







Daily CURRENT AFFAIRS

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SCO 173-174, Sector 17C, Chandigarh





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Tobacco Affordability Fuelling Cancer Epidemic in India

Why in the News?

On the occasion of World No Tobacco Day (May 31), recent studies and public health campaigns have raised alarms over the increasing affordability of tobacco in India and its direct link to the rising incidence of cancer, especially oral and lung cancers. Despite global trends showing that higher tobacco prices reduce consumption, India's low unit pricing and tax stagnation continue to make tobacco easily accessible. The issue undermines WHO's MPOWER strategy and endangers public health, necessitating urgent intervention.

Background

Tobacco use is a leading cause of preventable deaths worldwide. In India, it accounts for nearly 1.35 million deaths annually. The Global Adult Tobacco Survey-2 (GATS2) found that 42% of men and 14% of women in India use tobacco in some form. India also has the largest number of smokeless tobacco users globally - around 70% of global SLT users reside in India



India presents a unique dual tobacco market:

- Smoked tobacco: Mostly in the form of bidis and cigarettes, with bidis preferred in rural and lowincome groups due to affordability.
- Smokeless tobacco (SLT): Widely consumed as gutkha, khaini, and zarda.
- Notably, the economic cost of tobacco use in India was ₹1.77 lakh crore (approximately 1.04% of India's GDP) in 2017-18. This includes healthcare costs and loss of productivity. As tobacco use continues to grow, the health burden, particularly from cancers of the lip, oral cavity, and lungs, is expected to intensify.

Features of Tobacco Affordability and Use in India

- Low Unit Pricing
- Bidis are sold for as low as ₹5 per pack.
- Smokeless tobacco products can cost as little as ₹1.
- Cigarettes, although costlier (median price ₹95/pack), are available as single sticks for ₹15 or less, bypassing pictorial health warnings.

Widespread Availability

- Cigarettes and SLT products are sold through densely located informal vendors, often around schools, offices, and tea stalls.
- Over 87% of cigarette vendors sell single sticks, encouraging impulse buying and youth experimentation.



Cultural Normalisation

- Practices like the "chai-sutta" break at workplaces and colleges glamorise smoking as a stress-reliever and social activity.
- Perceptions of cigarettes as symbols of modernity have driven increased rural consumption.

Income Growth Outpacing Taxation

- · With India's burgeoning middle class, rising incomes have made tobacco more affordable despite minor tax increases.
- The 2024 Union Budget did not raise tobacco taxes, allowing the industry to maintain affordability through "undershifting" (absorbing tax costs instead of raising prices).
- Gender and Socioeconomic Disparities
- Tobacco use is higher among men, rural populations, and economically weaker sections.
- Women, although less likely to smoke, are often exposed to second-hand smoke, increasing their health risk.

Challenges

Policy and Regulatory Weaknesses

- Inadequate taxation: India's tobacco tax is far below the WHO recommendation of 75% of MRP.
- GST on bidis is only 28% with no compensation cess, keeping them ultra-affordable.
- Lack of ban on single-stick sales: Despite being banned in 88 countries, India allows it, undermining packaging warnings and health campaigns.

Industry Interference

 The tobacco lobby resists stronger regulations through advertising, lobbying, and price manipulation.



 Tactics like flavouring products and sponsoring local events target young and rural consumers.

Health Infrastructure Constraints

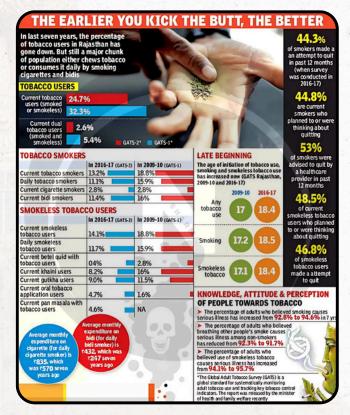
- · Limited availability of screening and early diagnosis, especially in rural
- Cancer care costs are high, and many patients report late due to a lack of awareness and accessibility.

Tuberculosis and Cancer Dual Burden

• India faces the world's highest TB burden, complicating lung cancer diagnosis and screening due to overlapping symptoms.

