

GOVERNANCE**Initiatives on 75th Independence Day**

Commemorating the 75th Independence Day, Prime Minister announced a slew of measures/initiatives and called for making the next 25 years a glorious one for India. A day before Independence day, the Prime minister also declared 14th August would now be observed as Partition Horrors Remembrance Day.

Key Points**Gati Shakti Master Plan:**

- It is a Rs.100 lakh-crore project for developing ‘holistic infrastructure’.
- It will help raise the global profile of local manufacturers and help them compete with their counterparts worldwide. It also raises possibilities of new future economic zones.
- It will be a source of employment opportunities for the youth in future.

National Hydrogen Mission:

- The National Hydrogen Mission and the green hydrogen sector will give India a quantum jump in meeting its climate targets. Green hydrogen is produced by splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen using an electrolyzer powered by electricity from renewable energy sources such as wind and solar.
- It will also help India to become energy independent. Today India spends over Rs 12 lakh crore on importing energy.

Rice Fortification Plan:

- The rice distributed under various government schemes will be fortified by 2024. It includes the Public Distribution System (PDS), Mid-Day Meals in schools and Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS).
- It is a significant initiative as the country has high levels of malnutrition among women and children.
- 1. According to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, every second woman in the country is anaemic and every third child is stunted.
- 2. India ranks 94 out of 107 countries and is in the ‘serious hunger’ category on the Global Hunger Index (GHI).
- Six states, including Maharashtra and Gujarat, have started distributing fortified rice as part of the pilot scheme. Food fortification or enrichment is the process of adding micronutrients to food.

Vande Bharat Trains:

- 75 Vande Bharat’ trains will connect different parts of the country in 75 weeks to mark the ongoing ‘Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav’.
- Vande Bharat, the indigenous semi-high speed train set, is being given a boost, with the Railways gearing to roll out at least 10 of them, linking around 40 cities, by August 2022 to commemorate 75 years of Independence.

Sainik Schools for Girls:

- All Sainik Schools in the country will now be open for girls also. At present, 33 Sainik schools are operating in the country.
- Sainik schools are run by the Sainik Schools Society which is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Defence.
- The aim of establishing Sainik schools was to prepare the students from an early age for their entry into the Indian armed forces.

E-commerce platform for Self-Help Groups:

- This digital platform will connect the products of women Self-Help Groups with people in far flung areas of the country as well as abroad and it will have far-reaching consequences.
- The government will create an e-commerce platform to ensure a huge market in the country and abroad for their products. More than eight crore women in the villages are associated with Self-Help Groups and they design top-end products.

Partition Horrors Remembrance Day:

- 14th August would now be observed as Partition Horrors Remembrance Day.
- This day will remind Indians of the need to remove the poison of social divisions, disharmony and further strengthen the spirit of oneness, social harmony and human empowerment.

India's Flag Code Rules

On 15th August, 2021, India celebrated its 75th Independence Day, and like every year the Prime Minister of India hoisted the National Flag at the Red Fort to commemorate the day.

Key Points**History of Adopting India's Flag:**

- **1906:** The first national flag, which consisted of three horizontal stripes of red, yellow and green, is said to have been hoisted on 7th August, 1906, at the Parsee Bagan Square, near Lower Circular Road, in Calcutta (now Kolkata).
- **1921:** Later, in 1921, freedom fighter Pingali Venkayya met Mahatma Gandhi and proposed a basic design of the flag, consisting of two red and green bands.

1931: After undergoing several changes, the Tricolour was adopted as our national flag at a Congress Committee meeting in Karachi in 1931.

1947: The Indian flag was adopted in its present form during a meeting of the Constituent Assembly held on 22nd July, 1947.

