

INDIAN SECURITY**New Army Aviation Brigade: LAC**

Recently, India raised a new army aviation brigade in the eastern sector of Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Arunachal Pradesh sector. Also, China's legislature has adopted a new border law that calls on the state and military to safeguard territory and "combat any acts" that undermine China's territorial claims.

The LAC is the demarcation that separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory. The recent stand-off at Ladakh's Galwan Valley has escalated due to the infrastructure projects that India has undertaken in recent years.

Key Points**About:**

- The new army aviation brigade was raised in March 2021 at Missamari air base, close to Tezpur, Assam and has capabilities such as Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH), US' Cheetah helicopters and Israel's Heron drones.
- While the function of the new brigade is largely for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) activities of the Army, it has the capability to support the Army for other objectives as well on the LAC.

Line of Actual Control (LAC):

- Demarcation Line: Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh and the Union Territory of Ladakh share a border with China.
- Sectors: The LAC is generally divided into three sectors namely: Western sector, Middle sector, and Eastern sector.
 - ❖ **Eastern Sector:** In this sector, India shares a 1346 km long boundary with China.
 1. It spans Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.
 2. The alignment of the LAC in the eastern sector is along the 1914 McMahon Line.
 3. China considers the McMahon Line illegal and unacceptable claiming that Tibetan representatives who had signed the 1914 Convention held in Shimla which delineated the McMahon line on the map were not having rights to do so.
 4. China claims the entire Arunachal Pradesh as South Tibet.
 - ❖ **Middle Sector:**
 1. In this sector, India shares about a 545 km long boundary with China which runs along the watershed from Ladakh to Nepal.
 2. Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand touch this border with Tibet (China) in this sector. Both sides do not have much disagreement over the border in this area.
 - ❖ **Western Sector:**
 1. India shares about 1597 km of border with China. It is between the Union Territory of Ladakh (erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir) and Xinjiang Province of China.
 2. In this sector, there is a territorial dispute over Aksai Chin. India claims it as part of erstwhile Kashmir, while China claims it is part of Xinjiang.
 3. The boundary dispute in the Western Sector pertains to the Johnson Line proposed by the British in the 1860s that extended up to the Kunlun Mountains and put Aksai Chin in the then princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. Independent India used the Johnson Line and claimed Aksai Chin as its own.
 4. Eleven of the 23 contested areas on the LAC are identified in Ladakh under the western sector, four in the middle sector and eight in the eastern sector. 23 contested areas were identified by the government through various mechanisms since India first accepted the concept of LAC in 1993.

POLITY**All India Judicial Service**

The central government is preparing to give a fresh push to the establishment of an All India Judicial Service (AIJS) on the lines of the central civil services.

Key Points**About:**

- The AIJS is a reform push to centralise the recruitment of judges at the level of additional district judges and district judges for all states.

- In the same way that the Union Public Service Commission conducts a central recruitment process and assigns successful candidates to cadres, judges of the lower judiciary are proposed to be recruited centrally and assigned to states.

Previous Proposals:

- The AIJS was first proposed by the 14th report of the Law Commission in 1958. A statutory or constitutional body such as the UPSC to conduct a standard, centralised exam to recruit and train judges was discussed.
- The idea was proposed again in the Law Commission Report of 1978, which discussed delays and arrears of cases in the lower courts.
- In 2006, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice in its 15th Report backed the idea of a pan-Indian judicial service, and also prepared a draft Bill.

Supreme Court's Stand:

- In 1992, the Supreme Court (SC) in All India Judges' Association v. The Union of India directed the Centre to set up an AIJS.
- In a 1993 review of the judgment, however, the court left the Centre at liberty to take the initiative on the issue.
- In 2017, the SC took suo motu cognizance of the issue of appointment of district judges, and mooted a Central Selection Mechanism.
 1. Senior advocate Arvind Datar, who was appointed amicus curiae (friend of the court) by the court, circulated a concept note to all states in which he recommended conducting a common examination instead of separate state exams.
 2. Based on the merit list, High Courts would then hold interviews and appoint judges. Datar submitted that this would not change the constitutional framework or take away the powers of the states or High Courts.