Social Acceptance and Addiction

 Social practices and peer pressure contribute to addiction.





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- Nicotine addiction is difficult to overcome without structured cessation support, which is scarce in public health facilities.
- Health Costs: Oral and lung cancers are among the most expensive to treat. Many families fall into poverty due to out-of-pocket treatment expenses.
- Workforce Loss: India loses significant productivity due to tobacco-related diseases.
- Second-hand Smoke: Non-smokers face elevated risk, especially children and women in households where male members smoke indoors.

Way Forward Raise Tobacco Taxes Significantly

- Implement the WHOrecommended taxation level of 75% of MRP.
- Equalise taxation between bidis and cigarettes to discourage bidi consumption among the poor.

Ban Single-Stick Sales

- Enforce a national ban to prevent evasion of packaging laws.
- Coupled with larger graphic warnings and plain packaging, this can reduce youth initiation.

Invest in Tobacco Cessation Infrastructure

- Expand tobacco cessation clinics at primary healthcare centres.
- Integrate counselling and pharmacological therapy with other national health programmes.

Public Awareness Campaigns

- Targeted, culturally sensitive campaigns in regional languages.
- Use digital media to reach young people with anti-tobacco messaging.

Regulate Vendor Proximity to Schools and Workplaces

- Implement zoning laws to restrict sales within a 100-metre radius of schools, offices, and public places.
- Penalise violations through local civic bodies.

Use Tax Revenue for Cancer Prevention

- Allocate part of the collected tobacco tax to fund free cancer screening and awareness camps.
- This will reduce late-stage diagnoses and healthcare burden.

Strengthen MPOWER Compliance

- Conduct annual audits of tobacco control law implementation.
- Increase penalties for non-compliance and introduce vendor licensing systems.

Combat Industry Influence

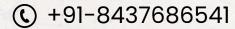
- Enforce Article 5.3 of the WHO
 Framework Convention on Tobacco
 Control (FCTC) to protect policymaking from industry interference.
- Ban all forms of indirect advertising, including brand placement and sponsorships.

Conclusion

India's battle against tobacco-related cancers is at a critical juncture. Affordability of tobacco, particularly among the poor and youth, has neutralised public health gain



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The current situation calls for a multipronged, evidence-based approach that includes robust taxation, regulatory reforms, public education, and strengthened enforcement of WHO's MPOWFR framework.

Q.. "Tobacco affordability in India is a public health crisis that undermines global frameworks like MPOWER and fuels a growing cancer epidemic." Critically examine the statement. Suggest comprehensive policy measures to address the challenge.

Q1. Consider the following statements for tobacco taxation in India:

- 1. The GST rate on bidis is lower than that on cigarettes.
- 2.The WHO recommends that tobacco taxes should comprise at least 75% of the retail price.
- 3. India currently meets the WHO benchmark for tobacco taxation.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

A. 1 and 2 only

B. 2 only

C. 1 and 3 only

D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A. 1 and 2 only **Explanation:**

- Statement 1 is correct: Bidis are taxed at 28% under GST without a compensation cess, while cigarettes have an additional cess.
- Statement 2 is correct: WHO recommends ≥75% tax on the tobacco retail price.
- Statement 3 is incorrect: India falls short of the WHO benchmark.





Autonomous warfare in Operation Sindoor

Why in the news

- Operation Sindoor gained prominence due to the unprecedented role of autonomous drones in live combat.
- India used a diverse set of UAVs -Heron MK-II, TAPAS-BH-201, Nagastra-1, and swarm drones- to conduct surgical strikes inside Pakistan.
- Pakistan retaliated using its Shahpar-II, Burraq, Bayraktar TB2, and Wing Loong II drones, targeting Indian military assets.
- For the first time, India's air defence grid (IACCS) integrated Directed Energy Weapons (DEWs) for drone neutralisation.
- The use of AI for target acquisition, radar spoofing, and ISR, without risking human life, has initiated a paradigm shift in military strategy.



Background

 Precursor to Operation Sindoor: April 22, Pahalgam attack by Islamist terrorists triggered Indian retaliation.