Rules Governing the Tricolour:

- **The Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950:** It restricts the use of the national flag, the coat-of-arms used by a government department, the official seal of the President or Governor, the pictorial representation of Mahatma Gandhi and the Prime Minister, and the Ashoka Chakra.
- **The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971:**
 1. It prohibits the desecration of or insult to the country's national symbols, including the national flag, the Constitution, the national anthem and the Indian map.
 2. A person who is convicted for the following offences under the Act is disqualified to contest in the elections to the Parliament and state legislature for 6 years.
 - ✓ Offence of insulting the National Flag,
 - ✓ Offence of insulting the Constitution of India,
 - ✓ Offence of preventing the singing of the National Anthem.
- **The Flag Code of India, 2002:**
 1. It allowed the unrestricted display of the Tricolour as long as the honour and dignity of the flag were being respected.
 2. The flag code did not replace the pre-existing rules governing the correct display of the flag. It was, however, an effort to bring together all the previous laws, conventions and practices.
 3. It is divided into three parts — a general description of the tricolour, rules on display of the flag by public and private bodies and educational institutions, and rules for display of the flag by governments and government bodies.
 4. It mentions that the tricolour cannot be used for commercial purposes, and cannot be dipped in salute to any person or thing.
 5. Moreover, the flag should not be used as a festoon, or for any kind of decoration purposes.
 6. For official display, only flags that conform to the specifications as laid down by the Bureau of Indian Standards and bearing their mark can be used.
- **Part IV-A of the Constitution:**
 1. The Part IV-A of the Constitution (which consists of only one Article 51-A) specifies the eleven Fundamental Duties.
 2. According to Article 51A (a), it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem.

SOCIAL ISSUE**SAMVAD Initiative**

Recently, the Ministry of Women and Child Development has launched the 2nd phase of the SAMVAD programme. The second phase was launched on the completion of one year of programme. The programme is aimed at mental health outreach for children who are abandoned and orphaned, child survivors of trafficking, or in conflict with law. Earlier, the government had announced a special "PM-CARES for Children" scheme for all those orphaned due to Covid-19.

Key Points

- **Stands for:** Support, Advocacy & Mental health interventions for children in Vulnerable circumstances and Distress (SAMVAD).
- **Funded By:** The initiative is funded by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

- **Implementing Body:** It is led by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS).
- 1. The NIMHANS is the apex centre of mental health and neuroscience education. It operates autonomously under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- 2. Recently, on the request of the Ministry of Home Affairs, NIMHANS, issued a set of guidelines on the management of mental health issues of the prisoners and prison staff.

Purpose:

- It is a national initiative and integrated resource that works in child protection, mental health and psychosocial care of children in difficult circumstances.
- It encompasses a specialized training curriculum on childhood trauma, interventions for children in conflict with the law, forensics in child and adolescent psychiatry and mental health.
- Education and mental health support to children with special needs, protection and care in the context of adoption.
- The initiative is providing coping mechanisms for children in distress by training close to 1 lakh stakeholders comprising Child Protection Functionaries, tele-counsellors, educators, law professionals among others.

Integration with Local Bodies: The initiative aims to foster care and integration of child protection and mental health in the Panchayati Raj systems in aspirational districts across the country to facilitate awareness generation and improve service delivery at the grassroots level.

Mental Health**About:**

- According to the WHO, mental health is 'a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.'
- Like Physical health, Mental health is also important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Scenario in India:

- A report published in The Lancet Psychiatry in February 2020 indicates that in 2017, there were 197.3 million people with mental disorders in India.
- The top mental illnesses were depressive disorder (45.7 million) and anxiety disorder (44.9 million).
- The contribution of mental disorders to the total disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) in India increased from 2.5% in 1990 to 4.7% in 2017.

Steps Taken by the Government:

- **National Mental Health Program (NMHP):** To address the huge burden of mental disorders and shortage of qualified professionals in the field of mental health, the government has been implementing the National Mental Health Program (NMHP) since 1982. The Program was re-strategized in 2003 to include two schemes, viz. Modernization of State Mental Hospitals and Up-gradation of Psychiatric Wings of Medical Colleges/General Hospitals.
- **Mental HealthCare Act 2017:** It guarantees every affected person access to mental healthcare and treatment from services run or funded by the government.
 1. It has significantly reduced the scope for the use of Section 309 IPC and made the attempt to commit suicide punishable only as an exception.
 2. The Mental Health Care Act (MHCA) 2017 came into force in 2018 to meet the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which India ratified in 2007.

