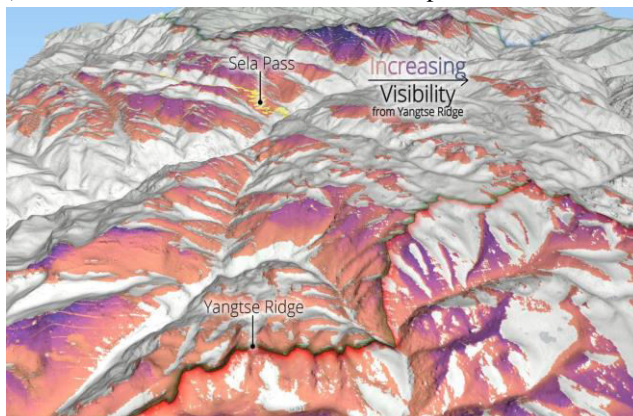


INTERNATIONAL RELATION

❖ **The escalation on the India-China border**

➤ **CONTEXT:** On December 9, 2022, Indian and Chinese troops clashed in the Yangtse area in the Tawang region along the India-China border. The confrontation in Tawang was the most serious skirmish between the two sides since the Galwan Valley clash in 2020.

- The Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) has found that the skirmish that took place in December was aided by new road infrastructure on the Chinese side, part of rapid infrastructure development by China along the border in this region allowing access to key locations on the Yangtse plateau more easily than a year ago.



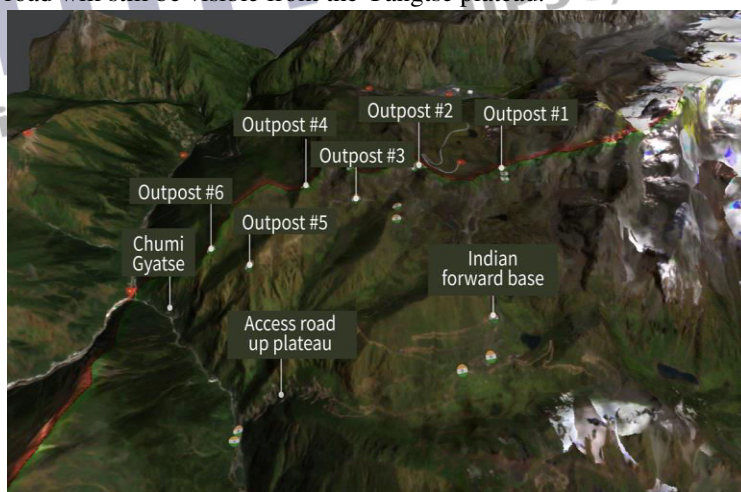
- Through satellite imagery, ASPI examines the terrain in which the clash took place along the India-China border, where tens of thousands of Indian and Chinese troops continue to be deployed.

➤ **Why Tawang?**

- Tawang is a strategically significant Indian territory wedged between China and Bhutan. The region's border with China is a part of the de facto but unsettled India-China border, known as the Line of Actual Control, or LAC. Within Tawang, the Yangtse plateau is important for both the Indian and Chinese militaries.
- With its peak at over 5,700 metres above sea level, the plateau enables visibility of much of the region.
- Crucially, India's control of the ridgeline that makes up the LAC allows it to prevent Chinese overwatch of roads leading to the Sela Pass (a critical mountain pass that provides the only access in and out of Tawang).
- India is constructing an all-weather tunnel through the pass, due to be completed in 2023. However, all traffic in and out of the region along the road will still be visible from the Yangtse plateau.

➤ **What led to December 9?**

- India's defences along the plateau consist of a network of six frontline outposts along the LAC.
- They are supplied by a forward base about 1.5 kilometres from the LAC that appears to be approximately battalion sized.
- In addition to this forward base, there are more significant basings of Indian forces in valleys below the plateau.
- Although Indian forces occupy a commanding position along the ridgeline, it is not impregnable.
- The access roads leading from the larger Indian bases are extremely steep dirt tracks.



- Satellite imagery shows that these roads are already suffering from erosion and landslides due to their steep grade, environmental conditions and relatively poor construction.
- While China's positions are lower on the plateau, it has invested more heavily than the Indian military in building new roads and other infrastructure over the past year.
- Several key access roads have been upgraded and a sealed road has been constructed that leads from Tangwu New Village to within 150 metres of the LAC ridgeline, enhancing China's ability to send People's Liberation Army troops directly to the LAC. It was the construction of this new road that enabled Chinese troops to surge upwards to Indian positions during the December 9 skirmish.