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- The rising frequency of cross-border infiltrations and drone-assisted arms drops had already escalated tensions.
- Evolution of Drone Warfare in South Asia
- India began inducting Heron and Rustom-II UAVs over a decade ago.
- Pakistan, with Chinese and Turkish assistance, ramped up its drone fleet.
- 2019 Balakot airstrikes foreshadowed India's capability and willingness to conduct aerial precision strikes.
- Strategic Doctrinal Shift
- Both countries revised their engagement rules post-Operation Sindoor.
- Shift from manned combat to autonomous engagement reflects growing regional militarisation of Al and robotics.

Key Features of Autonomous Warfare in Operation Sindoor

Multi-Tier Drone Deployment

- Use of loitering munitions (Nagastra-1, Harop) for precision strikes.
- Swarm drones created radar clutter and saturation attacks on Pakistani air defence.
- Quadcopters and micro UAVs relayed real-time ISR data to the Integrated Battle Management System (IBMS).

Sophisticated Targeting and Sequencing

- **Phase 1:** Electronic decoys and spoof drones saturated Pakistani radars.
- Phase 2: Loitering munitions targeted command and control nodes.
- Phase 3: ISR drones maintained persistent surveillance and relayed battle damage assessment (BDA).







Air Defence Integration

- India's IACCS provided unified command over air defence assets: S-400, Barak-8, Akash-NG, and SPYDER systems.
- Akashteer System enabled battlefield-level control over low-level threats.
- Legacy Soviet systems (ZSU-23, OSA-AK) modernised with digital radar targeting.

Directed Energy Weapons (DEWs)

- Use of high-powered microwaves and lasers against incoming drones.
- First operational demonstration of DEWs in the Indian context.

Info-War Parallel

- Drone footage, wreckage, and radar logs used for public diplomacy.
- India's narrative dominance aimed to preempt Pakistani propaganda.

Challenges in Autonomous Warfare

Legal and Ethical Dilemmas

- Autonomous weapons raise questions of accountability and international law.
- Geneva Conventions and customary laws do not yet address Al-based lethal decisions.

Escalation Risk Between Nuclear-Armed States

- High potential for miscalculation due to rapid, machine-triggered responses.
- Lack of human oversight can escalate tactical operations into strategic confrontations.

Counter-Autonomy Gaps

- Jamming, spoofing, and hacking of drones could lead to reverse attacks.
- Cyber-vulnerabilities of command-andcontrol systems pose national security threats.

Drone Proliferation

- Low cost and easy availability of kamikaze drones risk misuse by nonstate actors.
- Drone swarms could soon become a standard tool in proxy warfare and insurgency.

Limitations of Current Air Defence

- Difficulty in detecting low-RCS (Radar Cross Section) drones flying at treetop levels.
- Over-reliance on older LLAD systems requires urgent upgrades.

Indo-Pak Arms Race

- Autonomous arms race may trigger higher defence spending and reduce space for diplomacy.
- Pakistan may increase reliance on China and Turkey for drone tech parity.

Way Forward Develop an Indigenous Drone Ecosystem

- Scale production of tactical and strategic UAVs under 'Make in India'.
- Accelerate private-public collaboration and Al integration (e.g., DRDO, IdeaForge, Adani-Elbit).

Build Resilient C4ISR Architecture

 Secure command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) grid against EMP, cyber and signal interference.

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· Employ quantum encryption and hardened satellites for ISR data.

Create Legal and Ethical Frameworks

- Advocate global norms for autonomous weapons under the **UN Convention on Certain** Conventional Weapons (CCW).
- Establish parliamentary oversight on the deployment of AI-enabled military assets.

Strengthen Multi-Layer Air Defence

- Expand deployment of Akash-NG and Barak-8 systems in forward zones.
- Field-test DEWs and explore new technologies like kinetic interceptors and drone-on-drone warfare.

Institutionalise Drone **Warfare Doctrine**

- Include autonomous warfare modules in the training curricula of NDA, IMA, and Air War College.
- Establish a dedicated 'Drone Command' within the Tri-Services Command structure.

Promote Strategic Stability

- Initiate bilateral crisiscommunication channels (drone hotline).
- Pursue confidence-building measures (CBMs) with Pakistan on autonomous systems, similar to ballistic missile notification mechanisms.