Other Initiatives:

- **KIRAN:** The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has launched a 24/7 toll-free helpline to provide support to people facing anxiety, stress, depression, suicidal thoughts and other mental health concerns.
- **Manodarpan Initiative:** It is an initiative of the Ministry of Education under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. It is aimed to provide psychosocial support to students, family members and teachers for their mental health and well-being during the times of Covid-19.

INTERNATIONAL RELATION**Atmanirbhar Narishakti Se Samvad**

Recently, India organized the IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) Tourism Ministers' virtual meeting. India is the current IBSA Chair.

Key Points**About:**

- The IBSA is a trilateral, developmental initiative between India, Brazil and South Africa to promote South-South cooperation and exchange.
- The idea of South-South Cooperation (SSC) is not new. Its genesis can be traced back to the decades of efforts by countries and groupings working together to ensure South-South solidarity such as Bandung conference 1955, Non-Aligned Movement 1961, G77 grouping, UNCTAD, the Buenos Aires Plan of Action 1978, and the 2009 Nairobi declaration.

Formation: The grouping was formalized and named the IBSA Dialogue Forum when the Foreign Ministers of the three countries met in Brasilia (Brazil) on 6th June 2003 and issued the Brasilia Declaration.

Headquarters:

- IBSA does not have a headquarters or a permanent executive secretariat.
- At the highest level, it counts on the Summits of Heads of State and Government. So far Five IBSA Leadership Summits have been held. The 5th IBSA Summit was held in Pretoria (South Africa) in 2011. The 6th IBSA Summit is to be hosted by India.

Joint Naval Exercise:

- IBSAMAR (IBSA Maritime Exercise) is an important part of IBSA trilateral defence cooperation.
- Six editions of IBSAMAR have been held so far, the latest one being off the coast of South Africa in October, 2018.

IBSA Fund:

- Established in 2004, IBSA Fund (India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation) is a unique Fund through which development projects are executed with IBSA funding in fellow developing countries.
- The fund is managed by the United Nations (UN) Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC). Each IBSA member country is required to contribute \$1 million per annum to the fund.

Objectives:

1. To alleviate poverty and hunger in nations of the South;
2. To develop best practices in the fight against poverty and hunger by facilitating the execution of replicable and scalable projects in interested countries of the global south;
3. To pioneer and lead by example the South-South cooperation agenda;
4. To build new partnerships for development.

IBSA Fellowship Programme:

It focuses on multilateral institutional frameworks to coordinate, support and enable sustainable development globally; joint research for cooperation and exchange of information in the fields of macro-economy, trade and development; and any other area as may be found of interest within the IBSA framework.

Performance So Far:

- **Relevance in the wake of the emergence of BRICS:**
1. The grouping faces a fundamental challenge to maintain its relevance in the wake of the emergence of similar groupings such as BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).
 2. IBSA has been unable, until now, to hold its sixth summit.

Execution of Human Development Projects:

1. Over the years, the fund has contributed \$39 million and partnered in 19 countries from global South to implement 26 projects.
2. Projects have been funded in countries such as Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, Cape Verde, Burundi, Cambodia, Haiti, Palestine, Vietnam and others.
3. The fund has also been recognised for its good work in the field and has received UN South-South Partnership award 2006, UN MDG (Millennium Development Goals) award 2010, and the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Champions award in 2012.

