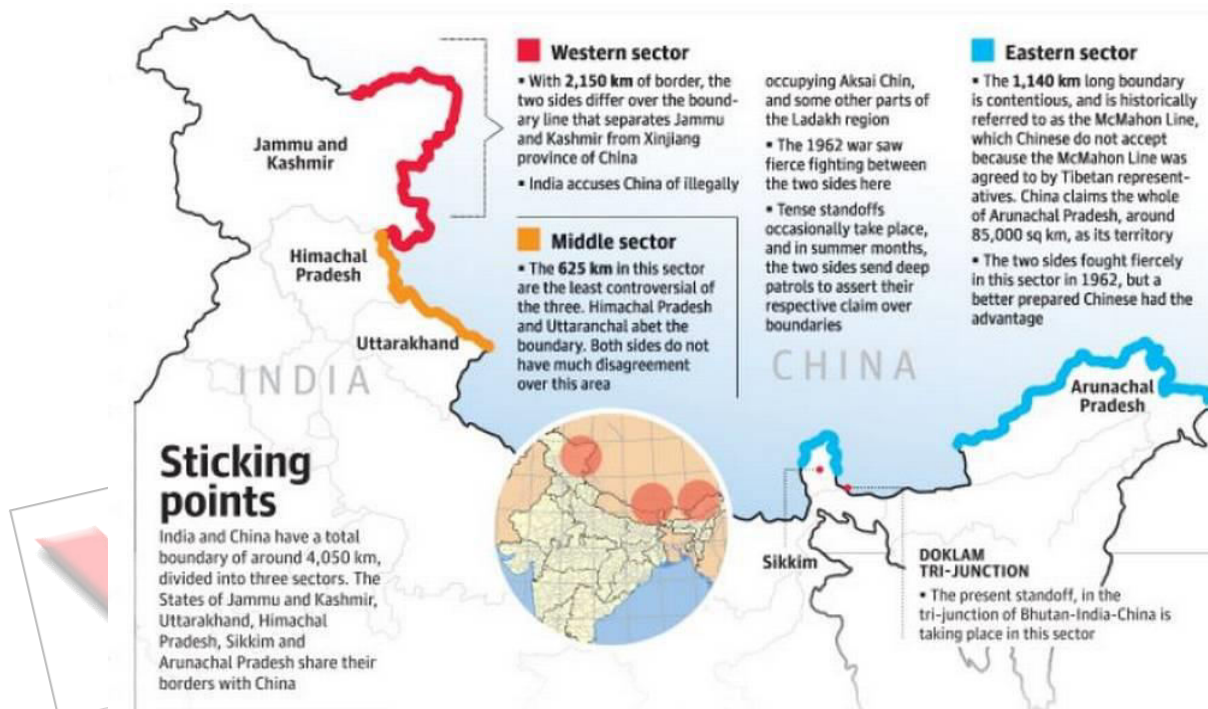


INTERNATIONAL RELATION

❖ **India China Border Talks**

➤ **CONTEXT:** In the first visit by a top Indian official to China in more than three years, the two countries have discussed proposals for disengaging in the two remaining friction areas along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) to create conditions to “restore normalcy” in relations.

- Both sides “reviewed the situation along the LAC” and “discussed proposals for disengagement in the remaining areas in an open and constructive manner, which would help in restoration of peace and tranquillity along the LAC in Western Sector and create conditions for restoration of normalcy in bilateral relations”.
- A statement from the Chinese side said both sides “reviewed the positive progress” and outcomes of disengagement in Galwan Valley and four other friction areas, while exchanging views on the next stage of talks.
- It said both sides “agreed to move forward on the basis of the consensus previously reached, accelerate the resolution of issues related to the western section of the Sino-Indian border, and reach a mutually acceptable solution at an early date”.



• To that end, both sides have also agreed to hold the 18th round of talks between senior military commanders at an early date, with the last round held on December 20, 2022.