Benefits of AIJS:

- **Efficient Judiciary:** It will ensure an efficient subordinate judiciary, to address structural issues such as varying pay and remuneration across states, to fill vacancies faster, and to ensure standard training across states.
- **Ease of Doing Business:** The government has targeted the reform of lower judiciary in its effort to improve India's Ease of Doing Business ranking, as efficient dispute resolution is one of the key indices in determining the rank.
- **Addressing Judges To Population Ratio:** A Law Commission report (1987) recommended that India should have 50 judges per million population as against 10.50 judges (then). Now, the figure has crossed 20 judges in terms of the sanctioned strength, but it's nothing compared to the US or the UK — 107 and 51 judges per million people, respectively.
- **Higher Representation of Marginalised Sections of Society:** According to the Government, the AIJS to be an ideal solution for equal representation of the marginalised and deprived sections of society.
- **Attracting Talent Pool:** The government believes that if such a service comes up, it would help create a pool of talented people who could later become a part of the higher judiciary
- **Bottoms-Up Approach:** The bottoms-up approach in the recruitment would also address issues like corruption and nepotism in the lower judiciary.

Criticism:

- **Encroaching States Power:** A centralised recruitment process is seen as an affront to federalism and an encroachment on the powers of states granted by the Constitution.
- **Won't Address Unique Issues:** This is the main contention of several states, which have also argued that central recruitment would not be able to address the unique concerns that individual states may have.
 1. Language and representation, for example, are key concerns highlighted by states.
 2. Judicial business is conducted in regional languages, which could be affected by central recruitment.
- **Not Good For Local Reservation:** Also, reservations based on caste, and even for rural candidates or linguistic minorities in the state, could be diluted in a central test.
- **Against Separation of Powers:** The opposition is also based on the constitutional concept of the separation of powers. A central test could give the executive a foot in the door for the appointment of district judges, and dilute the say that High Courts have in the process.

- **Wont Address Structural Issues:** The creation of AIJS will not address the structural issues plaguing the lower judiciary.
- 1. The issue of different scales of pay and remuneration has been addressed by the SC in the 1993 All India Judges Association case by bringing in uniformity across states.
- 2. Experts argue that increasing pay across the board and ensuring that a fraction of High Court judges are picked from the lower judiciary, may help better than a central exam to attract quality talent.

Way Forward

- The insurmountable number of pending cases calls for establishment of a recruitment system that recruits efficient judges in large numbers for speedy dispensation of cases.
- However, before AIJS gets into the legislative framework, there is a need to build consensus and take a decisive step towards the AIJS.

INTERNATIONAL RELATION**16th East Asia Summit**

Recently, the Prime Minister attended the 16th East Asia Summit (EAS).The 16th EAS discussed important regional and international issues including Indo-Pacific, South China Sea, UNCLOS, terrorism, and situation in Korean Peninsula and Myanmar.

Key Points**Indo-Pacific:**

- Reaffirmed India's focus on a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific and the principle of "ASEAN Centrality" in the region.Highlighted the synergies between ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific (AOIP) and India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).

Resilient Global Value Chain:

- Emphasised the importance of a resilient global value chain and reiterated India's commitment to providing Quad-sponsored vaccines to Indo-Pacific countries.Quad countries (India, Japan, Australia and US) are on track to help produce at least 1 billion vaccine doses in India to boost the global supply by the end of 2022.
- Recalled India's support of USD1 million to the ASEAN Covid-19 Recovery Fund.

Multilateralism:

- India remained committed to strengthening respect for shared values of multilateralism, rules-based international order, international law and sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations.

Cyber Security:

- The idea of developing global standards on cyber security has also been raised.

Others:

- The EAS leaders adopted three statements on mental health, economic recovery through tourism, and sustainable recovery, which have been co-sponsored by India.

East Asia Summit**About:**

- Established in 2005, it is a forum of 18 regional leaders for strategic dialogue and cooperation on the key political, security, and economic challenges facing the Indo-Pacific region.
- The concept of an East Asia Grouping was first promoted in 1991 by the then Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir bin Mohamad.
- There are six priority areas of regional cooperation within the framework of the EAS.These are – Environment and Energy, Education, Finance, Global Health Issues and Pandemic Diseases, Natural Disaster Management, and ASEAN Connectivity.

Membership:

- It comprises the ten member states of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) which are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, along with 8 other countries namely Australia, China, Japan, India, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the USA.
- It is an ASEAN-centred forum so it can only be chaired by an ASEAN member.Brunei Darussalam is the chair for 2021.

EAS Meetings and Processes:

- The EAS calendar culminates in the annual Leaders' Summit, which is usually held alongside ASEAN Leaders' meetings in the fourth quarter of every year.

- Meetings of EAS Foreign Ministers and Economic Ministers are also held annually.