Opportunities:

- **In the Emergence of BRICS:**
- 1. Working collectively towards ensuring the MERCOSUR -SACU-India Trilateral PTA (Preferential trade Agreement) first, and eventually a Free Trade Area (FTA), will go a long way in ensuring the grouping's relevance. (MERCOSUR for Brazil & SACU for South Africa).
- ✓ The Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR for its Spanish initials) is a regional integration process, initially established by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, and subsequently joined by Venezuela and Bolivia.
- ✓ The Southern African Customs Union (SACU) consists of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Swaziland. The SACU Secretariat is located in Namibia. SACU was established in 1910, making it the world's oldest Customs Union.
- The grouping must work together as a joint lobby in other groupings of which they are members of, such as BRICS and G20.
- **Reforming Multilateral Institutions:** Reforming institutions such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), IMF etc. is a necessary prerequisite to forge consensus behind the principle of economic development among developing countries. India, Brazil and South Africa have serious aspirations to become permanent members of UNSC.

Way Forward

- The forum continues to be a motor for global institutional reforms in the future, striving collectively to establish a rules-based and transparent international trading and finance system.
- By offering a new partnership based model for development cooperation, the forum has taken a giant step towards accelerating the development agenda of the global South.
- The 'people centric' approach is what defines and sets South-South cooperation apart from other partnership models. This particular focus on people-centric social policies is what will help in accelerating the restructuring of international financial architecture and reforming institutions of global governance.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

GSLV-F10 Failure: ISRO's EOS-03 Satellite Mission

Recently, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) suffered the loss of an important earth observation satellite (EOS-03) during launch when the GSLV rocket carrying it malfunctioned about five minutes from the lift-off.

Earth Observation Satellites

- Earth observation satellites are the satellites equipped with remote sensing technology. Earth observation is the gathering of information about Earth's physical, chemical and biological systems.
- Many earth observation satellites have been employed on sun-synchronous orbit.
- Other earth observation satellites launched by ISRO include RESOURCESAT- 2, 2A, CARTOSAT-1, 2, 2A, 2B, RISAT-1 and 2, OCEANSAT-2, Megha-Tropiques, SARAL and SCATSAT-1, INSAT-3DR, 3D, etc.

Key Points

About the EOS-03:

- It was capable of imaging the entire country four to five times every day.
- It was riding on a GSLV rocket (GSLV-F10), which has a new payload carrier designed to significantly reduce aerodynamic drag and thus carry larger payloads.
- The rocket was supposed to deposit the satellite in the geostationary transfer orbit, from where the satellite's onboard propulsion system will guide it to a geostationary orbit, 36,000 km from earth's surface.
- 2. Geostationary transfer orbit is a circular orbit positioned approximately 35,900 km above Earth's equator and having a period of the same duration and direction as the rotation of the Earth.
- 3. An object in this orbit will appear stationary relative to the rotating Earth.

Significance:

- EOS-03, part of the new generation of earth-observation satellites, was meant to provide almost real-time images of large parts of the country. The images could be used for monitoring natural disasters like floods and cyclones, water bodies, crops, vegetation and forest cover.
- EOS-03 was being sent ahead of EOS-02 which has been delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

1. EOS-02 was supposed to be launched around March-April this year, but now has been rescheduled for September-October.
2. EOS-02 was supposed to ride on ISRO's new SSLV (Small Satellite Launch Vehicle) rocket.
3. SSLVs will broaden ISRO's current rocket range that comprises PSLVs and GSLVs, and cater to the increasing demand for launching of small commercial satellites.

EOS-01:

- In November 2020, ISRO had launched EOS-01, the first in the series of new earth observation satellites that bear a new generic naming system. It was launched by Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), the third generation launch vehicle of India.
- It is intended for applications in agriculture, forestry and disaster management support.

Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV)

- GSLV is a space launch vehicle designed, developed, and operated by the ISRO to launch satellites and other space objects into Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit. Geosynchronous satellites are launched into orbit in the same direction the Earth is spinning and can have any inclination.
- GSLV has the capability to put a heavier payload in orbit than the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).
- It is a three-stage launcher with strap-on motors.

