News Analysis (22 Feb, 2019)

UNSC Condemns Pulwama Attack

United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has condemned the suicide bombing in Pulwama, Jammu & Kashmir, in which over 40 Indian paramilitary forces personnel martyred.

- UNSC has urged all States to cooperate actively with the Government of India and all other relevant authorities in this regard.
- The members of the Security Council expressed their deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims, as well as to the Indian people and the Government of India, and wished a speedy and full recovery to those who were injured.
- Pakistan-based terrorist organization **Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM)** has claimed responsibility for the attack.
- The attack has received global condemnation from a number of countries including the United States, Russia, France.
    - New Zealand parliament has passed a resolution condemning the attack.

Significance of Condemnation

- The condemnation of the attack by UNSC is a **diplomatic win for India** and can be seen as a part of **India's efforts to isolate Pakistan** at International level.
- There may also be a shift in China's stand against Jaish-e-Mohammad Chief Masood Azhar as the statement by UNSC names JeM as the perpetrator of the attack.
- Though JeM has been under sanction by UNSC since 2010. China has continuously vetoed resolution listing JeM chief Maulana Masood Azhar as a "global terrorist" at the **UN Security Council Resolution 1267 sanctions committee** for the last 10 years.

UNSC Resolution 1267 Sanctions Committee

- This committee oversees the implementation of sanctions pursuant to UNSC

resolutions 1267, 1989 and 2253.

- It is one of the most important and active **UN subsidiary bodies working on efforts to combat terrorism,** particularly in relation to Al Qaeda and the Islamic State group.
- It discusses UN efforts to **limit the movement of terrorists, especially those related to travel bans, the freezing of assets and arms embargoes for terrorism.**
- India has made at least three attempts in the last decade — in 2009, 2016 and 2017 — to list JeM chief as "global terrorist". All attempts have been blocked by China at Pakistan's behest.

Why China Blocks UNSC Resolution 1267 against Azhar?

- Official line by China for blocking the proposal is that it wants to "uphold the authority and validity of the 1267 Committee". China also insists that there **isn't enough evidence** to designate him a "global terrorist".
- But the real reasons are far from the official stand and includes
  - protecting its "all weather" ally **Pakistan**.
    Good relations with Pakistan and international protection for terrorist proxies like JeM provide China with insurance against terrorist attacks on CPEC infrastructure and the thousands of Chinese working on them.
  - business interests in the **China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)**
    Chinese firms have invested close to $40 billion in around 45 CPEC projects. China is determined to protect this gigantic investment of money, personnel and time.
  - making things difficult for its **Asian rival India.**

About UNSC

- The United Nations Charter established **six main organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council.**
- It gives **primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security to the Security Council,** which may meet whenever peace is threatened.
- All members of the **United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council.**
- While other organs of the United Nations make recommendations to member states, only the Security Council has the power to make decisions that member states are then obligated to implement under the Charter.
- UNSC has 15 members of which 5 are permanent and 10 are non-permanent members. Non-permanent members elected for two-year terms by the UN General Assembly.
- Five permanent members are- **US, UK, France, Russia, and China.**
- **India has served in UNSC as non-permanent members for seven terms (a total of 14 years), with the most recent being the 2011–12 term.**

India-Asean Expo and Summit

Recently the Minister of Commerce & Industry inaugurated the **4ᵗʰ India-ASEAN Expo and Summit** 2019 in New Delhi.

> It is organised by the **Department of Commerce** in collaboration with industry body **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI).**

Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)

- FICCI is a **non-government, not-for-profit organisation established in 1927.**
- It is the **largest and oldest apex business organisation** in India whose history is closely interwoven with India's struggle for independence, its industrialization, and its emergence as one of the most rapidly growing global economies.