Conclusion

Operation Sindoor was a watershed moment - not only in India's military evolution but also in the strategic stability of South Asia. It marked the formal entry of AI and autonomous systems into highstakes national security doctrines. The battlelines of the future will not be trenches, but cloud servers, algorithmic targeting, and swarm formations. While this form of warfare reduces troop casualties and enables pinpoint precision, it simultaneously ushers in an era of opaque escalation, cyber vulnerabilities, and ethical fog.

Question 1: Operation Sindoor is significant because it marked:

- A) The first use of nuclear weapons in South Asia
- B) The largest deployment of Indian infantry in a single operation
- C) The first full-scale deployment of autonomous warfare systems between nuclear-armed neighbours
- D) A joint military exercise between India and the USA

Ans: C

Q "Operation Sindoor marks a paradigm shift like conflict in South Asia." Critically examine the role of autonomous warfare technologies in Operation Sindoor and their implications for future India-Pakistan military engagements. (250 words)





Evaluating India's Welfare Architecture: ThirdParty Evaluation of CSS and CS Schemes Before the 16th Finance Commission

Why Is It in the News?

- On the cusp of the 16th Finance Commission recommendations, the Union Government issued a directive: no CSS or CS scheme will be extended beyond March 31, 2026, without a third-party evaluation.
- This includes 54 CSSs and 260 CSs with an expiry of approval on 31.03.2026.
- The Ministry of Finance, via directives, has linked future scheme appraisals to third-party outcomes and alignment with national priorities.
- The decision is also tied to the capital expenditure-led growth model adopted in recent years.
 Higher scheme efficiency would release more fiscal space for infrastructure spending.

Background: CSS and CS Schemes Explained

- Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS):
- Part-funded by the Union Government, implemented by State Governments.
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- **Share ratio:** 60:40 (general), 75:25 (NE and hilly states), 90:10 (UTs).
- Focus areas: Health, Education, Rural Development, Agriculture, Social Welfare.

• Examples:

- PM Poshan Scheme (school nutrition)
- PM Awas Yojana (Gramin) (rural housing)
- National Health Mission

Central Sector Schemes (CS):

- Fully funded and implemented by the Union Government.
- Executed directly by central ministries and departments.

Examples:

- PLI Scheme (manufacturing incentives)
- National Digital Health Mission
- UDAN (civil aviation)

Significance:

- Together, CSS and CS form the core of India's welfare and development framework, accounting for a major portion of Union Budget allocations.
- Schemes are tailored to fulfil constitutional mandates, such as the Directive Principles of State Policy, and international obligations like the SDGs.

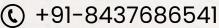
Current Evaluation Process and Government Mandate NITI Aayog's Role:

- Tasked with evaluating the effectiveness of CSS schemes.
- Uses parameters like outputs, outcomes, cost-effectiveness, and alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Third-Party Evaluation Mandate:

 Ministries must get schemes evaluated by July 2025.

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 Submit to the expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) for clearance before the Union Budget 2026–27 formulation begins.

Criteria for Continuation:

- Demonstration of positive outcomes and impact.
- Justification of the scheme's mandate and relevance.
- Proof of performance-linked necessity.

Ministry of Finance Directives:

- Warns against inflated projections (as seen with the Health Ministry's request for a higher vaccination fund).
- Mandates budgeting in line with actual performance, not just political or departmental demands.

Challenges in Implementation Institutional Challenges:

- Lack of Evaluation Capacity: Many ministries lack internal M&E (Monitoring & Evaluation) units.
- Inadequate Baseline Data: Absence of time-series or control group data makes attribution difficult.

Methodological Concerns:

- A one-size-fits-all approach may not work for schemes across sectors.
- Evaluation tools need contextual tailoring (e.g., comparing outcomes of healthcare vs. digital infrastructure schemes).

Federal Tensions:

- States may resist sharing data or supporting evaluations they perceive as threatening to their control or prestige.
- CSSs depend on centre-state coordination. Poor relations can derail evidence generation.