➤ **Background:**

- India and China have been holding talks on the Line of Actual Control in the Eastern Ladakh area to resolve the standoff and 17 rounds have been held so far
- The talks till now have resulted in the resolution of issues in North and South Bank of Pangong Tso, Galwan and Gogra Hot Spring areas.

➤ **border issue:**

- India-China-relations dates back to more than 2,000 years ago. There have been cultural and economic ties between the two countries since ancient times.
- Relations between contemporary China and India have been characterized by border disputes, resulting in military conflicts like — the Sino-Indian War of 1962, the Chola incident in 1967, the 1987 Sino-Indian and the 2020 India-China skirmish.
- Relations between India and China have come under “severe stress” time and again in the last decade due to multiple border stand-offs along the Line of Actual Control.

➤ **Root cause of border dispute between India & China:**

- The root cause lies in an ill-defined, 3,440km (2,100-mile)-long border that both countries dispute. Four states - Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand (erstwhile part of UP), Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh and Union Territories of Ladakh (erstwhile state of Jammu & Kashmir) share a border with China.
- The Sino-Indian border is generally divided into three sectors namely: Western sector, Middle sector, and Eastern sector.

➤ **Western Sector**

- In the western sector, India shares about a 2152 km border with China.

- It is between the union territory of Ladakh (erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir) and the Xinjiang province of China.
- The territorial dispute in the western sector is over Aksai Chin. India claims it as part of erstwhile Kashmir, while China claims it is part of Xinjiang.
- The dispute is said to be due to the failure of the British empire as it failed to demarcate a legal border between both countries. During the British rule in India two borderlines were proposed – Johnson’s line and McDonald line in 1865 and 1893 respectively.
- The Johnson’s line shows Aksai Chin in Ladakh i.e. under India’s control whereas McDonald Line places it under China’s control. India considers Johnson Line as a rightful national border with China, while on the other hand, China considers the McDonald Line as the correct border with India.
- The different claims and perceptions of LAC have led to an overlapping area, within that area lies a small zone which both the sides patrol causing clashes of the Indian and the Chinese army.
- At present, Line of Actual Control (LAC) is the line separating Indian areas of Ladakh from Aksai Chin. It is concurrent with the Chinese Aksai Chin claim line.
- **Middle Sector**
 - In the middle sector, India shares about 625km of the border with China. This is the only sector where the both countries have less disagreement. The border runs from Ladakh to Nepal.
 - The states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand touch the border with Tibet in this sector.
- **Eastern Sector**
 - In the eastern sector, India shares a 1140km boundary with China. The boundary line is called McMahan Line runs from the eastern limit of Bhutan to a point near the Talu Pass at the trijunction of Tibet, India, and Myanmar.
 - The majority of the territory of Arunachal Pradesh is claimed by China as a part of Southern Tibet.
 - China considers the McMahan line illegal. McMahan proposed the line in the Simla Accord in 1914 to settle the boundary between Tibet and India, and Tibet and China. Though the Chinese representatives at the meeting initialled the agreement, they subsequently refused to accept it.
- **Disputed areas along the LAC**
 - China claims about 90,000 sq km of India’s territory in the northeast, including Arunachal, while India says 38,000 sq km of land in China-occupied Aksai Chin should be a part of Ladakh.
 - There are several disputed areas along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), including in Himachal, Uttarakhand and Sikkim.
 - In Ladakh, the disputed areas include: Pangong Tso lake, Galwan Valley, where Shyok and Galwan rivers meet, Daulat Beg Oldi (DBO), a key northern region close to the Karakoram Pass, The Hot Springs-Gogra area of the LAC, Demchok which is close to the southernmost part of the LAC in Ladakh., Chushul located on the southern bank of Pangong Tso Lake, has an airstrip and is near Rezang La pass on the LAC.
 - Spanggur Gap along the LAC has roads leading to it from either side. India’s Chushul-Demchok road in the area is a critical communication link, Samar Lungpa, Trig Heights, Chumar, Dumchel, Kongka La
 - In Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, the disputed areas are Kaurik, Shipki La, an ancient trade route, Pulam Sunda, Barahoti Plains
 - In Sikkim, the disputed areas include: North Sikkim, a high-altitude plain area that is snowbound, Chumbi Valley – It is a Tri-junction between India, China and Bhutan. Doklam is located in this region.
 - Disputed areas in Arunachal Pradesh include: Namkha Chu, Sumdorong Chu, Asaphila, Longju, Dichu, Yangtse, Fish Tail-1 & 2 in Dibang Valley, Lamang
- **Disengagement efforts:**
 - The military talks to ease tensions between India and China are still underway. Recently, Five points of agreement were set forth after the sixth round of talks between the senior military commanders.
 - India-China Five-point Agreement:
 - ✓ Both sides should take guidance from the series of consensus of the leaders
 - ✓ Current situation in the border areas is not in the interest of either side.
 - ✓ Both sides shall abide by all the existing agreements and protocol on China India boundary affairs,
 - ✓ Both sides have agreed to continue to have dialogue and communication through the special representative mechanism on the India-China boundary question.
 - ✓ Both have decided to conclude new confidence-building measures to maintain peace and tranquillity.
 - Though the two sides have inked towards a quick disengagement, there is no clear mention of final restoration of status quo in the five points.