- The Summit is a platform for the policy makers, industry captains and business leaders to come together and forge a common vision for India and ASEAN's mutual growth and progress.
- The exposition will showcase the best initiatives of the business and industry from India and ASEAN countries across various sectors of mutual cooperation such as Infrastructure, Manufacturing, Manufacturing & Engineering, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), healthcare, etc.
- The Summit is a testimony of India's dedicated efforts towards **Act East policy.**

India and ASEAN

- India-ASEAN trade and investment relations have been growing steadily, with **ASEAN being the second largest trading partner** of India,after China,with a total bilateral merchandise trade of USD 81.33 billion, i.e. **10.58% in India's overall trade.**
- India and ASEAN represent **fast moving economies.**
  > According to the recently published **United Nations' World Economic Situation and Prospects Report 2019**, India and ASEAN are set to **outpace the global growth (3.0 % in 2019).**
- India continues to be the fastest growing major economy and is expected to grow at 7.2% in 2019 and ASEAN at 5.2%.
- This is a manifestation of the **new emerging world economic order**, wherein India and ASEAN have a significant place.
- India currently is working with ASEAN on **multiple connectivity projects, through land, water, and air. E.g.:**
  - India-Myanmar-Thailand Highway, Kaladan Multinational Transit Transport Project,
  - Project Development Fund for **CLMV countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar**

and Vietnam).
- ASEAN remains central to the economic integration of the Indo-Pacific region through **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).**
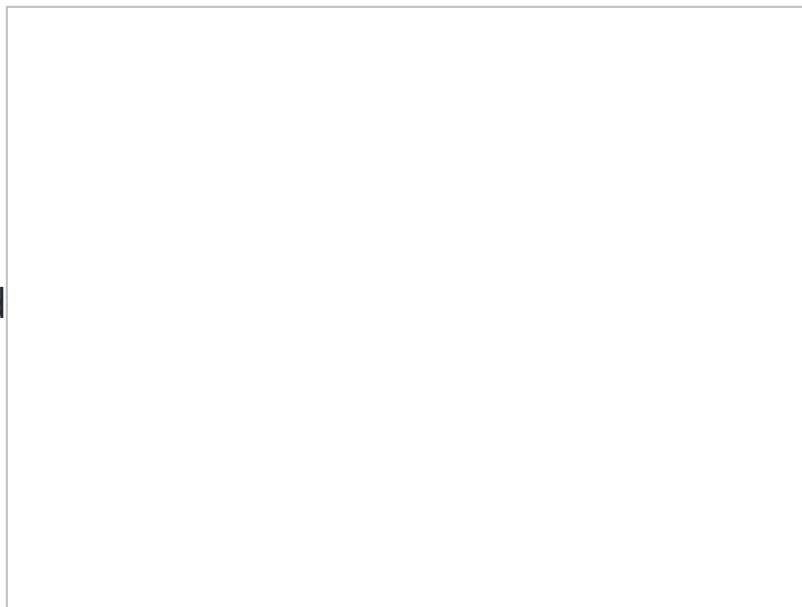
Challenges

- Both sides need to **explore opportunities through connectivity projects** in order to remove physical impediments to trade and further **integrate the two regions for better economic and trade relations.**
- Increasing the **rate of technology adoption and providing financing mechanisms** is another challenge to expand growth.

Forest Dwellers Face Eviction

The Supreme Court has ordered the **forced eviction of more than 1,000,000 tribal and other forest-dwelling households** from forestlands across 16 states after their claim as forest dwellers have been rejected under the Forest Rights Act of 2006.

> A three-judge Bench of Supreme Court has ordered the Chief Secretaries of many of these States to evict those whose claims as forest dwellers have been finally rejected under the law.

Background

- **Forest Rights Act**, passed in 2006, requires the government to give back **rights over traditional forestlands to tribals and other forest-dwellers**.
- Tribals and other forest-dwellers are permitted to lay claims before authorities through a laid down process in the Act.
- These authorities, based on criteria set in the law and regulations, are required to

either approve or reject the claims with several layers of appeals being available to claimants.

- The court's orders came while hearing a case filed by wildlife groups and retired forest officers in 2009 raising a legal challenge on the constitutional validity of the law.
- The petition, besides challenging the constitutional validity of the law, also demanded that those whose claims had been rejected be evicted as 'encroachers'.
- Hearing the case, back in March 2018 the Supreme Court had asked states to report on the status of eviction of those claimants whose claims have been rejected and the total extent of the areas from which they have been evicted.