India and EAS:

- India is one of the founding members of the East Asia Summit.
- At the East Asia Summit in Bangkok in November 2019, India had unveiled India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), which is aimed at forging partnerships to create a secure and stable maritime domain.

BIODIVERSITY & ENVIRONMENT**New Pledges at CoP26 Summit**

Recently, leaders at the CoP26 global climate conference in Glasgow have pledged to stop deforestation by the end of the decade and slash emissions of methane to help slow climate change. Earlier, India announced that it will reach carbon neutrality by 2070 as part of a five-point action plan that included reducing emissions to 50% by 2030.

Key Points**Methane Pledge:**

- The European Union (EU) and the US have launched a landmark pledge to slash emissions of the powerful greenhouse gas methane, a commitment that could prevent 0.2 degrees Celsius of global warming.
 - The alliance's members will seek to lower global emissions of methane - the second-largest contributor to climate change after carbon dioxide - by 30% below 2020 levels by 2030.
 - Besides the EU and the US, more than 103 countries have signed up so far, including major methane emitters like Nigeria and Pakistan.
- The Global Methane Pledge (US), first announced in September 2021, now covers emissions from two-thirds of the global economy.
 - China, Russia and India - have not signed up, while Australia has said it will not back the pledge.

Methane: A Concern

- Methane is more short-lived in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide but 80 times more potent in warming the earth.
- Humanity has also boosted the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere by hacking away at the forests that absorb roughly 30% of carbon dioxide emissions, according to the nonprofit World Resources Institute.
- Human sources of methane include landfills, oil and natural gas systems, agricultural activities, coal mining, wastewater treatment, and certain industrial processes.

Deforestation Pledge:

- More than 100 national leaders pledged to halt and reverse deforestation and land degradation by the end of the decade, underpinned by USD 19 billion in public and private funds to invest in protecting and restoring forests. In 2020, the world lost 258,000 sq km of forest — an area larger than the United Kingdom, according to WRI's Global Forest Watch.
- The agreement vastly expands a commitment made by 40 countries as part of the 2014 New York Declaration of Forests, and promises more resources.

Call for Climate Finance:

- India noted that climate finance cannot continue at the levels decided in 2009 (100 billion USD), and emphasised that it should be at least USD 1 trillion to meet the goals of addressing climate change.
- India underlined the unity and strength of Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC) as fundamental in the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) negotiations. To preserve the interest of the Global South in the fight against climate change, India highlighted that recognition of the current challenges being faced by developing countries required intensified multilateral cooperation, not intensified global economic and geopolitical competition and trade wars.
- India requested the LMDC members to join hands with India to support the global initiatives it has pioneered, including the International Solar Alliance (ISA), Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT).

Infrastructure for Resilient Island States:

- India launched this initiative as a part of the CDRI that would focus on building capacity, having pilot projects, especially in small island developing states.

- Small Island Developing States or SIDS face the biggest threat from climate change, India's space agency ISRO will build a special data window for them to provide them timely information about cyclones, coral-reef monitoring, coast-line monitoring etc. through satellite.

One Sun One World One Grid Group (OSOWOG) Launched:

- It is an initiative by India and the United Kingdom to tap solar energy and have it travel seamlessly across borders.
- It includes a group of governments called the Green Grids Initiative (GGI) - One Sun One World One Grid group. The aim of GGI is to help achieve the pace and scale of reforms to infrastructure and market structures needed to underpin the global energy transition.
- It has the potential to be a modern engineering marvel, and a catalyst for greatly expanding renewable electricity generation, and effectively mitigating climate change in the next decade.
- According to the ISA's concept note on OSOWOG, the global solar grid will be implemented in three phases.
 1. In the first phase, the 'Indian Grid' will interconnect with the Middle East, South Asia and Southeast Asia grids to share solar and other renewable energy resources for meeting electricity needs, including during peak demand.
 2. It will then be interconnected with the African power pools in the second phase.
 3. The third phase would cover global interconnection of the power transmission grid to achieve the OSOWOG's vision.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM**Molnupiravir: A Drug for Covid-19**

Recently, it is claimed that Molnupiravir, an oral drug, can cut the risk of hospitalisation in Covid-19 patients by half, in phase 3 trials. In India, the Optimus Group recently announced the results of phase 3 clinical trials, which found 91.5% of patients given the drug tested RT-PCR (Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction) negative.

