

## TOPIC 1

### India's increasing maritime tensions with China

#### Relevancy

- GS Mains paper II
- International relations, Indo-China maritime issues
- Indian ocean issues, Boundary issues of China

#### Recently

- The rise of China over the past decades has changed the geopolitical scene across India's maritime frontiers.

#### What is China doing in waters?

- **Chinese navy deployment and boundary issues:**
  - China has been deploying its navy coercively to enforce its expansionist claims across the South China Sea.
  - China claims this naval superiority in a unilaterally drawn "Nine Dotted Line".
  - It has resulted in tensions with all its neighbours, including South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia.
  - China is even building air bases and artificially constructed islands across the South China Sea.
  - It is doing so to enforce its untenable claims, whose basis has been rejected by a UN tribunal in a judgment on a complaint filed by the Philippines.
  - Whereas, Japan, Vietnam and Indonesia alone have stood firm against Chinese expansionism.
- **China's assertiveness in Indian Ocean:**
  - This Chinese "assertiveness" on its maritime boundary claims includes nuclear submarines, across the sea-lanes of the Indian Ocean.

- It extends from the Straits of Aden where China has established a naval base in Djibouti, across the Straits of Hormuz, to the Straits of Malacca.

## Concerns for India

- **Problems for trade:**
  - The entire Indian Ocean Region extending from Aden to Malacca accounts for 40 per cent of the world's oil production and 57 per cent of the world's oil trade.
  - Seventy per cent of India's oil supplies come across these sea-lanes.
  - Around 7 million Indians reside in the Arab Gulf countries from where India receives over \$40 billion annually as remittances.
  - The rise of Chinese power and territorial assertiveness are disturbing and need to be addressed strategically.
- **Boundary issues:**
  - China claims that its territorial frontiers with India extend across entire Arunachal Pradesh, with its borders lying just adjacent to the strategic Siliguri corridor in the east.
  - It is also claiming large tracts of Ladakh in the west.
- **Growing Chinese presence in Indian Ocean:**
  - A Chinese admiral in 1990s said that "The Indian Ocean is not India's Ocean".
  - China has also claimed the bulk of the South China Sea is "China's Sea".
  - China has also extended its claim to Indonesia's shores.
  - It has a full-fledged military base in Djibouti, and full access to port facilities at Gwadar, in Baluchistan.
  - It is also trying to strengthen Pakistan's navy by providing it 4 frigates and 8 submarines.
- **India's response to China:**
  - China's footprint across the Indian Ocean is growing rapidly.
  - India has responded together with other regional and outside powers, for eliminating piracy by China

## **Are India's maritime issues settled with others?**

- India's maritime boundary issues are settled with all its neighbours including Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Maldives.
- Also India has no maritime boundary tensions with Pakistan.
- India works cooperatively with littoral states in the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC).
- It has agreed on maritime norms and measures for disaster relief and economic cooperation.
- India is also partnering Japan for economic cooperation and connectivity across its shores to Africa.
- India has signed a number of maritime agreements, to build infrastructure and promote sea and air links with the Agalega Islands with Mauritius.
- Mauritius has been offered credits for mutually agreed security projects, including the provision of a 1300-tonne coastal patrol vessel.
- Similar agreements have been made with Seychelles.

## **Steps taken by India**

- India has offered better exchange of information, including timely intelligence on maritime movements across the Indian Ocean.
- Trilateral naval exercises with the US and Japan are now undertaken regularly.
- There have been recent maritime exercises with Russia at its Pacific port of Vladivostok.

## **Way forward**

- India's coastal lines of communication across the Indian Ocean should be closely monitored and secured.
- Steps need to be taken for cooperation with oil-producing/energy partners.
- Australia should be integrated in India's naval cooperation area.
- India should have an appropriate architecture for security/military cooperation in place on the eastern shores of Asia or the 'Indo-Pacific Region'.

## TOPIC 2

### What are bots?

#### Relevancy

- GS Prelims, GS Mains paper III
- Science and Tech
- Good and bad bots
- Merits, demerits

#### What are bots?

- A bot is a computer programme designed to work automatically.
- It is mainly used to gather information on the Internet or perform repetitive jobs.