PRELIMS

1. The Chicago Convention

- **CONTEXT: Cabinet approves the ratification of three Protocols on Article 3 and Article 50 (a) & Article 56 relating to amendments in the convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention), 1944.**
- The Chicago Convention has undergone a few amendments and India has been ratifying such amendments from time to time.

- The ratification has been approved in the following three protocols:
 - ✓ To refrain member States from resorting to the use of weapons against civil aircraft in flight.
 - ✓ For raising the strength of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Council from 36 to 40.
 - ✓ For raising the strength of the Air Navigation Commission from 18 to 21.

➤ **About the Convention:**

- The Convention on International Civil Aviation, also known as the Chicago Convention, established the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). ICAO a specialized agency of the United Nations charged with coordinating international air travel.
- The Convention establishes rules of airspace, aircraft registration and safety, security, and sustainability, and details the rights of the signatories in relation to air travel.
- The Convention also contains provisions pertaining to taxation.
- The document was signed on December 7, 1944, in Chicago by 52 signatory states.
- The Chicago Convention currently have 193 state parties, which includes all member states of the United Nations (including India) except Liechtenstein.
- The Cook Islands is a party to the Convention although it is not a member of the UN.

2. Keeladi

➤ **CONTEXT:** Keeladi is a tiny hamlet in the Sivaganga district in south Tamil Nadu. It is about 12 km south-east to the temple city of Madurai and is located along the Vaigai river. The excavations here from 2015 prove that an urban civilisation existed in Tamil Nadu in the Sangam age on the banks of the Vaigai river.

➤ **What has been unearthed so far?**

- Unearthing of heaps of pottery suggest the existence of a pottery making industry, mostly made of locally available raw materials.
- Over 120 potsherds containing Tamil Brahmi inscriptions have been found.
- Keeladi, along with other Tamil Nadu sites which have over a thousand inscribed potsherds, clearly suggest the long survival of the script.
- Spindle whorls, copper needles, terracotta seal, hanging stones of the yarn, terracotta spheres and earthen vessels to hold liquid suggest various stages of a weaving industry. There also existed a dyeing industry and a glass bead industry.
- Gold ornaments, copper articles, semi-precious stones, shell bangles, ivory bangles and ivory combs reflect the artistic, culturally rich and prosperous lifestyle of the Keeladi people.
- Agate and carnelian beads suggest import through commercial networks while terracotta and ivory dice, gamesmen and evidence of hopscotch have been unearthed revealing their pastime hobbies.