Failure of the GSLV-F10**Reasons:**

- Liquid fuel strap-on boosters start the launch of the satellite by providing the extra thrust needed to lift the rocket off the ground.
- Then, follows a solid fuel first stage with another liquid fuel stage coming next. These two stages operated as expected.
- It was the rocket's crucial third stage, which uses an indigenously-made Cryogenic Upper Stage (CUS) which then failed to ignite. The cryogenic stage is "technically a very complex system compared to solid or earth-storable liquid propellant stages due to its use of propellants at extremely low temperatures and the associated thermal and structural problems".

Impacts on the Future Missions:

- This was the second launch ISRO had lined up for 2021, which had suffered multiple delays after being originally scheduled for March 2020. Its successful mission was in February, which was Brazil's earth observation satellite Amazonia-1 and 18 co-passenger satellites.
- The failure breaks a series of 16 consecutive successful launches by ISRO since 2017.
- Satellites had been planned for 2020-21, including OCEANSAT-3, GISAT-2, RISAT-2A, etc. with these missions set to cost an estimated Rs 701.5 crore.
- Missions like Gaganyaan and Chandrayaan-3 will be launched on GSLV Mk-III, a more advanced version of the GSLV rocket that is designed to carry much heavier payloads into space.
- It is a big cause of worry for the NISAR mission, a first-of-its-kind collaboration between NASA and ISRO for a joint earth-observation satellite. NISAR, which will use two synthetic aperture radars (SAR) to monitor the entire Earth in a 12-day cycle, is the most important mission as yet involving the GSLV Mk-II rocket.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM**Parsi New Year: Navroz**

Navroz festival is being celebrated in India on 16th August in India. Across the world, Navroz is celebrated at the time of the vernal equinox (marking the start of spring) in the Northern Hemisphere.

Key Points**About:**

- Navroz is also known as Parsi New Year.
- In Persian, 'Nav' stands for new, and 'Roz' stands for the day, which literally translates to 'new day'.
- Though celebrated in March globally, Navroz arrives 200 days later in India and is celebrated in the month of August as the Parsis here follow the Shahenshahi calendar that doesn't account for leap years. In India, Navroz is also known as Jamshed-i-Navroz, after the Persian King, Jamshed. The king Jamshed is credited with having created the Shahenshahi calendar.

- Interestingly in India, people celebrate it twice a year - first according to the Iranian calendar and the second according to the Shahenshahi calendar which is followed by people here and in Pakistan. The festival falls between July and August.
- The tradition is observed by Iranians and Zoroastrian around the world.
- Navroj was inscribed in the list of UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity of India in 2009. This coveted list is made up of those intangible heritage elements that help demonstrate diversity of cultural heritage and raise awareness about its importance.

Zoroastrianism:

- Zoroastrianism, one of the earliest known monotheistic faiths, is practised by Parsis.
- It was created over 3,500 years ago in ancient Iran by Prophet Zarathustra.
- It was the official religion of Persia (now Iran) from 650 BCE until the emergence of Islam in the 7th century, and it was one of the most important faiths in the ancient world for over 1000 years.
- When the Islamic troops invaded Persia, numerous Zoroastrians fled to India (Gujarat) and Pakistan.
- The Parsis ('Parsi' is Gujarati for Persian) are the largest single group in India, with an estimated 2.6 million Zoroastrians worldwide.
- Zoroastrians (Parsis) are one of the notified minority communities.