➤ **Why is there an infrastructure race?**

- The skirmish that took place between Chinese and Indian troops on December 9 on the Yangtse plateau was aided by this new infrastructure development.

- Strategically, China has compensated for its tactical disadvantage with the ability to deploy land forces rapidly into the area.
- In small skirmishes, the PLA remains at a disadvantage because more Indian troops are situated on the commanding ridgeline that makes up the LAC. But in a more significant conflict, the durable transport infrastructure and associated surge capability that the PLA has developed could prove decisive, especially in contrast to the less reliable access roads that Indian troops would be required to use.



- Recent developments around Galwan and Pangong-Tso have shown that where there is the political will, tense situations along the LAC can be disengaged with the involvement of both sides. In these areas, successful redeployment to positions back from the LAC has greatly reduced the risk of conflict.
- On the Yangtse plateau and the eastern sector of the India-China border, the opposite is occurring. The December 9 clash is part of a pattern of Chinese troops continuing to attempt to change the status-quo along the LAC.
- This intrusion, and previous clashes (which the Indian government claims the Chinese troops provoked) likely served to further normalise the presence of Chinese troops immediately adjacent to the LAC.
- This is a goal that the PLA appears to be working towards across the border and is part of China’s long-term strategy. By engaging in such an intrusion, the PLA is able to strategically position any ‘retreat’ to a higher location on the plateau.
- India’s pace of infrastructure development in the northeastern State of Arunachal Pradesh where Tawang is located has also accelerated since the clash; Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated multiple infrastructure projects in the State, which he credited as the enabling factors behind Indian troops’ success at stopping an intrusion at the border on December 9, 2022.

➤ **What lies ahead?**

- China’s rapid infrastructure development along the border has created an escalation trap for India.
- It is difficult for India to respond to this new reality without being seen as escalating the situation. It is also difficult for it to unilaterally de-escalate without strategic concessions that would endanger its positions. India’s response has been to increase its vigilance and readiness along the border, including surveillance.
- As large numbers of Indian and Chinese outposts continue to compete for strategic, operational and tactical advantage at the border (propelled by new infrastructure) it is important to pursue non-military and multilateral measures in parallel to reduce the risk of accidental escalation and to position these incidents as a significant threat to peace and order in the Indo-Pacific. Regional governments must pay greater attention to clashes on the India-China border. Continued escalation, including the potential of more serious clashes along the LAC, could become a major driver for broader tensions in the Indo-Pacific.

PRELIMS

1. **Obscenity laws in India**

- **CONTEXT:** Around a week after a BJP leader appealed to the authorities to take action against actor Urfi Javed for “roaming the streets of Mumbai and exhibiting her body”, NCP leader Supriya Sule on Saturday urged the Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to stop the BJP from targeting women in the state.

➤ **What are the obscenity laws in India?**

- Under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Sections 292, 293 and 294 deal with the offence of obscenity.
- Section 292 says that any content shall be deemed to be obscene if it is lascivious or appeals to the prurient interest, or if its effect tends to deprave and corrupt persons likely to read, see or hear the content. This section prohibits the sale or publication of any obscene pamphlet, book, paper, painting, and other such materials.
- Section 293 criminalises the sale or distribution of obscene objects to anyone who is under the age of 20, or an attempt to do so. Although it is a bailable offence, the maximum punishment for the first conviction is three years of imprisonment and a fine up to Rs 2,000, and for the second conviction seven years with a fine up to Rs 5,000.