➤ **How is Keeladi linked to Sangam age?**

- The Sangam age is a period of history in ancient Tamil Nadu which was believed to be from the third century BCE to the third century CE.
- The name is derived from the renowned Sangam poets of Madurai from that time.
- Excavations by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and Tamil Nadu State Archaeology Department (TNSDA) has pushed the Sangam age further back.
- In 2019, a TNSDA report dated the unearthed artefacts from Keeladi to a period between sixth century BCE and first century BCE.
- The findings in the TNSDA report placed Keeladi artefacts about 300 years earlier than the previously believed third century BCE.
- A recent ASI report by K. Amarnath Ramakrishna, the Superintendent Archaeologist who discovered Keeladi in 2015, has pushed the Sangam age to 800 BCE based on these archaeological findings.
- Keeladi could also provide crucial evidence for understanding the missing links of the Iron Age (12th century BCE to sixth century BCE) to the Early Historic Period (sixth century BCE to fourth century BCE) and subsequent cultural developments.

➤ **Links to Indus Valley:**

- The unearthed Keeladi artefacts have led academics to describe the site as part of the Vaigai Valley Civilisation.
- The findings have also invited comparisons with the Indus Valley Civilisation while acknowledging the cultural gap of 1,000 years between the two places.
- Till now, the gap is filled with Iron Age material in south India, which serve as residual links.
- However, some of the symbols found in pot sherds of Keeladi bear a close resemblance to Indus Valley signs. A lot of digging and study has to be done to establish the links between these two civilisations. TNSDA affirms that Keeladi has all the characteristics of an urban civilisation, with brick structures, luxury items and proof of internal and external trade. It comes across as an industrious and advanced civilisation and has given evidence of urban life and settlements in Tamil Nadu during the Early Historic Period. Keeladi has also added to the credibility of Sangam Literature.

3. 'Corrupt act' under RPA 1951

➤ **CONTEXT: The Supreme Court held its decision on “corrupt practice” under the Representation of People’s Act, (RPA) 1951 by any candidate during or after the election process.**

- In Anugrah Narayan Singh v. Harsh Vardhan Bajpayee, the Apex Court dismissed the ruling which declared the election of a MLA as “null and void”.
- The court has mentioned that under corrupt act of RPA 1951, publishing a false statement of fact about his character and conduct to influence the outcome of his election, knowingly is a crime.
- The candidate should disclose his/her educational qualification for free and fair conduct of elections.
- However, now the Apex Court reversed its own decision in view that, no one in India votes for a candidate based on their educational qualifications and, thus providing false information about an electoral candidate’s qualifications cannot be considered a “corrupt practice”.

➤ **What are ‘corrupt practices’ under the RPA, 1951?**

- Section 123 of the Representation of People Act defines ‘corrupt practices’ to include bribery, undue influence, false information, and promotion or attempted promotion of “feelings of enmity or hatred between different classes of the citizens of India on grounds of religion, race, caste, community, or language” by a candidate for the furtherance of his prospects in the election.
- Section 123 (2) deals with ‘undue influence’ which it defines as any direct or indirect interference or attempt to interfere on the part of the candidate or his agent, or of any other person, with the consent of the candidate or his election agent, with the free exercise of any electoral right.
- Section 123 (4) extends the ambit of “corrupt practices” to the intentional publication of false statements which can prejudice the outcome of the candidate’s election.
- Under the provisions of the Act, an elected representative can be disqualified if convicted of certain offences; on grounds of corrupt practices; for failing to declare election expenses; and for interests in government contracts or works.

➤ **Related judgements:**

- In 1994, the Supreme Court’s ruling in ‘SR Bommai v. Union of India’, which otherwise held secularism to be a part of the ‘basic structure’, mentioned that, “whatever the attitude of the State towards the religions, religious sects, and denominations, religion cannot be mixed with any secular activity of the State.”
- The encroachment of religion into secular activities is strictly prohibited, the court stated while adding that the same is clear from sub-section (3) of Section 123 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
- The top court in its 2013 judgment in ‘Subramaniam Balajis v. State of Tamil Nadu’ held that promises of freebies cannot be termed a corrupt practice.

