

3. A decision without Forethought

Prelims Level: Governance

Mains Level: GS-II Government Policies and Interventions for Development in Various Sectors and Issues Arising out of their design and Implementation.

Why in News?

- Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 has been causing ruckus, protests and violence all over the country.
- In such a scenario, the impact of various protests in the North-East region and the impact of these protests on the Indian foreign policy and its image are discussed in brief in this article.

Impact of CAA related protests in Northeast and other aspects:

1. The North-east region acts as a major link between India and ASEAN countries. It also acts as a gateway to South-East Asian economies. In such a scenario, various projects such as Asian Trilateral Highway, BBIN corridor, Kaladan Multimodal project will be affected due to the tension and unease in the North-east region.
2. India and Japan have established Act East Forum in 2017. It is expected to serve as a driving force to advance India-Japan cooperation in the North-east. But the violent protests would be having drastic effect on this initiative too.
3. As part of its Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy, Japan has been investing in various development projects of the North-east.
 - ✓ Japan has decided to invest Rs 13,000 crore in different projects in the Northeast
 - ✓ Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is engaged in building Northeast road network connectivity, water supply projects and economic modernisation of the region.
 - ✓ Japan is financing the construction of India's longest bridge between Dhubri in Assam and Phulbari in Meghalaya.
 - ✓ Contributed official development assistance loans for the North East Road Network Connectivity Improvement Project.
 - ✓ India and Japan have decided to launch 'Japan India North East Bamboo Initiative' in view of the significance bamboo plays in the region. Industrial uses of bamboos and forest management will be pursued.
 - ✓ Promotion of Japanese language learning in the Northeast areas.

- ✓ Asia Health and Well-being Initiative: Japan has decided to pursue skill development of caregivers in the Northeast region.
 - ✓ Private Japanese organisations are also financing a host of development projects in the region.
4. Due to the CAA, Japan may have a rethink on these development projects, this might also affect Japan's engagement in projects it is pursuing in the rest of the country.
 5. Volatility in Northeast can possibly be a setback to the collaborative efforts between India and Japan in providing an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative.
 6. Japan is also a member of the Quad, which came into existence to counter Chinese economic prowess and unlock India's potential in the Indo-Pacific. This would also take a beating in the current scenario.
 7. With situation in Kashmir already volatile, during such a situation is it prudent to open another frontier of vulnerability in Northeast.
 8. UN has also described Citizenship Amendment Act of India as a fundamentally discriminatory legislation.
 9. US, UK and Canada and other countries have issued travel advisories to those visiting the Northeast. This affects the image of India in the Global Scenario.
 10. India is getting recently described as the Internet shutdown capital of the world. India's stand on the Human rights has also taken a beating.
 - ✓ Thus, the CAA has had an adverse effect not only on India's domestic affairs but also on important foreign policy concerns. At the global level, India has always been respected for its diversity and inclusive character. This image of India needs to be preserved and cultivated further.