Key Points**Molnupiravir:**

- It belongs to a class of broad spectrum antiviral drugs called nucleoside analogues.
- 1. They act by interfering with the function of viral RNA (Ribonucleic Acids) polymerases – which are enzymes that make new viral RNA in infected cells.
- 2. RNA is a polymer of ribonucleotides and an important biological macromolecule that is present in all biological cells. It is principally involved in the synthesis of proteins, carrying the messenger instructions from Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), which itself contains the genetic instructions required for the development and maintenance of life.
- It works by causing viruses to make errors when copying their own RNA, introducing mutations that inhibit replication. It was initially invented as a drug for the influenza virus.

Mechanism:

- These drugs work by preventing the process of replication of the virus inside human cells. A virus is a biological agent that can self-replicate inside a host cell. The infected cells by viruses may produce thousands of new copies of the original virus at an extraordinary rate.
- It alters critical enzymes that were necessary to the virus for replicating in the human body cells. As of now, the Emergency Use Authorization is awaited for the drug but currently, it can be administered as a pill in a 5-day regimen.

2.National Sports Awards 2021

Recently, the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports announced the National Sports Awards 2021. The National Sports Awards of India comprise six different awards given to sportspersons of India by the Central Government.

Key Points**About:****Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award:**

- Formerly known as the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, it is the highest award bestowed to a sports person in India and was instituted in the year 1991-1992.
- It is given for the spectacular and most outstanding performance in the field of sports by a sportsperson over a period of the previous four years.
- It comprises a medallion, a certificate, and a cash prize of Rs 25 lakh.

Arjuna Award:

- It was instituted in 1961 by the Government of India to recognise outstanding achievement in national sports events.
- It is given for good performance over a period of previous four years and showing qualities of leadership, sportsmanship and a sense of discipline.
- The award carries a cash prize of Rs 15 lakh, a bronze statue of Arjuna and a scroll of honour.

Dronacharya Award:

- It was instituted in 1985 by the Government of India to recognise excellence in sports coaching.
- It is given to coaches for doing outstanding and meritorious work on a consistent basis and enabling sportspersons to excel in International events.
- It carries a cash prize of Rs 15 lakh, a bronze statue of Dronacharya and a scroll of honour.

Dhyan Chand Award:

- It was instituted in the year 2002 and comprises a Dhyan Chand statuette, a cash prize of Rs 10 lakh, a certificate and a ceremonial dress.
- It is given to honour sportspersons who have contributed to sports by their performance and continue to contribute to promotion of sports events after their retirement.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Trophy:

- It was instituted in the year 1956-1957.
- It is for university-level sports performances.
- It is given to a university for "top performance in the inter-university tournaments" over the period of the last one year.

Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar:

- It was instituted in the year 2009
- It is given to corporate entities (both in private and public sector), sports control boards, NGOs including sports bodies at the State and National level who have played a visible role in the area of sports promotion and development.

Government Initiatives for Sports Development:

1. Khelo India Scheme.
2. National Sports Development Fund.
3. The National Sports Talent Contest (NSTC) Scheme.
4. Sports Authority of India Training Centres Scheme (STC).
5. Special Area Games (SAG) Scheme.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. The developments affecting India's neighbourhood over the past decade have led India to formulate policy options to secure her national interests, keeping in view the changes occurring in her neighbourhood. Discuss. (250 words)

Ans:

Introduction

There are worrying trends in India's neighbourhood such as like the three-step Bhutan-China roadmap to resolve the bilateral border dispute, the attack on Hindu citizens in Bangladesh, the lack of clarity on Nepal relations, the continuing tentativeness to Taliban ties in Afghanistan. India's cup of woes in the immediate neighbourhood is full, if not overflowing.

Body**India and neighbourhood**

- ❖ **China:** Indo-China border has been fragile since the Galwan clashes last year and there is increasing apprehensions regarding China's motives.
- China's BRI in Nepal, Pakistan and maritime sea routes are a cause for worry due to debt-trap diplomacy and string of pearls theory.
- India's backyard is being surrounded by Chinese intrusions through our neighbours and this impacts India's security.
- ❖ **Pakistan:** Pakistan-China axis, cross border terrorism, acquisition of nuclear war heads by Pakistan are all red flags for India. Pakistan has been trying to bring issue of Kashmir in every international forum and state-sponsored terrorism in the valley is a major irritant.
- Pulwama attack and previously Uri and Pathankot incident have deteriorated the relations drastically.