4. AstroSat MISSION

➤ **CONTEXT: The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has made an Announcement of Opportunity (AO) to allow scientists and researchers to analyse data from the first dedicated Indian astronomy mission, AstroSat.**

➤ **About the Mission**

- AstroSat is the first dedicated Indian astronomy mission aimed at studying celestial sources in X-ray, optical and UV spectral bands simultaneously.
- The payloads cover the energy bands of Ultraviolet (Near and Far), limited optical and X-ray regime (0.3 keV to 100keV).
- One of the unique features of AstroSat mission is that it enables the simultaneous multi-wavelength observations of various astronomical objects with a single satellite.
- AstroSat with a lift-off mass of 1515 kg was launched on September 28, 2015 into a 650 km orbit inclined at an angle of 6 deg to the equator by PSLV-C30 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.
- The minimum useful life of the AstroSat mission is expected to be 5 years.
- The scientific objectives of AstroSat mission are:
 - ✓ To understand high energy processes in binary star systems containing neutron stars and black holes;
 - ✓ Estimate magnetic fields of neutron stars;
 - ✓ Study star birth regions and high energy processes in star systems lying beyond our galaxy;
 - ✓ Detect new briefly bright X-ray sources in the sky;
 - ✓ Perform a limited deep field survey of the Universe in the Ultraviolet region.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. Many parts of the country are recording higher-than-normal temperatures in the month of February due to weak western disturbances. Explain the phenomena of western disturbances and their impact on the Indian weather system.

According to the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), a western disturbance is an extratropical storm that originates in the Mediterranean region and brings sudden winter rain to the north western parts of the Indian subcontinent. It is a non-monsoonal precipitation pattern that is driven by the westerlies. Over the past week, the

maximum temperatures have been 5-11 degrees C higher than normal in most parts of northern and western India. The IMD has attributed the current spell of hot weather to a combination of factors, including the absence of western disturbance activity in February.

Phenomena of western disturbances:

- Western disturbance has its origin in the **Caspian Sea or Mediterranean Sea** as an extra-tropical cyclone.
- **High pressure** is exhibited over the areas like Ukraine and neighbourhood countries causing the intrusion of cold air from polar regions towards an area of relatively warmer air with high moisture.
- This change in pressure from cold air to warm air generates favourable conditions for **cyclogenesis in the upper layer of the atmosphere**, which promotes the formation of an eastward-moving extratropical depression in the sea.
- This phenomenon usually **carries moisture in the upper layer** of the atmosphere, unlike their tropical counterparts where the moisture is carried in the lower layer of the atmosphere.
- Western disturbances then gradually travel across the middle-east from Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan to finally enter the Indian sub-continent.

Impact of western disturbances on the Indian weather system:

- **Brings winter rainfall:** Western disturbances cause most of the pre-monsoon season and winter rainfall. It is associated with a cloudy sky, high night temperature and unusual rain.
- **Causes snowfall:** They bring heavy snow to the Himalayan region of the Indian subcontinent. This snow also feeds the glaciers which are the source of many rivers in northern India.
- **Cold-wave conditions:** In the areas of Indo-Gangetic plains, it occasionally brings cold-wave conditions and dense fog.
- **Winter precipitation impacts agriculture:** The precipitation formed has a great impact on agriculture particularly on the rabi crops such as wheat and mustard. Weak western disturbances are often associated with crop failure due to low precipitation and above-normal temperatures in north India.
- **Advancement of monsoon:** When these western disturbances travel across northwest India earlier to the onset of monsoon, a set of temporary advancements of monsoon currents appears over the affected region.

