

Q. 3 Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow.

(20)

The sudden outbreak of hostilities between India and Pakistan on 10 May 2025 marked a watershed moment in the history of South Asian conflicts. Unlike previous encounters, this confrontation was not confined to the roar of tanks or the thunder of artillery. At the very outset, as Indian squadrons approached, Pakistan's advanced air-defence system shot down five Rafales before they could even cross into its airspace, a decisive blow that stunned military observers. Yet, Pakistan did not limit its response to defensive manoeuvres; in a swift and calibrated retaliation, its missile batteries and long-range artillery struck selected military installations, forcing the Indian capital into an unexpected blackout that paralyzed communications and spread panic in New Delhi.

However, the greater surprise came immediately afterward when Pakistan, rather than escalating the conventional battle, opened an invisible front in the digital domain. Alongside these air and artillery victories, simultaneously unveiled a sophisticated cyber-warfare strategy. In a matter of hours, its cyber units disabled enemy command systems, blinded satellite networks, silenced air defence radars, and disrupted encrypted communications. The battlefield, for the first time, shifted from the plains and skies to a hidden theatre of codes and signals, where no further gunpowder was spent yet entire formations were rendered ineffective.

The effect was staggering. The remaining Rafales never dared to fly again. As the magnitude of the technological disruption became apparent, nations that once stood aloof during Indo-Pak crises began to speak. Western powers, wary of further escalation, criticized India's aggressive posture, while regional powers expressed open support for Pakistan. For the first time in decades, India found itself diplomatically cornered and without a credible ally to defend its stance.

Even more remarkable was the transformation in the Middle East. In a region where Pakistan had often been treated with disdain, Arab leaders, deeply impressed by its mastery of digital warfare and its disciplined conduct, began to regard it as a formidable power. What had long been a bruised national pride was suddenly restored. This reawakening of respect also strengthened strategic partnerships throughout the region. Pakistan's preparedness demonstrated that the future of war lies not merely in conventional might but in the ability to dominate the digital arena, where battles are fought invisibly yet decided decisively.

Questions:

- Q1. Why did Arab leaders change their attitude towards Pakistan after the conflict?
- Q2. How did the blackout in Delhi influence the psychological state of India during the conflict?
- Q3. If Pakistan had not launched digital warfare after the missile retaliation, how would the conflict have turned out differently?
- Q4. Compare and contrast the role of traditional military force and digital warfare as described in the passage. Which one proved more decisive and why?
- Q5. If the events of 10 May 2025 were to be viewed as a turning point, what does the episode reveal about the changing meaning of "power" in the 21st century?

1- Arab leaders changed their attitude towards Pakistan after the conflict because they realized that future of war is in digital arena, not only in conventional one. Presently, Pakistan dominated the digital arena. So, Arab leader are impressed by her disciplined conduct and mastery of digital warfare.

- 2- The blackout in Delhi influence the psychological state of India as their command system had been disabled by Pakistan. It included blinding of satellite networks, silencing of air defence radars and disrupting encrypted communications.
- 3- If Pakistan had not launched digital warfare after the missile retaliation, the war remained at conventional grounds which caused more destruction. Pakistan used digital warfare and targeted command system of India. It eliminated the chances of nuclear warfare.
- 4- Traditional military forces revolves around use of more destructive weapons such as tanks and artillery. Simultaneously, cyber warfare is a sophisticated way and as technological disruption weakens enemy psychologically.
- 5- The meaning of power has been changed in 21st century. Previously, power was associated with dangerous weapons. Meanwhile, the event of 10th May 2023 shifted the 'power' from plains and skies to hidden theatre of codes and signals, a digital war.