- Section 294 prohibits obscene acts and songs in public spaces. The maximum punishment for the person convicted under this charge is three-month jail and a fine.
- With the advent of the digital age, laws were made to criminalise obscene conduct on the internet also. Section 67 of the Information Technology Act says that anyone who publishes or transmits obscene material in electronic form can be punished.
- **Judiciary's view on what constitutes as obscene**
- With no clear definition in the laws, what can be considered as obscene as per the Indian courts has changed and evolved over the years. Until 2014, the judiciary used the Hicklin test to determine if something is obscene or not.
- The Hicklin Test was established in English Law after the case of Regina vs Hicklin (1868). According to it, a work can be considered obscene if any portion of it is found to “deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such influences”.
- The test was most famously used by the Supreme Court to ban DH Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover in the case of Ranjit D Udeshi vs State Of Maharashtra (1964).
- However, in 2014, the apex court did away with the Hicklin Test while hearing the case of Aveek Sarkar & Anr vs State Of West Bengal and Anr, which was regarding the publication of a semi-nude picture of Boris Becker and his fiancée.
- In its judgement, the court said “while judging as to whether a particular photograph, an article or book is obscene, regard must be had to the contemporary mores and national standards and not the standard of a group of susceptible or sensitive persons”. It added that the photograph must be “taken as a whole” and seen with the context of what it wants to convey.
- **Other notable cases of “obscenity”**
- In 2022, after Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh posted pictures of his nude photoshoot for the New York-based Paper magazine on social media, police booked him under Sections 292, 293 and 509 of the IPC and Section 67A of the IT Act.
- Before Singh, model and actor Milind Soman was booked by the Goa Police in November 2021 for uploading a photograph of himself running nude on a beach in the state.
- 2. Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas 2023 begins**
- **CONTEXT: The 17th edition of the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas (PBD), or the day for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) that is commemorated annually on January 9, was marked by the Central government with events in Indore, Madhya Pradesh.**
- The programme began on January 8, when the Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas was held.
- **Why is Pravasi Bharatiya Day celebrated?**
- A High-Level Committee on Indian Diaspora, headed by jurist and Parliamentarian LM Singhvi, had recommended in January 2002 that the government must renew and strengthen linkages of overseas Indians to their place of origin, and with each other.
- The committee recommended that a Pravasi Bharatiya Bhavan should be set up to emerge as the focal point for networking between India and its overseas Indian community; and as a suitable place which to commemorate the stories of the Indian Diaspora. The idea of a day to have the government recognise the community flowed from this, and was held in 2003.
- January 9 was selected as it was the date when Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa in 1915. Over the years, he has often been described as the first non-resident Indian of the most famous NRI by various politicians. Since 2015, the centenary year of Gandhi's return, the format was revised for the meeting to be held once every two years. Since the pandemic, this will be the first in-person meeting.
- This year's theme is “Diaspora: Reliable partners for India's progress in Amrit Kaal”.
- Over 3,500 diaspora members from nearly 70 different countries have registered for the PBD Convention. The Special Guest of Honour is Suriname President Chandrikapersad Santokhi and the Chief Guest is Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of Guyana.
- **The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award**
- An award called The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award is given out as part of the programme. It is the highest honour conferred on a Non-Resident Indian, Person of Indian Origin; or an organisation or institution established and run by them.
- The award is to commemorate the contribution of the Indian diaspora to create a better understanding of India abroad, support India's causes and work for the welfare of the local Indian community.
- “A jury-cum-awards committee, with (the) Vice President as the chairman and External Affairs Minister as the vice-chair and other distinguished members from various walks of life considered the nominations and unanimously selected the awardees.

