

General Studies – 2; Topic: India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Cementing India - China relations

1) Introduction

- The relations between the two Asian giants have looked tired and worn in recent months.
- There are lot of perception-related issues due to the historic baggage of China-India relations.
- India has actively started engaging with the countries in Chinese Periphery, so as to have some bargaining position on different issues.
- But, all these efforts are too little to deliver any tangible results.

2) Reasons for Strain in the Relations

- China's position on India's Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) bid
- Its incomprehensible stand on the listing of Masood Azhar under the U.N. Security Council's 1267 Committee
- Deployment of Chinese military and engineering assets in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir
- Development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)
- China's claim over the state of Arunachal Pradesh, occupation of the Shaksgam Valley in Ladakh

3) Why should India and China repair their ties?

- **Strategic**
 - a) Better relationship between two countries will bring peace in the region and they can fight against terrorism and underdevelopment in the region.
 - b) China too faces the tune of infiltration and drug trafficking. So indulging in mutual intelligence sharing and cooperation is required for a more secured border.
 - c) Keeping Pakistan under check and getting support for UNSC membership could happen if we have a more sustained and defined relationship with China.
- **Economy**
 - a) With Global uncertainty, growing Protectionism and anti Globalization trend, India and China, both beneficiary of liberal international order must work closely to sustain the same.
 - b) Trade between two nations is over \$70 billion. Hence both nation's are markets for each other's economy.
 - c) China has huge forex reserve and India needs foreign investment for projects like Make in India.
 - d) Both nation's are members in NDB, AIIB, BRICS, BCIM etc and hence good relations among them can bring economic prosperity
- **Asian Emergence**
 - a) With Russian economy crumbling, India and China are two of the great powers who would have a greater to play.
 - b) Thus a cordial relationship is vital for holistic development of the region
- **Terrorism**
 - a) The two countries have a common interest in curbing religious radicalism and terrorism.
 - b) Kashmir and Xinjiang, both contiguous neighbours, have similar challenges posed by terrorism and separatist movements.

4) Why is India reluctant to join OBOR initiative?

- India's reaction to China's OBOR has been non-committal, mainly because of the CPEC through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

- The Chinese have chosen to disregard the sovereignty issues surrounding the dispute between India and Pakistan over the State of J&K
- There is anticipation that it would serve the China's interest more and can dominate the trade policies
- The legacy of 1962 war and India's crushing defeat still inflicts upon the relations between both.
- India prefer US dominated sea lanes of communication(SLOCs) over land routes shows that it has less confidence in China than US

5) How can India and China repair their ties?

- Establishing a friendship and cooperation treaty.
- A free trade agreement (FTA) covering goods and services, cross-border investment, R&D, standards and dispute resolution to boost bilateral relations.
- Resolve the boundary question based on negotiations held so far.
- Both the countries must appreciate and support each other's regional aspirations, be it OBOR or membership in NSG/ UNSC.
- Both must work closely to eliminate rising nuclear stockpile and proliferation in the region to maintain stability
- People to people contact, tracing the work of Chinese traveller Huen zang and Indian counterpart Kashyap Matenga in relation with Buddhism.
- promotion of business and people-centred connectivity, and mutual confidence-building measures
- Both countries need to show sensitivity and respect for each other's core concerns and interests

6) What can India do as a counter measure to CPEC?

- India should explore the development of connectivity between Tibet and India, especially through the Sikkim sector into Bengal.
- Opening of ties between India and the Xinjiang region of China is also worth examining.
- Providing for air connectivity between Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang province and New Delhi as one of the OBOR linkages
- This would help in people-to-people ties, trade and commercial contact and counter-terrorism cooperation between India and China.