Quality of Third-Party Agencies:

- Many agencies lack domain expertise, fieldwork capability, or statistical rigour.
- Issues of conflict of interest, selection bias, and delayed reporting are persistent.

Time Constraints:

- Ministries have just over a year to conduct and submit evaluations.
- Evaluation, feedback loop, and policy adaptation in such short windows may lead to superficial compliance.

Budgetary Rigidity:

 If schemes fail evaluation, entire sectors (like rural health or child nutrition) may see funding shocks unless alternatives are rapidly put in place.

The Way Forward Strengthen Monitoring & Evaluation Ecosystem:

- Establish dedicated M&E units in each ministry and state planning board.
- Build inter-ministerial evaluation cells with experts from NITI Aayog, academia, and civil society.

Capacity Building:

- Conduct training workshops for policymakers and state officers on impact assessment techniques.
- Leverage AI and big data for realtime scheme tracking (e.g., dashboards, geotagging, mobile surveys).



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Institutional Reform:

- Develop a National Evaluation Policy to guide all scheme assessments.
- Maintain a public repository of evaluations to foster transparency and peer learning.

Improve Federal Coordination:

- Convene regular Centre-State Scheme Appraisal Dialogues.
- Allow states to co-nominate evaluation agencies and co-create ToRs (Terms of Reference).

Ensure Fair Transition:

- If schemes are discontinued, provide exit strategies or replacement blueprints to avoid disruption.
- Use the evaluation exercise to redesign, rather than merely terminate, underperforming schemes.

Promote Realistic Budgeting:

- Ministries must align with the Finance Ministry's guidance to seek 5.5x average past allocations only if substantiated by need and performance.
- Develop performance-based budgeting norms, linking allocations to prior outcomes.

Conclusion

The mandatory third-party evaluation of CSS and CS schemes is a watershed in India's governance paradigm. It aligns with global best practices in evidence-based policymaking, promoting accountability, efficiency, and fiscal discipline.

Yet, the initiative's success hinges on addressing deep-seated challenges, methodological inconsistencies, centrestate friction, and institutional inertia.

Q.. "The Union Government's decision to mandate third-party evaluation before the continuation of CSS and CS schemes marks a paradigm shift in public expenditure governance." Critically analyse this move in light of the upcoming 16th Finance Commission recommendations. (250 words)

Q. Regarding the Union Government's recent directive on the evaluation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and Central Sector Schemes (CS), consider the following statements:

- 1. All Centrally Sponsored Schemes are fully funded and implemented by the Union Government.
- 2. Third-party evaluation is now mandatory for the continuation of both CSS and CS schemes beyond March 31, 2026.
- 3. Ministries have been directed to submit evaluation reports to the Finance Commission before the Union Budget 2025-26.
- 4. The Ministry of Finance has capped allocations for schemes in the next Finance Commission cycle to 5.5 times the average expenditure during 2021– 22 to 2025-26.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

A. 2 only B. 2 and 4 only C. 1, 2 and 3 only D. 1, 3 and 4 only

Correct Answer: B. 2 and 4 only

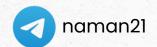


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Explanation:

- Statement 1 Incorrect: CSSs are not fully funded by the Union Government. CSSs are shared-cost programs between the Centre and States (e.g., 60:40 or 75:25). Only Central Sector Schemes (CS) are fully funded and implemented by the Union.
- Statement 2 Correct: As per the recent directive, third-party evaluation is mandatory for the continuation of both CSS and CS schemes beyond March 31, 2026.
- Statement 3 Incorrect: Ministries have been asked to submit evaluations to the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC), not directly to the Finance Commission, and before Budget 2026–27, not Budget 2025–26.
- Statement 4 Correct: Under the new fiscal rules, ministries can seek an allocation up to 5.5 times the average actual expenditure incurred during 2021–22 to 2025–26.





Shangri-La Dialogue

Why in the News?

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan is set to visit Singapore to attend the 22nd Shangri-La Dialogue, one of the world's most prestigious platforms for defence diplomacy. Held annually by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in collaboration with Singapore's Ministry of Defence, this summit convenes strategic thinkers, policymakers, and military leaders to deliberate on emerging security challenges in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.