- It will be awarded by President to 27 people based in countries such as Australia, Ethiopia, Israel, Japan and more. The Chief Guest of the event and the President of Guyana, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, will also be awarded.
- Also on the list of awardees is Dr Darshan Singh Dhaliwal, a US-based NRI who was sent back from Delhi's IGI Airport on the night of October 23-24, 2021, over his alleged involvement in organising a langar for protesting farmers at Delhi borders against the three farm laws.
- **What is planned for the 2023 Pravasi Bharatiya Day?**
- A Commemorative Postal Stamp 'Surakshit Jaayen, Prashikshit Jaayen' will be released to underline the importance of safe, legal, orderly and skilled migration.
- A first-ever digital Exhibition for the event, on the theme "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav – Contribution of Diaspora in Indian Freedom Struggle" will be held.
- There will also be five thematic Plenary sessions:
- ✓ First Plenary on 'Role of Diaspora Youth in Innovations and new Technologies', chaired by Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports, Anurag Thakur.
- ✓ Second Plenary on 'Role of Indian Diaspora in promoting Indian Healthcare Eco-system in Amrit Kaal: Vision @2047', chaired by Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya and co-chaired by Minister of State for External Affairs, Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh.
- ✓ Third Plenary on 'Leveraging the soft power of India – Goodwill through craft, cuisine & creativity', chaired by Minister of State for External Affairs, Meenakshi Lekhi.
- ✓ Fourth Plenary on 'Enabling global mobility of Indian workforce – Role of Indian Diaspora', chaired by Minister of Education, Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Dharmendra Pradhan.
- ✓ Fifth Plenary on 'Harnessing the potential of diaspora entrepreneurs towards an inclusive approach to nation building', chaired by Minister of Finance, Nirmala Sitharaman.
- 3. Aspirational Block Programme**
- **CONTEXT: The Prime Minister launched the Aspirational Block Programme (ABP), which is aimed at improving the performance of blocks lagging on various development parameters.**
- **About**
- The aspirational district model will be taken up to the block level in the form of the Aspirational Block Programme.
- **Objective:** To enable holistic development in those areas that require added assistance. The focus area will also be more specific thus ensuring greater attention to detail.
- The programme will cover 500 districts across 31 states and Union Territories initially.
- Over half of these blocks are in 6 states—Uttar Pradesh (68 blocks), Bihar (61), Madhya Pradesh (42), Jharkhand (34), Odisha (29) and West Bengal (29).
- The Aspirational Blocks Programme is on the lines of the Aspirational District Programme that was launched in 2018 and covers 112 districts across the country.
- **The Aspirational Districts programme:**
- The Government of India launched the 'Transformation of Aspirational Districts' initiative in January 2018.
- **Implementation:** NITI Aayog anchors the programme with support from Central Ministries and State Governments.
- **Aim:** The 'Transformation of Aspirational Districts' Programme aims to expeditiously improve the socio-economic status of 117 districts from across 28 states.
- **Principles:** The three core principles of the programme are –
 - ✓ Convergence (of Central & State Schemes)
 - ✓ Collaboration (among citizens and functionaries of Central & State Governments including district teams)
 - ✓ Competition among districts.
- **Themes:** The programme focuses on 5 main themes- Health & Nutrition, Education, Agriculture & Water Resources, Financial Inclusion & Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure.
- **Real-time monitoring:** NITI Aayog in partnership with the Government of Andhra Pradesh has created a dashboard 'Champions of Change' for monitoring the real-time progress of the districts.
- **Ranking:** Districts are ranked through 'delta ranking' based on progress made on a real-time basis.
- Virudhunagar, Tamil Nadu achieved overall first rank.
- Simdega (Jharkhand), Chandauli (Uttar Pradesh), Sonbhadra (Uttar Pradesh) and Rajgarh (Madhya Pradesh) were found to have progressed the most since the beginning of the programme.
- **Achievements:** Under ADP previously neglected districts, including those in remote locations and those affected by Left Wing Extremism, 'have experienced more growth and development in the last three years than ever before.
- The programme has strengthened the technical and administrative capacities of the districts.

ANSWER WRITING

Q: Ethics in international relations is a myth, only national interest determines the foreign policy. How far do you agree with this statement? Discuss with suitable illustrations.

National interest is the predominant consideration that guides the conduct of a country's foreign policy. The excessive reliance on ends over means to attain the objectives of national interest makes the domain of international relations devoid of ethical practices. However, to say that ethics in international relations is a myth would not be correct because:

- During the covid-19 pandemic, countries despite suffering economic crisis, extended aid to other nations in order to contain the loss of human lives. E.g., Vaccine maitri policy of India.
- Global cooperation is increasingly gaining pace to tackle various global challenges like Climate Change, terrorism etc., E.g., despite overwhelming developmental needs, India has committed to achieve net zero emissions by 2070.
- Making regional development an equally important priority as national growth points towards the importance of enlightened nationalism. E.g., Gujral doctrine of India; SAGAR doctrine.
- Adherence to international laws and treaties highlight the ethical behaviour of a country even at the cost of national interest. E.g., India welcomed the UNCLOS decision on maritime dispute with Bangladesh even though it lost maritime space.

Even though we see isolated acts of ethics in International Relations (IR), National Interest continues to hold considerable sway over the conduct of foreign policy:

- In the conduct of international relations there are no permanent foes or friends, however, national interest reigns supreme, even at the cost of ethic. E.g., to facilitate its withdrawal USA signed Doha pact with Taliban.
- National interest is paramount to protect the strategic interest of a country E.g., Despite their historical connect with Palestine, UAE and Bahrain signed the Abraham Accords with Israel.
- National interest is the primal factor in the conduct of foreign policy of a country in order to safeguard the interests and welfare of its citizens. E.g., India continues to purchase cheap oil from Russia despite criticism from the West.
- Though the principles of Human Rights are well accepted by the west, their conduct is not in line with what they preach. E.g., Asylum pact between Rwanda and United Kingdom.
- National interest outweighs ideological/ethical considerations. E.g., USA, biggest exponent of the democracy, supported dictatorship regimes in South America and Africa.
- National interest prioritises the safety of one's own citizens even at the cost of the life of innocents. E.g., Global War on Terror (GWT) of America, led to loss of several innocent lives.

Ethics in International Relations are important in order to build a peaceful, prosperous and stable global order. Enlightened national interest is important to ensure that the domain of international relations do not reduce to a stage of war of all against all.

