Impact of China's New Border Law

What is the issue?

China has issued a new land border law for which India has raised several concerns.

What is the new law?

- It was proposed in March 2021 during the crisis along the Line of Actual Control
- The law, which took effect on January 1, 2022, lists various responsibilities for civilian and military authorities in China to take steps to safeguard national sovereignty.
- The law has 62 articles in 7 chapters, covering delineation and border defence to immigration, border management and trade.
- The issuing of new names comes under Article 7, which calls for promoting border education at all levels of government.
- Article 22 calls for the Chinese military to carry out border drills and to resolutely prevent, stop and combat what it calls invasions, encroachments and provocations.

What is reason behind the move?

- In the new law China's Ministry of Civil Affairs had issued standardised names for 15 places in the Indian State of Arunachal Pradesh.
- In 2017, Chinese authorities first issued six "official" names for places in Arunachal Pradesh.
- That move was seen at the time as a retaliatory measure after the Dalai Lama visited the State.
- Now the new list is more extensive. It has 15 names, including 8 towns, 4 mountains, 2 rivers and 1 mountain pass, covering 11 districts in Arunachal from Tawang in the west to Anjaw in the east.
- These names are to be used henceforth on all official Chinese documents and maps. It shows Arunachal as "south Tibet".
- The move indicates a broader new Chinese approach to territorial disputes.
- China views it important to **safeguard their national sovereignty,** better maintain national security and manage border-related matters
- It gives a legal level amid regional tensions, including frictions with India.

How has India responded?

- India responded to the move saying that assigning invented names will not alter the status on the ground and Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India.
- The naming is a largely symbolic gesture.
- It will not change facts on the ground.

How China's move will affect India-China relations?

- The new law will give legal cover and formalise the Chinese military's transgressions across the LAC in 2020.

- It would give fresh impetus to carry out the construction of infrastructure.
- This includes frontier villages in border areas, including some in disputed territories along the border with India and Bhutan
- Under the border village construction plan, launched in 2017, China is building “first line and second line villages” in border areas.
- It also moves residents mainly herders to live in the new dwellings along the borders with India, Bhutan and Nepal as well.
- In November 2021, satellite images surfaced showing a second Chinese cluster of 60 newly built dwellings.
- India claims these as its territory in Arunachal Pradesh, around 100 km east of another village built in late 2020.
- The territory in question has been under Chinese control since 1959 and previously had Chinese military installations there
- But the civilian constructions were seen as further bolstering Chinese claims essentially in a land that is still disputed and under negotiation by the two sides.
- India expressed concern saying that such unilateral decision can have implications on the existing bilateral arrangements on border management.

Reference

1. https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/explained-what-will-be-the-impact-of-chinas-border-law/article38089888.ece

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