- The CPEC corridor, all the way to Gwadar with China threatens India's sovereignty as it passes through Pakistan Occupied Kashmir.
- ❖ **Bangladesh:** Though ties with Bangladesh have improved with coming of Sheikh Hasina government, issues of Teesta River water sharing, alternative access to north-east and closeness of Dhaka with Beijing remain a cause for worry.
- ❖ **Afghanistan:** The Taliban takeover has created unstable environment in Afghan nation. Fragile within, a possible state collapse would spawn jihadist terrorism in all directions from which India is unlikely to remain immune.
- g. Within days of takeover, many ISIS violence and attacks have taken place in Kabul.
- ❖ **Sri Lanka:** Colombo is heavily dependent on China and has a huge debt burden it owes to China.
- The Hambantota takeover by China in Indian ocean for 99 years is a case in point. It is a major sea line of communication and is a good vantage point for China upon India.
- ❖ **Nepal:** Indo-Nepal border is virtually open and lightly policed which is exploited by terrorist outfits and insurgent groups from North Eastern part of India e.g. supply of trained cadres, fake Indian currency.
- Overtime trust deficit has widened between India-Nepal because of the Indian reputation for delaying implementation of various projects.
- The establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and China and its growing influence in Nepal has resulted in declining traditional leverage of India in Nepal.

Need for strategic approach in neighbourhood

- **Nepal:** India should provide an alternative narrative for India-Nepal ties, one that takes into account longstanding people-to-people ties and cultural connect.
- 1. India should focus on fructifying the potential of hydropower cooperation, which has remained untapped largely due to differing perceptions.
- 2. India should maintain the policy of keeping away from internal affairs of Nepal, meanwhile in the spirit of friendship India should guide the nation towards more inclusive rhetoric.
- **Sri Lanka:** India has taken many high development community projects in Sri Lanka. India has also taken non reciprocal measures such as extending lines of credit etc.
- 1. g. India housing project is Government of India's flagship project of developmental assistance to Sri Lanka. Its initial commitment is to build 50,000 houses for those affected by the civil war.
- **China:** At the ground-level, we need to visibly reinforce our positions, and move forward to the LAC all along.
- 1. We should enhance the operational-tempo of the three services as a measure of deterrence. Indian warships should show heightened presence at the Indian Ocean choke-points.
- 2. The Ministry of Defence should seize this opportunity to urgently launch some long-term "Aatmanirbharta" schemes in defence-production.
- 3. At the strategic level, the government should consider sustained process of engagement with China at the highest politico-diplomatic
- 4. The negotiations should seek multi-dimensional Sino-Indian modus-vivendi; encompassing the full gamut of bilateral issues like trade, territorial disputes, border-management and security.
- **Pakistan:** International Organizations can be used for building pressure over Pakistan for carrying out anti-terrorist activities like Pakistan's inclusion on the FATF Grey list makes it harder for its government to access international markets at a time when its economy is weakening. In order to strengthen the bilateral engagements between India and Pakistan need of the hour is to employ perfect balance of soft and hard power diplomacy coupled with international diplomacy.
- **Afghanistan:** India should consider appointing a special envoy dedicated to Afghanistan. The envoy can ensure that Indian views are expressed at every meeting, and broaden engagement with the Taliban. This does not mean India is endorsing Taliban.

Conclusion

India's immediate neighbourhood directly impacts it geopolitically, geo-strategically and geo-economically because of its vicinity. Thus, working with them is important for India to rise as a great power. Emphasis must be on sustainable and inclusive development.

DAILY QUIZ

Q1. Consider the following statements about the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme:

1. It was introduced in 2003 as a social measure that guarantees “the right to work”.
2. The Gram Sabha is the principal forum for wage seekers to raise their voices and make demands.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. Viruses, bacteria, and fungi can all cause pneumonia.
2. Antibiotics can treat many forms of pneumonia.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q3. Consider the following statements the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI):

1. It is a statutory authority established under the provisions of Information Technology Act, 2000.
2. It serves as the issuing authority for Aadhaar unique identification numbers (UIDs) and cards.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q4. In the context of the recent advances in human reproductive technology, Pronuclear transfer technology is used for:

- a. Fertilization of egg into vitro by the donor sperm
- b. Genetic modification of sperm producing cells
- c. Development of stem cells into functional embryos
- d. **Prevention of mitochondrial diseases in offspring**

Q5. With the present state of development Artificial Intelligence can effectively do which of the following?

1. Bring down electricity consumption in industrial units
2. Create meaningful short stories and songs
3. Disease diagnosis
4. Text to speech conversation
5. Wireless transmission of electrical energy

Select the correct answer using the given code below-

- a. 1, 2, 3 and 5 only
- b. 1, 3 and 4 only
- c. 2, 4 and 5 only
- d. **1, 2, 3, 4 and 5**