

## **Patrolling Points on the LAC**

### **Why in news?**

The recent disengagements between India and China on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) are around the patrolling points.

### **What exactly are Patrolling Points?**

- PPs are patrolling points identified and marked on the LAC.
- They are patrolled with a stipulated frequency by the security forces.
- They serve as a guide to the location of the LAC for the soldiers.
- They act as indicators of the extent of 'actual control' exercised on the territory by India.
- By regularly patrolling up to these PPs, the India is able to establish and assert its physical claim about the LAC.

### **Are all the PPs numbered?**

- The PPs where there are identifiable geographical features, such as a pass, no numerals are given.
- Only those PPs where there are no prominent features are numbered.

### **Are these Patrolling Points manned?**

- The PPs are not posts and thus not manned.
- Unlike on the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan, the border with China is not physically held by the Army all along.
- They are just physical markers on the ground, chosen for their location.
- They have no defensive potential or tactical importance for the Army.

### **How the claims are made?**

- The claim of these PPs is asserted by the Army or joint Army-ITBP patrols as they show more visible presence in these areas.
- This is done by physically visiting PPs frequently, as the deployment has moved closer to the LAC and due to improved infrastructure.
- As the Chinese may not see when the Indian patrols visit these PPs, they will leave cigarette packets or food tins with Indian markings behind.
- That lets the Chinese know that India was in control of these areas.

### Who has given these PPs?

- These PPs have been identified by the high-powered China Study Group, starting in 1975 when patrolling limits for Indian forces were specified.
- It is based on the LAC, after the government accepted the concept in 1993, which is marked on the maps with the Army in the border areas.
- But the frequency of patrolling to PPs is not specified by the CSG.
- It is finalised by the Army Headquarters in New Delhi, based on the recommendations made by the Army and ITBP.

### What is this frequency?

- The frequency of reaching various PPs are given in the annual patrolling programme.
- Based on the terrain, the ground situation and the location of the LAC, the duration for visiting each PP is specified.
- It can vary from once a month to twice a year.

**Source: The Indian Express**

