



Border on the boil

GS III: Security Challenges and Their Management in Border Areas

With a series of ceasefire violations by the Pakistan Army that targeted civilians, and heavy artillery fire by the Indian Army, the LoC is once again on the boil. India's threat matrix now includes the possibility of a two-front situation.



Highlights:

1. The government accused Pakistan of firing as a way of providing cover for terrorists infiltrating into India before the winter snow closes the passes and underground routes.
2. Army officials now say 2020 has seen the highest levels of firing since the 2003 India-Pakistan ceasefire agreement, with a record number of 4,052 ceasefire violations by Pakistan since January.
3. Pakistan's intentions are to provoke India ahead of its two-year term at the UN Security Council from January 2021, as well as to rake up trouble before the Financial Action Task Force review in February.
4. Pakistan's assault at the LoC was followed by allegations against India on attacks inside Pakistan that he said primarily targeted China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) infrastructure projects.
5. By naming the CPEC, Pakistan also appears to want to further strain India-China relations that have undergone what Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla called their "worst crisis" since 1962, as a result of PLA aggression at the LAC in Ladakh and the stand-off.
6. Studied with the escalation by Pakistan at this time, it should be evident that India's threat matrix includes the very real possibility of a two-front situation



where the Army will be engaged at the LoC and the LAC simultaneously, along with a possible spike in terrorist activity in Jammu and Kashmir.

Mains:

1. India's two-front dilemma slowly turned into a nightmare with the constant threat of non-state actors adding to complexities. Suggest way ahead in diplomacy and security dimensions.

Suu Kyi again

GSII: Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests

The National League for Democracy's landslide victory in the November 8 general election in Myanmar indicates that a vast majority of its nearly 38 million voters continue to think that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is a bulwark against the military, which ruled the nation with an iron fist for about half a century. With her mandate, she must be more assertive against the military in Myanmar's transition.



Background:

1. When Ms Suu Kyi's NLD came to power after winning Myanmar's first truly contested election in 2015, hopes were high that the pro-democracy icon would spearhead the transition into a full democracy.
2. Ms Suu Kyi, who is barred from becoming the President by the military-era Constitution, took the levers of power as the State Counsellor in 2015. But during this time, instead of confronting the Generals or pushing to end the military's outsized influence, she appeared to have bought peace with them.
3. Her public defence of the Generals' handling of the operations in Rakhine State that led to the exodus of at least 740,000 Rohingya Muslims dented her image as a pro-democracy fighter and raised questions about her commitment to the country's transition.



Statecraft of Suu Kyi

1. The power struggle between the popular civilian leadership and the powerful military establishment is an ongoing reality despite the elections.
2. While Ms Suu Kyi avoided confronting the Generals, she remained a force between the military and the people. In a country where the memories of the military dictatorship are still fresh, it is unsurprising that Ms Suu Kyi, who built her moral and political capital in the long fight against the junta, remains the most popular leader. But when she begins her second term with another decisive victory, she would face tough questions again.
3. Did she win just to act as a buffer between the Generals and the voters or to lead the country into full democracy?
4. As the elected ruler, she will also have to address allegations of genocide and walk her talk of making peace with the ethnic minority groups.

Mains:

1. The transition of Myanmar into a full democracy will lead to multiple benefits to India. Elaborate.

Weather advisories drive farmers' income up to 50%

GS III: E-technology in the aid of farmers.

A survey by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) has shown that timely delivery of weather advisories to farmers had a significant impact on their income. Every rupee spent on weather forecasting fetches 50-fold economic gains to below poverty line farming families.

Context: India was 'poorly prepared' to deal with 'climate reality', due to which it was more vulnerable to extreme natural disasters, according to the World Risk Index (WRI) 2020. India ranked 89th among 181 countries on the WRI 2020. The country was fourth-most-at-risk in south Asia on the index, after Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

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<http://www.sriramsias.com>

Highlights:

1. The survey was done to gauge the economic impact of India's investments on the National Monsoon Mission (NMM) and High-Performance Computing Facilities (HPC).
2. It showed that farmers taking precautionary actions based on agrometeorology advisories from the government reported an increase in income of up to 50 per cent.
3. The India Meteorological Department and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research send district-level agrometeorological advisories to over 22 million farmers through a network of 130 agro-met field units.
4. These advisories also recommend suitable changes or advice for farm operations like management of sowing, changing crop variety, spraying pesticides for disease control and managing irrigation.
5. The NCAER survey especially investigated the effectiveness of agrometeorology advisories in mitigating risks in India's rainfed districts. These districts account for up to 40 per cent of the country's foodgrain production. They also host a significant percentage of India's poor.
6. According to the study, 98 percent farmers made modifications to at least one of the nine critical practices based on the weather advisories.
7. The nine practices included in the weather advisory were:
 - a. Change variety/breed of crop
 - b. Arrange for storage of harvest, depending on weather events
 - c. Hasten/delay harvesting according to forecasts
 - d. Change crop
 - e. Hasten/delay sowing
 - f. Change the schedule of ploughing/land preparation
 - g. Change the pesticide application schedule
 - h. Change the fertiliser application schedule
 - i. Change scheduled irrigation



Key Understanding

1. The survey found a clear linkage between the annual income of a farmer and the changes s/he made in cropping operations based on weather advisories. Going by NCAER estimates, the average annual income of a farming household that didn't adopt any changes despite getting advisories was Rs 1.98 lakh. Those farmers who adopted all the nine changes had an income of Rs 3.02 lakh per annum.
2. Frequent use of weather advisories was found to increase drastically in 2019, with 59 percent of farmers reporting their use twice a week. This was only seven per cent before 2015.
3. The incremental economic benefits in rainfed districts (accruing to a large number of families belonging to the 'Below Poverty Line' or BPL category) for the next five years is estimated to be Rs 48,072 crore. In India's rainfed areas, there are 10.7 million households belonging to the BPL category.

Conclusion:

1. Going by calculation of income gains due to investment in weather forecasting, it emerges clearly that mitigation and risk reduction activities are not only cheaper but also highly profitable.
2. The economic investment of one rupee in NMM and HPC facilities realises a 50-fold increase in economic benefits through gains to BPL farming and fishing families.

Mains:

1. Climate change-induced disasters are wreaking havoc on Indian farmers. In 2019-20, extreme weather events impacted over 14 million hectares of farmlands in India. Explain the role played by timely weather advisories in safeguarding income of Farmers and highlight their prominent role in climate-change ridden future.