Background: What is the Shangri-La Dialogue?

- The Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD), initiated in 2002, has emerged as Asia's premier defence and security summit. Named after the Shangri-La Hotel in Singapore, where it is held every June, the dialogue facilitates multilateral interaction and defence diplomacy among countries, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Organised by the London-based IISS and co-hosted by Singapore's Ministry of Defence, the Dialogue is both a strategic forum and a track 1.5 diplomatic platform, combining high-level official interactions with informal, off-the-record discussions.

Its prominence has grown as global attention shifts towards Indo-Pacific dynamics, where territorial conflicts, rising militarisation, and non-traditional threats challenge regional peace.

Key Features of the Shangri-La Dialogue

- Multilateral Engagement: The
 Dialogue attracts defence ministers,
 military chiefs, top bureaucrats, and
 experts from over 50 countries,
 including the US, China, Japan, India,
 Australia, and ASEAN members.
- Two-Tier Structure: Open plenary sessions for speeches and diplomatic statements.
- Closed-door breakout meetings where participants hold confidential and frank exchanges on pressing regional issues.

Agenda Breadth:

The summit covers: Traditional security issues: Military cooperation, territorial disputes (e.g., South China Sea), defence budgets.

Non-traditional threats: Cybersecurity, terrorism, pandemic preparedness, supply chain resilience, and climate change.

Asia-Pacific-Centric Focus: While global in participation, the summit remains focused on developments in East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, particularly the Indo-Pacific maritime and strategic environment.

India's Participation and Significance

India has been a regular and active participant in the Shangri-La Dialogue. The country's engagement reflects:

- It is a status as a major Indo-Pacific power.
- It's commitment to multilateralism and a rules-based order.







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 It has strategic interests in freedom of navigation, regional connectivity, and counterbalance to China's assertiveness.

In 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered the keynote address, articulating India's vision of a "free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific." This marked a diplomatic milestone, projecting India's evolving maritime strategy and geopolitical stance.

This year, CDS Gen. Anil Chauhan's visit underscores the importance India places on strategic dialogues, especially amid growing regional tensions, such as:

- · South China Sea militarisation.
- China-Taiwan-US triangle.
- The evolving Quad-AUKUS dynamics.
- Escalating grey-zone warfare and cyber threats.

Why the Shangri-La Dialogue

Shifting Security Architecture: With the erosion of post-World War II alliances and the US-China rivalry escalating, Asia's security architecture is in flux. Platforms like SLD help manage tensions, build trust, and prevent conflict escalation.

Rising Indo-Pacific Tensions:

- China's aggressive maritime claims have triggered backlash.
- US military posturing in the South China Sea has intensified.
- ASEAN centrality is under stress due to polarisation.

India, advocating for strategic autonomy, seeks to play a stabilising role while safeguarding its interests.

Non-traditional Threats:

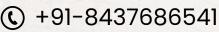
- · Climate disasters.
- Cyberattacks on critical infrastructure.
- Maritime piracy and illegal trafficking.

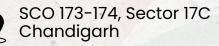
Such issues demand cooperative multilateral responses, and the Dialogue facilitates these conversations.

- Confidence-Building and
 Diplomacy: The closed-door
 meetings allow for backchannel
 diplomacy, vital in diffusing
 misunderstandings, especially
 among military leaders of adversarial
 nations.
- Challenges and Limitations of the Shangri-La Dialogue
- Lack of Enforcement Mechanism:
 Unlike formal organisations (e.g.,
 ASEAN or UN bodies), SLD does not
 produce binding resolutions or
 treaties. It's largely dialogue-centric.
- Geopolitical Polarisation: The presence of rivals like the US and China often leads to rhetorical sparring rather than meaningful outcomes. For instance, both sides use the platform to issue veiled threats or project military resolve.
- Exclusion of Russia: The diminishing participation or marginalisation of Russia limits the platform's universality in Eurasian security dialogue.
- ASEAN's Diluted Influence: While hosted in Singapore and linked to ASEAN security dialogue processes, ASEAN's voice is often overshadowed by bigger powers.
- Tokenism in Non-Traditional Issues:
 Issues like climate change and health security, though discussed, often take a backseat to military and territorial debates.

