China-Occupied Kashmir

What is the issue?

- Pakistan is training and funding separatists, and pretending to have solidarity with the people of Kashmir.
- China is supporting Pakistan perpetuate its own territorial grab in the trans-Karakoram Shaksgam Tract of Kashmir.

What is China doing?

- China treats the J&K issue as a bilateral dispute to be resolved between India and Pakistan.
- It turned a blind eye to the constitutional mischief by which Pakistan's has acquired complete sway over Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK).
- China ignores Pakistan's agenda of integrating Gilgit-Baltistan as its fifth province.
- Yet, China questions the establishment of the Union Territory of Ladakh.
- It had termed it as a 'unilateral' attempt to change the status quo in the Kashmir region.

Why China doesn't have the right to question?

- China has no locus standi to comment on India's internal affairs.
- This is because of the fact that the former princely State of J&K acceded to India through the Instrument of Accession in 1947.

What is the Shaksgam valley issue?

- The Shaksgam valley, part of PoK, was handed over by Pakistan to China through an illegal border agreement in 1963.
- However, the continuing Chinese occupation of Kashmir's territory does not find adequate mention in the contemporary discussion on this issue.
- China occupies 5,180 square kilometres in the Shaksgam Valley in addition to 38,000 square kilometres in Aksai Chin.
- China and Pakistan have colluded to confuse these facts.
- They promote the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which runs through parts of Indian territory under their respective occupation.

What is the history?

- Historically, China played an insidious role in changing the frontiers of J&K through fictitious claims and alliances with local chieftains.
- China exploited the 'Great Game' between British India and Russia in the late 19th century.
- It pitched territorial claims far beyond the traditional frontiers of Xinjiang.
- It gradually crept into areas in the Taghdumbash Pamirs and the Karakorams, well south of its frontier along the Kun Lun mountains.

What did the British do?

- In 1936, the Mir of Hunza was asked by the British to abandon his rights in the Taghdumbash Pamirs as well as in the Raskam valley.
- But the Shaksgam valley to the south-west of Raskam and the Aghil range remained with the Mir of Hunza.
- This remained the traditional frontier of British India until independence, inherited by India following J&K's accession in 1947.
- It is this border that was blatantly compromised by Pakistan in its so-called agreement with China on March 2, 1963.

What did Pakistan do?

- Pakistan gave in to China's expansionist designs and spurious claims to a boundary along the Karakoram Range.
- By doing so, it enabled China to extrapolate a claim line eastwards along the Karakoram Range in Ladakh.
- This collusion allowed China to claim the whole of Aksai Chin.
- After the Partition of the Indian subcontinent, from 1953, Chinese troops actively started transgressing the frontier in eastern Hunza.
- Pakistan, spotting an opportunity in the rapidly deteriorating India-China ties in the late 1950s, decided to pander to the Chinese.
- Pakistan chose to downgrade the historical claims of the Mir of Hunza and eventually signed away the Shaksgam valley to China in 1963.

What makes China a party to the dispute?

- The provisional nature of the territorial settlement between China and Pakistan is evident in Article 6 of the 1963 agreement.
- It states that this agreement will be replaced by formal Boundary Treaty that will be made with Chinese government, after the settlement of the Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India.
- In effect, this agreement has established China as a party to the dispute.
- China has a vested interest in legitimising its illegitimate gains in the trans-Karakoram tract.

- India should look into China’s illegal territorial occupation.

Source: The Hindu