Traditional New Year Festivals in India

- **Chaitra Shukla Pratipada**
 1. It marks the beginning of the new year of the Vikram Samvat also known as the Vedic (Hindu) calendar.
 2. Vikram Samvat is based on the day when the emperor Vikramaditya defeated Sakas, invaded Ujjain and called for a new era.
- **Gudi Padwa and Ugadi**
 1. Celebrated in the month of Chaitra Shukla Pratipada as per the Hindu Lunar Calendar.
 2. Deccan region including Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.
- **Navreh**: It is the lunar New Year that is celebrated in Kashmir. It falls on the very first day of the Chaitra Navratras.
- **Sajibu Cheiraoba**: It is celebrated by Meiteis (an ethnic group in Manipur) which is observed on the first day of Manipur lunar month Shajibu, which falls in the month of April every year.
- **Cheti Chand**
 1. It is celebrated by Sindhi community. Chaitra month is called 'Chet' in Sindhi.
 2. The day commemorates the birth anniversary of Ishta Deva Uderolal/Jhulelal, the patron saint of Sindhis.
- **Bihu**
 1. It is celebrated three times a year.
 2. Rongali or Bohag Bihu is observed in April. Kongali or Kati Bihu observed in October and Bhogali or Magh Bihu observed in January.
 3. Rongali or Bohag Bihu is the Assamese new year and spring festival.
 4. The Rongali Bihu coincides with Sikh New Year- Baisakhi.
- **Baisakhi**
 1. It is celebrated as the Indian thanksgiving day by farmers.
 2. It also has religious significance for the Sikhs community as the foundation of the Khalsa Panth was laid on this day by Guru Gobind Singh.
- **Losoong**
 1. Losoong also known as Namsoong is the Sikkimese New Year.
 2. It is usually the time when the farmers rejoice and celebrate their harvest.
 3. It is mostly celebrated in the month of December every year with traditional gaiety and colour both by the Lepchas and Bhutias.

Al-Mohed Al-Hindi Exercise: India-Saudi Arabia

Recently, India and Saudi Arabia started their first-ever Naval joint exercise called the Al-Mohed Al-Hindi Exercise. The decision on this Bilateral exercise was taken in the Riyadh Summit held in 2019.

Key Points**About:**

- Indian Naval Ship (INS) Kochi is participating in the exercise. The exercise comprises several coastal and sea-based exercises between the two navies.
- 1. INS Kochi is the second ship of Kolkata-class stealth guided-missile destroyers, which was built by the Indian Navy under the code name Project 15A.
- 2. This ship is termed as a ‘Network of Networks’ since it is equipped with sophisticated digital networks, an array of state-of-art weapons and sensors that can neutralise any maritime threat.

Aim: To carry out tactical manoeuvres, search and rescue operations, and an electronic warfare drill to enhance interoperability.

Significance:

- It reflects the growing defense ties between the two countries in the midst of rapidly changing developments in the Gulf region.
- It will enhance bilateral cooperation and security in the Indian ocean Region.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. The success of Act East policy lies in peace and trust between neighbourhood states. Analyse in the context of recent border disputes between different northeastern states. (250 words)

Ans:**Introduction**

- India's Act East Policy focusses on the extended neighbourhood in the Asia-Pacific region. The policy which was originally conceived as an economic initiative, has gained political, strategic and cultural dimensions including establishment of institutional mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation.
- The Objective of “Act East Policy” is to promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop strategic relationship with countries in the Asia-Pacific region through continuous engagement at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels thereby providing enhanced connectivity to the States of North Eastern Region including Arunachala Pradesh with other countries in our neighbourhood. The North East of India has been a priority in our Act East Policy (AEP).

Body**Inter-state disputes and implications on Act-East policy:**

- The North-eastern region remains one of the most fragile regions of the country.
- All the aspects of national security, i.e., insurgency, drug trafficking, terrorism, and many more, is found in the north-eastern state. In a region like such, land boundary dispute among the state is the least one can think of.
- The violent clashes on the Assam-Mizoram border in Lailapur recently are a result of the continuing confrontation between the two states.
- There is a 164.6-km inter-state border that separates Assam and Mizoram, with the three Assam districts of Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj sharing a border with Kolasib, Mamit and Aizawl districts of Mizoram.
- Further, the boundary between Mizoram and Assam follows naturally occurring barriers of hills, valleys, rivers and forests, and both sides have attributed border skirmishes to perceptual differences over an imaginary line.
- Following the various policy initiatives by both the state and central government over the subsequent year, the situation and ground reality of the region has changed a lot.
- The northeastern state remains at the fulcrum of India's ‘Act East Policy,’ aiming to connect India to the Southeast Asian countries, reaching up to ASEAN.

