan. Around 80 lakh refugees entered India. India supported the Bangladesh liberation struggle. The USA and China supported Pakistan, while India signed the Treaty of Peace and Friendship with the Soviet Union in August 1971. War began in December 1971; Indian forces advanced rapidly in East Pakistan and Pakistani forces surrendered in Dhaka. Bangladesh became an independent country.

Areas of Cooperation:

Despite tensions: India and Pakistan cooperated to restore women abducted during Partition to their families.

The Indus Waters Treaty (1960) resolved the dispute over sharing river waters. It was mediated by the World Bank. It was signed by Nehru and General Ayub Khan.

Tashkent Agreement — 1966:

Lal Bahadur Shastri and Ayub Khan signed the agreement. It was brokered by the Soviet Union. It helped restore peace between India and Pakistan.

Shimla Agreement — 1972:

Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto signed the Shimla Agreement on 3 July 1972, helping restore peace after the war.

12. India's Nuclear Policy

India's nuclear programme initially focused strongly on peaceful purposes.

Homi J. Bhabha played an important role in developing India's nuclear programme.

Nehru supported the use of science and technology for India's development.

India wanted to use atomic energy for peaceful purposes.

India opposed the growth of nuclear weapons and supported nuclear disarmament.

13. NPT — 1968

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) aimed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

India considered the treaty discriminatory because:

- It recognised five nuclear weapon powers.
- It imposed restrictions on other countries.

India believed genuine nuclear disarmament should apply to all nuclear powers.

India therefore refused to sign the NPT.

14. India's First Nuclear Test — 1974

India conducted its first nuclear explosion in May 1974.

India described it as a “peaceful nuclear explosion.”

India continued to emphasise the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

15. India's Nuclear Programme — 1998

India conducted a series of nuclear tests in May 1998.

Pakistan soon followed with its own tests.

The tests increased concerns about a possible nuclear conflict in South Asia.

International criticism and sanctions followed.

India's Nuclear Doctrine

India later emphasised:

- Minimum credible nuclear deterrence
- No First Use
- Commitment to global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament
- A long-term goal of a nuclear-weapons-free world.

India also opposed the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995 and refused to sign the CTBT.

16. Shifting Alliances in World Politics

After 1977, the Janata Party government announced that it would follow genuine non-alignment. Over time, India worked towards better relations with: China | United States

After 1990:

- Russia remained an important friend of India but its global influence declined.
- India moved towards a more pro-US strategic relationship.
- Economic interests became increasingly important in foreign policy.
- India-China relations gradually improved, particularly through efforts towards normalisation and trade.

India-Pakistan Relations:

Efforts were made to improve relations through:
Cultural exchanges | Movement of people | Economic cooperation | Bus and train services

However, tensions continued, including the Kargil Conflict of 1999.

Kargil Conflict — 1999

- Pakistani forces occupied several positions on the Indian side of the LoC.
- Indian forces launched operations to recover these positions.
- India regained control of most of the occupied positions.
- The conflict affected the peace process between India and Pakistan.

QUICK EXAM REVISION — IMPORTANT DATES

1947	Asian Relations Conference	
1950	China took control over Tibet	
1954	Panchsheel Agreement	
1955	Bandung Conference	Indus Waters Treaty
1956	Suez Crisis & Hungarian Crisis	First NAM Summit — Belgrade
1959	Dalai Lama received asylum in India	Chinese invasion of India
1960	Indus Waters Treaty	CPI split
1961	First NAM Summit — Belgrade	India-Pakistan War
1966		Tashkent Agreement
1971		Bangladesh War
1972		Shimla Agreement
1974		India's first nuclear test
1977		Janata government & genuine non-alignment
1998		India's nuclear tests
1999		Kargil Conflict

MCQs — India's External Relations

1. Consider the following statements about India's policy of Non-Alignment:

Statement I: India refused to become a member of either of the two Cold War military blocs.

Statement II: Non-Alignment meant that India would remain completely neutral on every international issue.

Choose the correct option:

- A. Both Statement I and Statement II are correct.
- B. Both Statement I and Statement II are incorrect.
- C. Statement I is correct, but Statement II is incorrect.

Answer: C. India stayed away from military blocs but did not remain neutral on every issue; it took independent positions according to its national interests.

4. Undia of the following events in the correct policy, (iv)

Answer: B.

2. Which of the following best explains why India's foreign policy under Nehru cannot be described as simply "pro-Soviet"?

- A. India rejected all forms of international cooperation.
 - B. India maintained relations with both Cold War blocs while taking independent positions.
 - C. India joined the US-led military alliances.
 - D. India completely avoided receiving assistance from either superpower.
- Answer: B.**

3. Arrange the following events in the correct chronological order:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (i) Bandung Conference | (ii) Panchsheel Agreement |
| (iii) First NAM Summit | (iv) Chinese invasion of India |

Choose the correct option:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| A. (ii) → (i) → (iii) → (iv) | B. (i) → (ii) → (iii) → (iv) |
| C. (ii) → (iii) → (i) → (iv) | D. (iii) → (i) → (ii) → (iv) |

Answer: A.

