

Ceasefire Violations at LoC with Pakistan

Why in news?

Pakistani troops violated the ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kamalkote sector of Jammu and Kashmir.

What are the recent happenings?

- Shelling and retaliations along the LoC with Pakistan is becoming an everyday occurrence.
- All of May 2020, the Pir Panjal range, which fronts the Kashmir Valley, has seen mortar and small arms firing.
- The recent firing led to the unfortunate death of Sepoy Lungabui Abonmli.
- Sepoy Abonmli is the third soldier to succumb to shelling in this area in recent times.
- Two other soldiers with injuries were airlifted to the Command Hospital in Udhampur, due to shelling in Poonch sector.
- The recent shelling in Haji Pir in Uri claimed the life of Akhtar Begum, a civilian.
- This has been a worrying trend, as when the shells reach deeper they fall in residential areas, in villages such as Churunda and Silikote.
- When shells begin raining, villagers panic, leave their homes and run further, to temporary shelters.

How are the diplomatic ties currently?

- Unfortunately, aspects of relations with Pakistan in other spheres are not encouraging as well.
- Two personnel from the Indian mission in Islamabad were suddenly missing.
- All this implies further breakdown in relations.
- It makes evident that India and Pakistan are unable even to adhere to reciprocal protocols regarding staff posted in the missions.
- Earlier, India expelled two Pakistan High Commission officials, Abid Hussain Amid and Mohd Tahir Khan, on charges of espionage.
- Whether or not it is a tit-for-tat reaction by Pakistan for this, India must take steps to ensure its diplomatic personnel do not face such harassment.

What should be done?

- The incidents are an additional disruption to life for the J&K people, in the aftermath of the dilution of Article 370 in August 2019 and the COVID-19 lockdown.
- Shelling should not be allowed to be a regular occurrence.
- India needs to re-engage with Pakistan and end the ceasefire violations along the border.
- But currently, ceasefire with Pakistan along the Line of Control is obviously not working.
- The government thus needs to build bomb shelters for civilians until normalcy returns.
- It is also time to consider if the Indian staffing in Pakistan is commensurate with the vastly shrunk bilateral relations or not.
- The pandemic rages and there are travel curbs and reduced face-to-face opportunities now.
- So, it might be prudent to temporarily maintain only essential mission staff in Pakistan till India is able to obtain trust and stability in the ties.

Source: The Hindu

