Defence & Security · GS - III

Analyse the institutional and operational changes introduced in India's internal security architecture after the 26/11 Mumbai attacks. How far have these reforms addressed the vulnerabilities exposed by the attacks?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 26/11/2026	GS - III	Defence & Security

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

26/11 attacks, NIA, NSG regional hubs, coastal security, intelligence coordination, inter-agency cooperation, counter-terrorism preparedness

Model Answer

26/11 as a security turning point

The November 2008 Mumbai attacks exposed serious gaps in India's coastal surveillance, intelligence sharing, inter-agency coordination and rapid counter-terrorism response. The attacks demonstrated that isolated institutional capabilities were insufficient against coordinated, multi-location terrorist operations.

Major institutional and operational reforms

1. **National Investigation Agency:** Established under the NIA Act, 2008, the agency created a specialised national-level mechanism for investigating scheduled offences, including terrorism-related crimes.

2. **NSG regional hubs:** Regional hubs were established in Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad and Kolkata to improve the speed of specialised counter-terrorism responses.

3. **Coastal security:** The government strengthened coastal surveillance through coastal police stations, radar networks, vessel monitoring and coordination between the Navy, Coast Guard and marine police.

4. **Intelligence coordination:** The Multi Agency Centre and Subsidiary Multi Agency Centres were strengthened to facilitate intelligence sharing between central and state agencies.

5. **Maritime awareness:** Greater emphasis was placed on coastal mapping, vessel identification, fishermen's participation and monitoring of suspicious maritime activity.

Remaining vulnerabilities

Despite these reforms, challenges persist in intelligence assessment, information-sharing at the operational level, uneven state police capabilities and coordination across multiple security agencies. Maritime surveillance also requires continuous technological modernisation and effective human intelligence.

Strengthening the security framework

India needs regular joint exercises, interoperable communication systems, specialised police training, stronger cyber-intelligence capabilities and clearly defined accountability mechanisms. Coastal communities should remain active partners in maritime security.

Conclusion: Post-26/11 reforms significantly strengthened India's counter-terrorism institutions and maritime preparedness. However, security effectiveness depends on continuous coordination, institutional learning and the ability to adapt to evolving threats.

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