Other Challenges for India's Act East policy

- Incidents such as the recent violence between Assam and Mizoram provides a fertile breeding ground for Extremists and other non-state actors to perpetrate violence.
- Three developments over the past five years are, however, testing Indian diplomacy in the region.
 1. First, the rising profile of China combined with growing China-India tensions.
 2. Second, disappointment in the region with India's economic under-performance.
 3. Third, rising concern in the region with India's approach towards its minorities, especially Muslims and Christians.
- There is also the fact that India did not join RCEP Free trade agreement.

- Taken together, all these developments weakened the business-to-business (B2B) and people-to-people (P2P) connect between India and ASEAN despite the best efforts of hard-pressed diplomats to maintain good government-to-government (G2G) relations.
- While a lot of foreign policy analysis focuses on G2G relations and official policy statements, and a lot of this can be cited to claim that all is well with India-ASEAN relations, few are paying attention to how trends in civil society and domestic politics are being shaped.
- The bottom line is that despite the best intentions of an Act East Policy, India's standing and image in Southeast Asia have suffered.

Measures for conflict resolution on boundary:**• Proper Demarcation of Borders:**

1. There is a need for a legitimate 'Centre led' initiative to resolve the border issues.
2. The Centre can decide to maintain the status quo in the region or find a 'common rationale' to demarcate the border.

• People to People Engagement:

1. All ethnic majority and minority tribes residing in the region, must be respected and developed.
2. The concept of a 'shared' North East Identity could bring the people together. Education can be an effective tool to facilitate people-to-people connect.

• Involvement of the Supreme Court:

1. The active involvement of the Supreme Court in matters pertaining to legal issues could fast-track the decision-making process and thereafter the implementation process.
2. Establishment of a 'court monitored boundary commission' to look into the demands of all the conflicting parties involved, and thereafter, suggest a solution, is essential.

• Political Solution:

1. With the NDA in power in all these states and at the centre, a political solution to these vexed boundary disputes seems relatively easy to push through.
2. The presence of common leadership in most states can lead to an agreement on border issues as well as the presence of the centre leadership would lead to faster implementation of the solution in the region.

• The Act East Factor:

1. Maintaining a peaceful North East is vital for India's 'Act East Policy' as the NorthEast Region is the doorway to the ASEAN regions.
2. All the states gain by being connected to one another and for this peaceful border to ensure 'free' movement of people and trade are essential.

Conclusion

The speedy resolution of border disputes is necessary, given that the central government has invested heavily in the region over the last decade. The resolution of these border disputes will improve the overall connectivity, employment opportunity, livelihood, and make the northeastern state the doorway to southeast Asia, and enhance the scope of India's 'Act East Policy'. However, if the focus remains on maintaining the status quo, the time is not far that these border disputes will turn into major internal security threats for India.

DAILY QUIZ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. An amendment of the Constitution can be initiated only by the introduction of a bill in either House of Parliament.
2. In case of any disagreement between the two Houses of Parliament on a Constitution Amendment Bill, there is a provision to summon a joint session of parliament.

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q2. Consider the following statements about the Mid-Day meal scheme:

1. The scheme guarantees one meal to all children in government and aided schools and madarsas supported under the Right to Information Act 2005.
2. The Scheme comes under the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD).

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. **Neither 1 nor 2**

Q3. Consider the following statements:

- 1. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) is a scheme of the Ministry of Rural Development for providing LPG connections to Rural Masses.
- 2. PMUY 2.0 is only for females who belong below the poverty line.

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. **2 only**
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q4. The phrase ‘One Country Two Systems’ approach is sometimes mentioned in the news in the context of the affairs of

- a. Afghanistan
- b. Israel
- c. **China**
- d. United Kingdom

Q5. Recently, which of the following nation has granted a patent to an ‘artificial intelligence system’ relating to a “food container based on fractal geometry” innovation?

- a. South Korea
- b. Singapore
- c. China
- d. **South Africa**



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