#### Some popular examples of bots

- Apple's Siri
- the Google Assistant
- Amazon's Alexa
- Microsoft's Cortana

#### Benefits

- **A bot is mainly used to:**
  - Gather information: Bots in such guises are called web crawlers.
  - For automatic interaction using instant messaging, instant relay chat or other web interfaces.
  - Dynamic interaction with websites

#### Drawbacks

- **Malicious bot:**
  - It is a self-propagating malware that infects its host and connects back to a central server(s).

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- Malicious bots can gather passwords, log keystrokes, obtain financial information, relay spam.
- These kind of bots can exploit back doors opened by viruses and worms, among other things.
- Bots are also related to automated fake accounts on Twitter and Facebook.
- Efforts are being made to restrict these bots from spreading misinformation on the respective platforms.

## **Application of 'good' bots**

- Artificial intelligence-based bots are increasingly being used by organisations and entities to provide customer care, and sales and marketing services.
- Bots are the new apps according to Microsoft.
- According to studies, by 2021 more than 50% of enterprises will be spending more per annum on bots and chatbot creations than traditional mobile app developments.
- Some banks have also introduced AI-based chatbots that are capable of interacting with users and answering information-related queries.

## **Challenges to bots**

- Sometimes a computer gets infected with virus, malware or a bad bot which needs to be taken care of to protect the data.
- If a computer is negatively affected there will be symptoms such as:
  - a slow Internet
  - crashing of computer for no apparent reason
  - pop-up windows and advertisements appearing even when a web browser is not being used
  - friends and family receiving mails which were not sent
  - a fan going into "overdrive" when the device is idle

## **Precautions and remedies**

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- It is important for users to have a good anti-malware software.
- All software should be regularly updated.
- Most importantly the system updates should not be ignored.

## TOPIC 3

### All about 'Tripura's peace model'

#### Relevancy

- GS Prelims, GS Mains paper I, II, III
- Tripura model, Peace model
- HDR Tripura, Lessons for other states

#### What is 'Tripura's peace model'?

- In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Tripura opted for a completely unique path to peace.
- Its main features are:
  - It was not dependent just on the security measures
  - The model involved major investment in human development
  - There was significant people's participation in the implementation of socio-political and economic policy.
- More than 10 years later the human development consequences of peace in Tripura have been extra ordinary.

#### History of Tripura Human development Report

- The state started forming its 'Tripura Human Development Report' in 2005 and 2006.
- Insurgency was on the decline by the time the Tripura Human Development Report 2007 was published.
- But the acts of insurgent violence still continued.
- An important part of the Report was the idea that the people had to be free from threats to life and limb in order to achieve their full potential.
- Economic and social investments and people's involvement are essential components of the peace process in the State.

#### Efforts for peace in the state

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- The repeal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, or AFSPA, in 2015 in the State was a huge step in favour of peace.
- By 2016 changes of an atmosphere of peace and personal safety in the State, even in its most remote reserved-forest settlements were visible.
- Much progress has been achieved over the last 10 years in several indicators of human development, especially in education, health, and employment.

## **Literacy and health indicators**

- Literacy has been described as being “the basic personal skill that underlies the whole modernizing sequence.”
- Separatist militancy in Tripura was major hindrance to the spread of literacy and schooling of children.
- But progress in literacy has been rapid in Tripura since last 20 years.
- According to the Census, the share of literate persons above the age of seven years rose from 73% to 87% between 2001 and 2011.
- National Family Health Survey (NFHS) data indicates that the infant mortality rate (IMR) in Tripura almost halved between 2005-6 and 2014-15.
- It has declined from 51 per thousand live births to 27 per thousand.

## **Employment and labor force participation data**

- Peace and security enable the expansion of employment and livelihoods.
- The growth rate of Tripura’s ‘per capita State Domestic Product (SDP)’ has been over 8% per annum in eight out of the last 10 years (2005-6 to 2014-15).
- In the last four years when per capita Net Domestic Product (NDP) of India was growing only at around 5% per annum, Tripura grew at 9 to 10% a year.
- For the last five to six years, Tripura has ranked first among the States of India with respect to the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).
- Over the last decade there is a rise in labour force participation and work force participation particularly among women in the state.



