



DAILY MAINS NEWSLETTER

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Mains Value Addition

G7 accommodates Indian stand on Internet curbs

Syllabus-- GS 2: IR

Analysis: -

- Internet freedoms are subject to national security, said government sources, claiming that India's tough negotiations on the joint communique issued by G7 and Guest Countries at the session on Open Societies, had ensured that the original language criticising "Internet shutdowns" had been amended to include New Delhi's concerns.
- The explanation came after the 'G7 and Guest Countries: 2021 Open Societies Statement' referred to "politically motivated Internet shutdowns" which indirectly addresses Internet blackouts in various parts of the world including India.

- Kashmir has experienced Internet and mobile telephony shutdown since Article 370 was amended on August 5, 2019.
- Similar communication shutdowns were witnessed in Delhi and Assam during the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act during 2019-2020 and the farmer's protest last January.
- Communication shutdowns were also witnessed in other parts of the world including Hong Kong where a protest against Chinese security laws intensified during 2019.
- The G7 statement also took note of developments in military-ruled Myanmar as well as in larger economies.

Union Home Ministry order inviting citizenship applications faces Supreme Court challenge

Syllabus – GS 1: Art and Culture

Analysis: -

- The National Archives is the primary repository of documents on India's past. The last time it was in the news was in 2016 when digital copies of files relating to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose were made publicly accessible.
- The imminent demolition of its annexe by the Government of India has brought the institution to public attention once again.



- A petition by leading Indian and foreign scholars is in circulation demanding that the government show greater openness in the proposed demolition of the National Archives annexe and the safe storage of its contents since “several centuries of India’s history lie in the documents that make up the National Archives of India”.
- The petition said: “The archival records include 4.5 million files, 25,000 rare manuscripts, more than 100,000 maps, treaties, 280,000 premodern documents and several thousand private papers... The loss or damage of a single object or archival record would be an irrevocable loss.”
- The annexe also houses the cartography section and 1,50,000 oriental records in Persian, Arabic and Urdu.
- The birch bark and clay coated Gilgit Manuscripts in the National Archives are, according to UNESCO, “the oldest surviving manuscripts in India”.
- These include “canonical and non-canonical Buddhist works that throw light on the evolution of Sanskrit, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Mongolian, Manchu and Tibetan religion-philosophical literature”.

Mains Analysis

The road from Galwan, a year later

Why in News?

On June 15 last year, the Line of Actual Control (LAC) witnessed its first deaths after 1975 when 20 Indian soldiers and at least four soldiers of China’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA) died in a violent clash in Galwan in Ladakh. China is now in a different league, competing with the U.S., and New Delhi faces the task of living with an uneasy calm.

Syllabus—GS 2- International Relations

Political accountability

- The ministerial statements in Parliament were monologues with no questions allowed from other representatives of the people.
- A huge public outcry led to an official clarification by the Prime Minister’s Office which contained rhetoric that dodged the offending remarks.
- The Government’s political strategy for dealing with the Ladakh border crisis has been based on dodging, denial and digression.
- An honest appraisal of the situation in Ladakh would be politically costly for a government.
- There is no record of the Cabinet Committee on Security being convened to discuss the Ladakh border situation — Mr. Modi is being held responsible in the public imagination for the setback.

Military situation

- The current situation is not militarily precarious in Ladakh. With a continued deployment of 50,000-60,000 soldiers, the Indian Army has been able to hold the line to prevent any further ingress by the PLA.
- The Chinese presence on the Indian side of the LAC in Gogra, Hot Springs and Demchok gives the PLA some tactical advantage but the area which majorly jolts Indian military plans is the Chinese control of Depsang Plains.
- There has been no progress in talks after the disengagement at Pangong lake and Kailash range in February.
- The basis of this shift was articulated by the Chief of Defence Staff when he recently said that China is a bigger security threat for India than Pakistan.
- The Ladakh crisis has also exposed India's military weakness to tackle a collusive threat from China and Pakistan: to avoid such an eventuality, the Government opened backchannel talks with Pakistan which led to the reiteration of the ceasefire on the Line of Control.

External rebalancing

- The Ladakh crisis has also led the Government to relook external partnerships, particularly with the United States.
- The Indian side was silent about it but senior U.S. military officials have earlier spoken of

the intelligence and logistics support provided to the Indian forces in Ladakh,

- While the Indian military has sought to learn from the American experience of implementing the Multi Domain Operations (MDO) doctrine to wage a war of the future against a technologically superior PLA.
- That China is “a larger neighbour, which has got a better force, better technology”, was acknowledged by General Rawat recently, to argue that India will “obviously prepare for a larger neighbour”.
- The military importance of the Quad remains moot, with India reportedly refusing to do joint naval patrolling with the U.S. in the South China Sea; the two treaty allies of the U.S., Japan and Australia, also refused.
- India's focus on its land borders and its limited resources for military modernisation in a period of economic decline impinge on its maritime ambitions in the Indo-Pacific.

