Indo-China Dispute

What is the issue?

- While Indian Army has gained an advantage by taking the Chushul heights, a diplomatic and military long haul seems likely.
- Until Line of Actual Control (LAC) is delineated, the Chinese can be expected to continue violations of Indian Territory.

How dangerous is the situation?

- Both China and India have deployed over two regular divisions (about 40,000 troops) each along the Eastern Ladakh.
- Along the LAC, the The People's Liberation Army (PLA) has now occupied many areas which were earlier considered 'disputed'.
- There is a lack of trust after the Galwan incident.
- The Kailash Range was occupied by India and shots were fired along the LAC by the PLA.
- The situation on the ground, particularly in the Chushul sector, is very tense and explosive.
- Besides, accusations and counter-accusations flying thick and fast are only adding to the tension.

What does the Chinese domination of Fingers area mean to India?

- On the north bank of Pangong Tso, there are eight major finger-like spurs coming down to the Tso (lake).
- From heights along these spurs, one can observe military activity on the north and south banks of Pangong Tso.
- The Chinese and Indian (perceived) LACs are about 8 kilometres apart (between Finger 4 and Finger 8) in this area.
- In May 2020, the PLA occupied the disputed area on Finger 4.
- It blocked Indian troops, which used to earlier patrol the areas up to Finger 8.

What does India get by occupying the Chushul sector?

- Heights in the Chushul sector enable observation of the adversary's military activities in the visible area.
- It has the ability to bring down accurate direct and indirect fire on the

chosen enemy target.

What if the talks don't lead to any disengagement on the ground?

- In the current situation, it will be a long haul on both the diplomatic and military fronts.
- India's forces on the ground have to remain alert to ensure that the PLA does not take any advantage during the lull created by diplomatic talks.

How India deals with the Chinese in certain regions?

- **Demchok** - The PLA has been objecting to India's non-military developmental activities for India's civilian population.
- About 90 km from Demchok, at Chumar, it had made territorial claims and military advances in 2014.
- **Sub Sector North** - There has been an LAC-related dispute here.
- In 2013, the PLA troops set up a temporary camp in our area, but later withdrew.
- They have again occupied some area claimed by India, which resulted in additional deployment of troops by both sides.

What are the reasons for the disputes?

- All these disputes in Eastern Ladakh, and elsewhere, are related to the **LAC** that has **not been delineated** on the maps.
- India has made many efforts, even at the highest level, but the Chinese have steadfastly refused.
- An ambiguous LAC enables the Chinese to maintain a political and military pressure on India.
- In the recent incidents, China has violated all the confidence-building agreements and the perceived alignment of the LAC until now.
- Unless the LAC is delineated on the map, such violations of Indian Territory by the PLA are likely to continue.

What logistics challenges will Indian troops face?

- India has never deployed such large forces like Army, Air Force and paramilitary forces in Ladakh earlier.
- As road access to Ladakh will not be available for six months, the winter stocking requirement for civilians and the military is huge.
- The IAF will remain heavily committed for essential daily maintenance and movement of troops whenever necessary.

What are the chances of the Ladakh situation leading to a conflict?

- Climatically, intense conflict chances remain high until mid-November.
- The winter months will reduce the intensity, but one cannot expect a complete stoppage.
- Aerial and ground surveillance, infantry and artillery deployments will continue.
- Today, one cannot imagine any armed conflict situation without synergy and jointness among armed forces.
- The IAF has a crucial role at the strategic and operational levels.

Would the situation turn into a two-front threat?

- There is a concern of a two-front threat with Pakistan also throwing its weight behind China.
- China and Pakistan are already engaged in a 'collusive threat' (engaged in hidden avowed goals) vis-à-vis India.
- China is unlikely to bank on Pakistani collaboration in any large-scale conflict with India.
- However, in the current scenario, a limited China-Pakistan military collaboration in the Karakoram Pass region cannot be ruled out.
    1. It could activate the diversionary military movements by Pakistan in Siachen and Kargil sectors.
    2. It could intensify proxy war conditions in Jammu & Kashmir.

What could India do?

- National security, particularly armed conflict issues, requires a 'whole of the government' approach.
- Unfortunately, India hasn't come out of the habit of working in ministerial silos and stovepipes.
- This habit in the past have often resulted in military operations not achieving the desired strategic goals.
- Military personnel should be directly involved in defence policy-making.
- They should be involved while negotiating issues with foreign leaders.

Source: The Indian Express

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