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- The work participation rate (WPR) rose among men and women, rural and urban, over the seven year period while there was a decline at all-India level.

## **Challenges in road ahead**

- The dramatic rise in work participation rates especially among women has been the improvement in the security environment.
- This has encouraged women to enter the labor force in much larger numbers than before.
- The rise in work and labor force participation rates is both a positive achievement and a challenge.
- The challenge is to generate adequate employment opportunities to absorb the increasing number of women who are willing to join the work force.

## **Conclusion**

- Tripura's path of development respects administrative autonomy for regions where people of the Scheduled Tribes are predominant in the population.
- It follows the principle of unity of its diverse people which makes it an inclusive path of development.
- As a legacy it encompasses the poorest in the population and the most far-flung of forest-based human settlements as well

## TOPIC 4

### What are the recent priorities of U.S.A. w.r.t. Asia?

#### Relevancy

- GS Mains paper II
- International relations, APEC summit
- Indo-Pacific dream
- Multilateralism

#### Recently

- U.S. President Donald Trump has concluded his 12-day 5-nation tour of East Asia.

#### What is U.S.'s stand on China?

- There is passive resistance to China's expansive ambitions by calling them 'freedom of navigation' and condemnation of 'predatory' economic practices.
- President advocated for America's commitment to democracy, human rights, and free trade.
- U.S.-Philippines made commitment to share best practices to prevent illegal drug use, which is a problem afflicting both countries.
- U.S. seems to be wanting to be friends with North Korea and China lately through speeches of President.
- There were many business deals and security partnerships with these Asian partners in his recent visit.
- U.S. has started to refer the region as Indo-Pacific region which clearly acknowledges India's prominence in the region.

#### Changing existing arrangements

- **New Arrangements:**
  - According to Mr. Trump it is time the terms of engagement between these countries and the U.S. changed.

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- He said that the U.S. has been taken advantage of by all countries and global institutions, particularly the World Trade Organisation (WTO).
- But he blamed the U.S. administrations before him and not these Asian countries.
- He offered a renewed partnership with America based on bilateral trade agreements.
- His vision of 'Indo-Pacific dream' is that U.S. will abide by the principles of fair and reciprocal trade with any Indo-Pacific nation that wants to partner with it.
- **Current situation of trade with US**
  - The U.S. has trade deficits with all the five countries that Mr. Trump visited.
  - In the case of the Philippines, which has a small surplus with the U.S., the relationship is less about trade but more for "military purposes.
  - Mr. Trump has pointed to the agenda of 'buy our goods and services' alone.
  - According to him countries should be strong, independent, and prosperous, in control of their own destinies, and satellites to no one.
- **End of multilateralism:**
  - He called for ending multilateralism.
  - It is expected of U.S. to soon cut a deal with China on its own, regardless of its potential impact on other countries.
- **Anti-Korea and Anti-Saudi Arabia stand:**
  - Mr. Trump asked APEC countries to join hands with the U.S. in stopping North Korea's nuclear adventurism.
  - He pitched for Japan, Vietnam and South Korea to buy weapons from them while turning them against Saudi Arabia.

## Implications of Trump's policy

- First, these countries will get technology, capital and access to America's market.
- Second, America offers a security guarantee and a predictable world order based on multilateral trade and security pacts.
- **Example:**

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- China has been a beneficiary of this system.
- And the rise of China has added additional buoyancy for neighbouring countries.
- The friction between China and its neighbours heightened as China's ambitions grew after the 2008 financial crisis.

### **Conclusion**

- All this reflects a respect for the autonomy of these countries but largely American disinterest.
- Mr. Trump's "Indo-Pacific dream" may not appear to be much of a dream for most countries in the region.
- American strategy is for the countries to open their markets and cooperate on security issues.
- But currently they don't seem to have a strategy for the management of such a global economic system.