Way Forward

- Institutionalise Outcomes: While SLD is informal, efforts can be made to institutionalise follow-ups through working groups or regional security compacts.
- Expand Participation:







- Inclusion of more African and West Asian nations can make the dialogue truly Indo-Pacific and reflect interconnected security ecosystems.
- Enhance India's Role:

India can:

- Lead sessions on non-traditional threats (e.g., space, cyber, pandemic).
- Propose regional confidencebuilding mechanisms.
- Present alternative frameworks for maritime governance in the Indo-Pacific.
- Strengthen ASEAN-Centricity: Balancing the dialogue to ensure ASEAN voices remain central will make outcomes more regionally acceptable and stable.
- Promote Track-II Diplomacy: Parallel summits with think tanks, scholars, and media can enrich the dialogue, promote people-to-people understanding, and create bottomup security cooperation models.

Conclusion

• The 22nd Shangri-La Dialogue arrives at a time of unprecedented flux in Asia's security landscape. As India deepens its role in regional affairs, General Anil Chauhan's participation reinforces New Delhi's commitment to multilateral engagement, maritime security, and a balanced Indo-Pacific order.

Q. Regarding the Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD), consider the following statements:

- 1. It is held annually in Tokyo and organised by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).
- 2. It is a platform focused exclusively on traditional military threats in the Indo-Pacific region.



3. India's Prime Minister once delivered the keynote address at this forum. 4. The SLD facilitates both formal diplomatic sessions and informal closeddoor discussions.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

A. 1 and 2 only B. 3 and 4 only C. 1, 3 and 4 only D. 2, 3 and 4 only

Answer: B. 3 and 4 only

- Statement 1 is incorrect. The SLD is held in Singapore, not Tokyo.
- Statement 2 is incorrect. It covers both traditional and non-traditional threats like cybersecurity, pandemics, and climate change.
- Statement 3 is correct. PM Narendra Modi delivered the keynote address in 2018.
- Statement 4 is correct. The Dialogue has both plenary and closed-door sessions, promoting informal diplomacy.

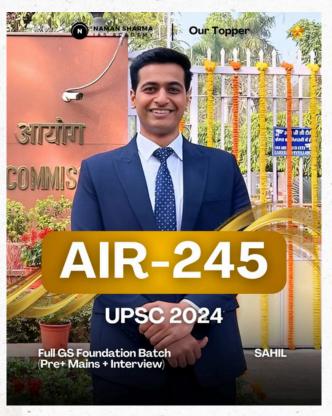
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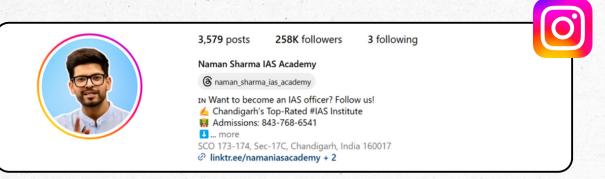
SDM Himani Sharma AIR-2, HPAS 2024

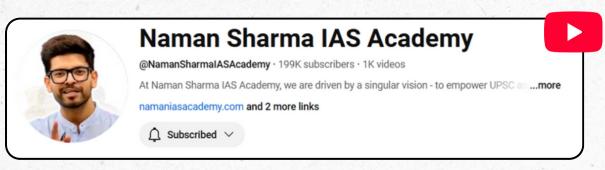


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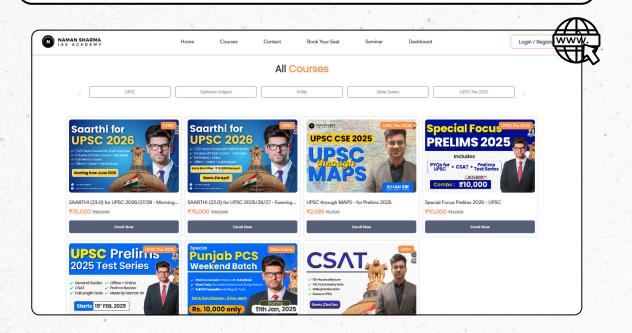






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