Western disturbances in recent times are being impacted by climate change and because of warming in the atmosphere, western disturbances are going higher in elevation. In general, they move in subtropical westerly jets however now they are becoming lighter and moving higher. Western disturbances are complex weather phenomena and their impact on Indian weather patterns needs to be studied in more depth.

MCQs

1. Consider the following statements with reference to India-China relations.
 1. In 1954, the five principle statements come into existence between the two countries.
 2. India and China gave each other the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status.
 3. Very recently Nathu La Pass opened for border trade between India and China.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

 - a) 1 and 2 only
 - b) 2 and 3 only
 - c) 1 and 3 only
 - d) 1,2 and 3
2. With reference to Convention on International Civil Aviation, also known as the Chicago Convention, consider the following statements.
 1. It establishes rules for the safety of airlines.
 2. The convention exempts air fuels in transit from double taxation.
 3. It provides that “Every state has complete and exclusive sovereignty over airspace above its territory”.
 4. International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) was established by this convention.

Select the correct answer using the codes below.

 - a) 1 and 2 only
 - b) 3 and 4 only
 - c) 2 and 3 only
 - d) 1, 2, 3 and 4
3. Consider the following pairs

SL. No.	Section of RPA 1951	Provision
1.	Section 8A	Disqualification on ground of the corrupt practices
2.	Section 10	Removal or reduction of the period of disqualification
3.	Section 30	Conduct of Elections

Which of the pairs given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only

- b) **1 and 3 only**
c) 2 only
d) 2 and 3 only
4. With reference to 'Astrosat', the astronomical observatory launched by India, which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. Other than USA and Russia, India is the only country to have launched a similar observatory into space.
 2. Astrosat is a 2000 kg satellite placed in an orbit at 1650 km above the surface of the Earth.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) **Neither 1 nor 2**
5. In the context of the recent linking of India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) with Singapore's PayNow, which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. It will allow real-time payment between users in India and Singapore, without switching over to a third financial transaction medium or international system.
 2. Singapore is the first country with which India has launched cross-border Person to Person (P2P) payment facilities.
 3. It will allow for faster remittances between the two countries at a competitive rate.

Select the correct option using the code given below:

- a) 1 and 2 only
b) 2 and 3 only
c) 1 and 3 only
d) **1, 2 and 3**
6. With reference to Sansad Ratna Award consider the following
1. The Sansad Ratna Awards were instituted in 2010 at the suggestion of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam to honour top-performing Parliamentarians.
 2. A lifetime award is to be presented for the first time in 2023.

Which of the above statement/s is/are not correct?

- a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) **Neither 1 nor 2**
7. With reference to liquorice (mulethi) consider the following
1. It is mainly grown all over India, while minor produce are from Pakistan, Bangladesh, China
 2. It is use to treat chest and lung diseases, pneumonia, bronchitis, kidney and heart diseases,

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) **Both 1 and 2**
d) Neither 1 nor 2
8. With reference to i-ATS (Indigenous-Automatic Train Supervision) system consider the following
1. It is India's first ever indigenously developed Train Control and Supervision System.
 2. India becomes the 3rd country that has its own ATS products after France, Germany, Japan.

Which of the above statement/s is/are not correct?

- a) 1 only
b) **2 only**
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2
9. In the context of cultural history of India, a pose in dance and dramatics called 'Tribhanga' has been a favourite of Indian artists from ancient times till today. Which one of the following statements best describes this pose?
- a) **One leg is bent and the body is slightly but oppositely curved at waist and neck**
b) Facial expressions, hand gestures and make-up are combined to symbolize certain epic or historic characters
c) Movements of body, face and hands are used to express oneself or to tell a story
d) A little smile, slightly curved waist and certain hand gestures are emphasized to express the feelings of love or eroticism
10. 'Wagner Group' seen in news often is a/are relate to which of the following?
- a) Cybercrime group
b) **Private military organization**
c) Business lobbyists
d) Paramedics involved in rescue operations