MCQs

1. Sela pass often mentioned in news is located in which of the following Indian state
a) Assam **b) Arunachal Pradesh** c) Kerala d) Maharashtra
2. India and Japan are going to commence the maiden joint air exercise 'Veer Guardian,' with reference to this consider the following statements
1. It is the first joint fighter jet drills between India and Japan
2. This maiden air exercise will also be the first time when an Indian Air Force woman fighter pilot would be part of the Indian contingent for aerial war games in a foreign land.
3. This exercise is one of the outcome of recently held the first 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial meeting between India and Japan
Which of the above statement/s is/ are correct?
a) 1 and 3 only b) 2 and 3 only **c) 1 and 2 only** d) 2 only
3. Parshuram Kund Festival often mentioned in news is associated with which of the following state?
a) Mizoram b) Manipur c) Assam **d) Arunachal Pradesh**
4. With reference to Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, consider the following statements
1. It is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
2. It, among other things will also impart training in soft skills, entrepreneurship, and financial and digital literacy.
3. It aims to align the competencies of the unregulated workforce of the country to the National Skill Qualification Framework.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
a) 1 and 3 only b) 2 only **c) 2 and 3 only** d) 1, 2, and 3

5. Consider the following statements pertaining to Coffee plantation in India:-
1. Need a warm and moist climate with a spell of dry weather during the ripening period
 2. Rolling fields having good drainage
 3. Strong sunshine over hilly slopes exceeding temperature 35°C
 4. Karnataka is the leading producer in India
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- a) 1 and 4 only b) 1, 2 and 3 c) 3 and 4 **d) 1, 2 and 4**
6. Consider the following statements regarding **Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas 2023**.
1. 17th edition of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is organized by Ministry of External Affairs with association of Govt. of Madhya Pradesh.
 2. The theme for 2023 edition is 'Diaspora: Reliable partners for India's progress in Amrit Kaal'
 3. For 2023 edition, the Special Guest of Honour is Suriname President Chandrikapersad Santokhi and the Chief Guest is Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of Guyana.
- Select the correct statement(s) using the codes below
- a) 1 and 2 only b) 1 and 3 only **c) 1, 2 and 3** d) 2 and 3 only
7. Consider the following statement about **the obscenity laws that exist in India**.
1. Indian Penal Code (IPC), Sections 292, 293 and 294 deal with the offence of obscenity. while section 292 define what constitutes obscenity, the section 293 criminalises the sale or distribution of obscene objects to anyone who is under the age of 20 .
 2. Section 294 prohibits obscene acts and songs in public spaces. The maximum punishment for the person convicted under this charge is three-month jail and a fine.
 3. Section 67 of the Information Technology Act says that anyone who publishes or transmits obscene material in electronic form can be punished.
 4. Obscenity is a Non-bailable offence in India.
- Select the correct statement(s) using the codes below.
- a) 1 and 4 only b) 1, 2 and 4 only **c) 1, 2 and 3 only** d) 1 and 3 only
8. Consider the following statement regarding recently launched Aspirational Blocks Programme(ADP).
1. The Aspirational District Programme(ADP) is aimed at improving performance of districts lagging on various development parameters. Aspirational Districts are those districts in India, that are affected by poor socio-economic indicators.
 2. Initially **115 districts were identified from 28 states, at least one from each state**.
 3. At the Government of India level, the **programme is anchored by Ministry of Rural Development**.
 4. ADP is based on 49 indicators from the 5 identified thematic areas, which focuses closely on improving people's Health & Nutrition, Education, Agriculture & Water Resources, Financial Inclusion & Skill Development AND Basic Infrastructure.
- Select the correct statement using the codes below
- a) 1, 2 and 3 only **b) 1, 2 and 4 only** c) 1, 3 and 4 only d) 1 and 4 only
9. Consider the following statement on Manual Scavenging in India.
1. The Parliament had enacted the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 which outlaws all manual excrement cleaning of insanitary latrines, open drains, or pits.
 2. National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) has been assigned the work to monitor the implementation of the Act, tender advice for its effective implementation to the Center and State Governments and enquire into complaints regarding contravention/non-implementation of the provisions of the Act.
- Select the correct statement using the codes below
- a) 1 only b) 2 only **c) 1 and 2** d) None of these
10. Which of the following organization launched 'One Health Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance'
1. World Health Organization (WHO)
 2. UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
 3. United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF)
 4. International Organization on Animal Health (OIE).
- Select the correct answer using the code given below.
- a) 1, 2 and 3 only** b) 2 and 3 only c) 1, 2 and 4 only d) 1, 2, 3 and 4