Recent Developments in India - China Relations.

Why in News?

India and China are communicating again instead of ignoring each other. This raises the question of whether they will return to their pre-Galwan "normal" relationship or if tensions will rise again.

What are the India's Engagements with China?

- **Engagement & Confidence Building (1988–2019)**
  - **1993 & 1996** - Agreements for peace along LAC.
  - **2003** - India recognized Tibet, China accepted Sikkim.
  - **2005** - Strategic Partnership Agreement signed.
  - **2008 -2019** - Economic ties flourished; China became India's largest trade partner.
- **Border Tensions & Strategic Competition (2020–Present)**
  - **Doklam (2017)** - Standoff over Bhutanese territory.
  - **Galwan (2020)** - Deadliest clash since 1962; 20 Indian soldiers martyred.
  - **Ongoing Standoff** - Military buildup, disengagement talks.
  - **Economic Actions** - India banned ***Chinese apps, tightened FDI*** rules, reduced import dependency.
  - **Geopolitical Competition** - India strengthens Quad ties; China expands in South Asia & Indian Ocean.

What are the Four Pillars Since 1988 in India China Relations?

- **Summitry (Regular Diplomatic Meetings**) - High level meetings between leaders are essential for managing relations.
  - Wuhan Summit (2018) and Mamallapuram Summit (2019) to reduce tensions and increase cooperation.
  - Regular interactions foster direct communication and engagement.
- **Border Negotiations-** Both nations have engaged in talks to resolve territorial disputes.
  - Agreements like the 1993 and 1996 Border Peace Accords aim to maintain peace along the LAC.
  - Special Representatives dialogues and Working Mechanisms address border issues.
- **Confidence Building Measures -** Focus on reducing military tensions and ensuring stability along the LAC.
  - Measures include no use of force policy, military hotlines, and joint military exercises.
  - The 2020 Galwan Clash exposed limitations of CBMs, leading to renewed tensions.
- **People to People (P2P) Ties** - Strengthening cultural, educational, and economic exchanges.
  - Initiatives include tourism, student exchanges, and trade partnerships.
  - P2P ties have weakened due to border conflicts and security concerns post 2020.

What are the Military and Strategic Issues with China?

- **Border Disputes & Military Clashes** – LAC is the de facto border between India and China.
  - **Violent Clash** - In June 2020, resulted in the deaths of 20 Indian soldiers and an undisclosed number of Chinese troops, marking the 1st fatal clash in over 40 years and

worsening relations.
    - **December 2022** - Troops clashed near Yangtse in Arunachal Pradesh without fatalities, highlighting ongoing tensions along the LAC.

- **Strategic Military Developments**- China has enhanced border infrastructure with roads, airstrips, and military installations for quick troop mobilization.
    - India is also improving its infrastructure for better defense readiness.
    - **Upgrades to the G219 highway** - running parallel to the LAC, improve military logistics and rapid troop movement in Aksai Chin.
    - **Advancements in military technology** – by china includes new generation warplanes, raise concerns in India about the growing strategic gap.
- **Diplomatic Engagements & Confidence** - Diplomatic talks are held to reduce tensions; recent meetings stressed mutual support, but the border dispute remains unresolved.
    - **21st Round of India** - China Border Talks (2023) emphasized stability and peace with no major breakthroughs.
    - **Various agreements** - such as the ***2013 Border Defence Cooperation Agreement,*** are in place to maintain peace, though their effectiveness has been questioned after recent clashes.
- **Geopolitical Dynamics**
- **Alliances and Partnerships** - India's involvement in groupings like the Quad (U.S., Japan, Australia & India) is viewed by China with suspicion, while China's Belt and Road Initiative and its ties with Pakistan are concerns for India.
- **Trade Relations** - Despite strategic tensions, bilateral trade has grown, with China being 1 of India's largest trading partners.
    - However, trade imbalances and security concerns have led India to implement measures such as banning certain Chinese apps and tightening foreign direct investment regulations.
    - ***Example - Tightened FDI Rules (2020)***

        - *India made government approval mandatory for FDI from countries sharing land borders, primarily targeting Chinese investments in Indian tech startups.*

What are the Measures to Improve Indo-China relations?

- **Wuhan (2018) and Mamallapuram (2019)** - Summits helped ease tensions. Expanding such summits to include mid-level officials could enhance communication.
- **Border Peace Agreements** - 1993 & 1996 maintained LAC peace. Strengthening these with technology driven CBMs like shared surveillance could reduce tensions.
- **China a key trading partner for India**- Aiming for balanced trade, reducing the trade deficit, and investing in joint ventures would stabilize relations.
- **Expanding educational exchanges** -tourism, and digital platforms can improve mutual understanding and perceptions.
- **BRICS and SCO**- Can enhance Cooperation & can address global issues like climate change, health, and sustainability.
- **Establishing regular dialogues** - Or multilateral forums on security concerns, including Afghanistan and the South China Sea, can prevent conflicts.

What Lies ahead?

- Since 1988, Indo-China relations have maintained balance through summitry, border negotiations, and confidence-building measures.
- Improving ties requires sustained diplomacy, border resolution, economic and cultural exchanges, and addressing security concerns.
- A stable future can be achieved through mutual respect, cooperation, and peaceful conflict resolution.

To Solve Mains question - Click here

Reference

Indian Express | India China Relations