Balancing act

- With the widening power gap between New Delhi and Beijing, the challenge is as much economic as it is geopolitical.
- Despite the border crisis and the Indian restrictions on Chinese technology companies, China displaced the U.S. to be India's biggest trade partner in 2020-21, up to nearly 13% of India's total trade.
- Even though India has been dependent on China for medical equipment to fight the

pandemic and asked for assured supplies, the Government has been reluctant to publicly acknowledge this dependence.

- New Delhi has placed the border issue at the centre of the relationship with China, arguing that there can be no normalcy without restoration of status quo ante at the borders.

Unappetising choices

- For the past few decades, Indian planners operated on the premise that their diplomats will be able to manage the Chinese problem without it developing into a full-blown military crisis.
- That belief has been laid to rest. Militarily, Chinese incursions in Ladakh have shown that the idea of deterrence has failed.
- New Delhi has learnt that it can no longer have simultaneous competition and cooperation with Beijing; the dramatic engagement that started with Rajiv Gandhi's historic visit to China in 1988 is over.
- India will never be comfortable taking sides in a new Cold War between the U.S. and China, as it has always valued its strategic sovereignty.
- Beijing seems as keen as New Delhi to avoid a military conflict, though accidents such as Galwan can never be ruled out.
- This leaves India with the daunting task of living with this tense and uneasy calm with China for some time, a challenge brought to the fore by the Ladakh crisis.

Conclusion:

The events of the past one year have significantly altered India's thinking towards China. The relationship is at the crossroads now. The choices made in New Delhi will have a significant impact on the future of global geopolitics.

Question: -

India's attempts to counter the burgeoning Chinese influence in the neighbourhood have faltered, exacerbated by the mishandling of the second wave of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Comment

How indicative is GDP?

Why in News?

Since the revision of GDP calculation methodology in 2015, there's been a debate about how India calculates its GDP & about GDP as a measure itself.

Syllabus— GS3: Resource Mobilization & the Growth-related issues

GDP- Gross Domestic Product:

- IMF states that GDP measures the monetary value of final goods & services produced in a country in a given period of time (quarter or year).
- It is also important to note that GDP counts only the value of final goods & services but not intermediate goods & services value.
- The rationale is to avoid double-counting, as the value of intermediary ones are already included in the value of final ones.

GDP A Faulty Metric to map Economic Growth?

- For now, the assumption is true, as GDP's dominance as the single most important way to map the economy health has been questioned.
- Similarly, in *The Growth Delusion* (2018), David Pilling argued that the GDP is the wrong way to measure the well-being of a society
- And thus pursuing policies that solely focus on raising GDP often ends up hurting the people's welfare.

Objectives: -

- To identify the limits of GDP as an indicator of economic performance & social progress including the problems with its measurement.
- To consider what additional information is required for the production of more relevant indicators of social progress.
- To assess the feasibility of alternative measurement tools.
- To discuss how to present the statistical information appropriately.

Counter to the above arguments:

- GDP only measures the total market value of goods & services in a economy in a year.
 - It does not claim to measure welfare or wellbeing.
 - It does not claim to measure happiness, inequality & corruption, or lack of it.

- It does not measure the robustness of democracy, climate change & pollution.
- So failing to measure above all indicators make GDP a Faulty measure of the total monetary value of final goods & services.
- No, because GDP is a simple measure & berating it by judging it based on social or moral norms would be a complete misinterpretation of GDP usage.

Is GDP Adequate to measure welfare?

- It is difficult to measure growth accurately for an economy like India because of several limitations:
 - **Lack of proper Data availability.**
 - Because a large part of the economy is in the Informal sector & considering only formal sector estimates would be missing out an accurately capturing the GDP.
 - It is failed to capture the welfare loss & gains that happen due to many things in the economy.
 - In a broader sense, GDP is inadequate for measuring people's wellbeing, it is not due to revised methodology but it's by design.

Alternatives for GDP:

- The following measures that can possibly be alternative
 - GDP per capita,
 - Median income
 - Inequality(Gini coefficient)
 - Net Domestic Product

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- Well-Being using Maryland's Genuine Progress Indicator
 - Carbon Dioxide Emissions.
 - Even then using any single above metric to measure wellbeing will be faulty & inadequate.

Way-Ahead:

- Focusing solely on GDP will indeed lead to inadequate policies that prevent people's broader well-being.
- At the same time, it is equally true that it is very difficult to find a worthy replacement to GDP.
- Rather than pulling down GDP, it is better to look at a broader set of variables for getting a more nuanced understanding of people's wellbeing.

Question: -

GDP has often been criticised for failing to capture some aspects of the economy. Instead of pulling it down, using a broader set of variables can provide a more nuanced understanding of people's wellbeing. Discuss.