4. Assertion (A): India's relations with China changed considerably between 1954 and 1962.

Reason (R): The Tibet issue and the unresolved boundary dispute gradually created tensions between the two countries.

- A. Both A and R are true, and R correctly explains A.
- B. Both A and R are true, but R does not correctly explain A.
- C. A is true, but R is false.
- D. A is false, but R is true.

Answer: A.

5. Which development most directly demonstrated India's commitment to its independent nuclear policy?

- A. Joining a military alliance with a nuclear power
- B. Signing the NPT without reservations
- C. Opposing discriminatory nuclear arrangements while supporting peaceful uses of nuclear energy
- D. Abandoning its nuclear programme after 1962

Answer: C.

Answer: A.

6. Consider the following pairs:

Event	Year
Panchsheel Agreement	1954
Indus Waters Treaty	1960
Tashkent Agreement	1966
Shimla Agreement	1972

Which of the following is correct?

- A. Only the first two pairs are correct.
- B. Only the last two pairs are correct.
- C. All four pairs are correct.
- D. Only the first and fourth pairs are correct.

Answer: C.

LONG QUESTIONS — With Answers

1. “India’s policy of Non-Alignment was not a policy of isolation or neutrality.” Examine the statement.

Answer:

- India adopted Non-Alignment in the context of the Cold War division between the US and USSR.
- India did not join either military bloc. It wanted to preserve its sovereignty and independent decision-making.
- India could maintain relations with both superpowers and receive assistance from both.
- Non-Alignment allowed India to take an independent stand on international issues.
- For example, India opposed the Anglo-French intervention in the Suez Crisis of 1956.
- Thus, Non-Alignment meant independent foreign policy, not complete neutrality or isolation.

2. “Nehru played a crucial role in shaping India’s foreign policy after independence.” Explain.

Answer:

- Nehru played a central role because he was both Prime Minister and Foreign Minister from 1946 to 1964.
- His contribution included:
 - Emphasising the preservation of India’s sovereignty.
 - Protecting India’s territorial integrity.
 - Promoting rapid economic development.
 - Adopting the policy of Non-Alignment.
- Thus, Nehru strongly influenced the basic direction of India’s foreign policy in its early decades.

3. “The initial friendship between India and China gradually turned into conflict.” Analyse the statement.

Answer:

- India initially maintained friendly relations with China, but several developments gradually created tensions.
- India recognised the communist government of China soon after the 1949 revolution.
- The Panchsheel Agreement of 1954 was intended to establish peaceful relations.
- However, China’s takeover of Tibet in 1950 became an important source of tension.
- India granted political asylum to the Dalai Lama in 1959.
- A serious border dispute developed over Aksai Chin and the eastern sector.
- China launched an invasion in October 1962.
- The war damaged India’s international image and exposed weaknesses in its military preparedness.
- Therefore, the relationship changed from cooperation and Panchsheel to distrust and military conflict.

4. “The wars between India and Pakistan were accompanied by attempts at cooperation and peace.” Explain with suitable examples.

Answer:

- India-Pakistan relations were marked by both conflict and efforts at cooperation.
- The 1947–48 Kashmir conflict created a major dispute between the two countries.
- Despite tensions, both countries cooperated in restoring women abducted during Partition.
- The Indus Waters Treaty (1960) was signed with World Bank mediation to resolve the sharing of river waters.
- The 1965 war ended through UN intervention.
- The 1965 war ended through UN intervention.
- The Tashkent Agreement (1966) was signed by Lal Bahadur Shastri and Ayub Khan to restore peace.
- After the 1971 Bangladesh War, the Shimla Agreement (1972) was signed by Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.
- Thus, conflict remained an important feature of India-Pakistan relations, but diplomatic efforts repeatedly attempted to restore peace.

5. Explain the evolution of India’s nuclear policy from peaceful nuclear development to the nuclear tests of 1998.

Answer:

- India’s nuclear policy initially focused on the peaceful use of nuclear technology.
- Under the guidance of Homi J. Bhabha, India developed its nuclear programme.
- Nehru supported scientific and technological development but opposed the spread of nuclear weapons.
- India supported global nuclear disarmament.
- India rejected the NPT of 1968, considering it discriminatory because it created a distinction between nuclear and non-nuclear states.
- India conducted its first nuclear explosion in May 1974, describing it as a peaceful nuclear explosion.
- India continued to oppose discriminatory nuclear arrangements, including the CTBT.
- In May 1998, India conducted a series of nuclear tests.
- India subsequently emphasised minimum credible nuclear deterrence, No First Use and commitment to global nuclear disarmament.
- Thus, India’s nuclear policy evolved while retaining its emphasis on strategic autonomy and opposition to discriminatory nuclear regimes