

3. The LoC agreement of 2007 deserves a relook

Prelims Syllabus: International Relations

Mains Syllabus: GS-II International Relations | Bilateral, Regional and India and Neighbourhood Relations



Why in News?

- According to former special envoy Satinder Lambah, the Line of Control (LoC) agreement (2007) was ready to be signed by then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistan President General Musharraf.
- However, it was disrupted by the stand-off with the judiciary in Pakistan (2007) and the Mumbai 26/11 attacks (2008).

Highlights:

- Mr. Lambah publicly referred to the settlement in 2014. He further made it clear that India would never agree to give away any territory.
- In his book, he further expanded the idea that the “Line of Control has to be respected like a normal border between the two countries”.
- It should be noted that any initiative to restart the dialogue between both countries has been hampered by terrorist attacks.
- Moreover, Pakistan’s proposal to restore ties was impacted by India’s act to amend Article 370.

- **The relationship between the two land neighbours is grim as:**
 - ✓ There is no political contact at any level.
 - ✓ There is a lack of trade activities.
 - ✓ There is an absence of direct travel links by air, road, or rail.
 - ✓ Moreover, there are no High Commissioners in each other's countries.
 - ✓ The relations would further weaken after the recent terror attack in Poonch.

Other associated concerns:

- Unjust arrests and continued security crackdown on politicians and civil society.
- Stringent lockdowns and Internet bans.
- Targeting journalists.
- Cross-border terrorism and attacks on Kashmiri Pandits.

India-Pakistan Engagement:

- Despite ruptures in India-Pakistan ties, the relationship always veers towards engagement.
- All Indian Prime Ministers have continued to seek engagement with Islamabad and have often resorted to back-channel processes.
- The back-channel mechanism is believed to be run between India's National Security Adviser and Pakistani intelligence.
- They focus on preventing hostilities. For instance, the post-Balakot strike in 2019, the LoC ceasefire agreement of 2021, etc.
- The two sides have also discussed matters like the reappointment of High Commissioners and the restoration of visas and people-to-people ties.
- Notably, the Indian Home Minister has also hinted the initiatives like the Kartarpur Corridor, and Sharda Peeth Corridor (a corridor to the temple in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir's Neelum Valley).

Way Ahead:

- India and Pakistan should revisit the LAC agreement. However, there have been many changes in the last 15 years. For instance,
- India revoked J&K's special status and Statehood (August 2019).
- It also revoked Article 35(A).
- Gender parity in property inheritance was already implemented in 2002. The J&K High Court directed against the provision of taking away property rights of women who married outside the State.

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- The residents of J&K should be given a fair chance to prosper without the constant overhang of war and a proxy war.
 - The non-territorial agreement should be revisited and adopted by both sides.

Conclusion:

- The LoC has remained stable for almost half a century. Any military operations in LoC are unlikely to occur.
- Moreover, Pakistan's own internal crises (political and economic) puts it on a weak wicket.
- The bigger challenge for India is the Chinese threat at the Line of Actual Control.