Concerns

- Several activists have pointed to the inaction from the forest department officials in granting forest rights to these tribal and forest dwellers, issuing land rights documents and other identity cards. For example,
  - According to activists the tribal settlements in the Eastern Ghats have not been granted forest rights patta due to the apathy from forest department officials and hence face the risk of eviction.
- Tribals and other forest-dwellers have been living in the forest area for centuries. Their livelihood depends on non-timber forest products they harvest, such as food. Hence, the forest department must ensure that they get community rights documents.

Forest Rights Act, 2006

- The Forest Rights Act (FRA) was introduced to address the "historic injustice" and decades of rights denied to the tribals and forest dwellers due to the colonial forest laws in the country.
- FRA recognises that forest dwelling communities have three kinds of rights:
  - **Individual rights** (occupation and cultivation);
  - **Community rights** (grazing, fuel-wood collection, fishing, ownership and disposal of non-timber forest produce); and
  - Rights to protect,regenerate, conserve and manage **community forest resource (CFR)** areas.
- The recognition of CFR rights is the most empowering provision of the Act because it **restores Gram Sabha's control over governance of forests from the forest department**, thereby democratising the country's colonial forest governance as a whole.
- The Act has given **executive and judicial power to Grama Sabhas** in recognising the rights of the tribals. There are sabhas (committees) in the ward level that is the primary tier to recognise and recommend the rights of tribal hamlets. Then there are Sub-Divisional Level Committees (SDLC), followed by District-Level Committees (DLCs).

Important Facts for Prelims (22nd February 2019)

Digital India Awards

- The **National Informatics Centre (NIC)** to organize the fifth edition of **Digital India Awards on February 22, 2019.**
- The Digital India Awards recognizes the **digital presence and e-Governance efforts of various Government institutions across the country.**
    - Central Government Ministries/ Departments/ Offices/ Institutions, State Government Departments/ Offices/ Institutions, District Administrations and Indian Missions Abroad are eligible to apply for the Digital India Awards.
- The awards **instituted in 2009** are one of a kind in India for honoring the efforts of different Government entities in the digital realm.
- Since its inception the Digital India Awards have seen **four editions, beginning from 2010,** and **biennially** being conferred in 2012, 2014, & 2016.

National Portal of India

- The Portal has been developed as a **Mission Mode Project (MMP) under the National E-Governance Plan (NEGP)** of the Government. The portal was **launched in November 2005.**
- It is designed, developed and hosted by the **National Informatics Centre (NIC),** a premier ICT organization of the Government of India under the aegis of the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology.
- The objective behind the Portal is to provide a single window access to the information and services being provided by the Indian Government for citizens and other stakeholders.

National Informatics Centre

National Informatics Centre (NIC) is a premiere S&T institution of the Government of India, **established in 1976**, for providing e-Government / e- Governance Solutions adopting best practices, integrated services and global solutions in Government Sector.

National E-Governance Plan (NEGP)

- The Government approved the **National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), comprising of 27 Mission Mode Projects** and 8 components in **2006.**
- In the year 2011, **4 projects - Health, Education, PDS and Posts** were introduced to make the list of 27 MMPs to **31 Mission Mode Projects (MMPs).**
- Within NeGP, "mission mode" implies that projects have **clearly defined objectives, scopes, and implementation timelines** and milestones, as well as **measurable**

outcomes and service levels.
- The 31 mission mode projects (MMPs) are **further classified as state, central or integrated projects.** Each state government can also define five MMPs specific to its individual needs.

BharatNet

- Recently the **Digital Communications Commission (DCC)**, the inter-ministerial panel of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), has given in-principle nod for **monetisation of fibre assets of BharatNet.**
- These assets will be offered to the **private telcos through auction, lease for 20 years or by outright sale.**
- This comes against the backdrop of concerns over poor utilization of digital infrastructure that has been created across more than 100,000 gram panchayats in the country.
- Earlier, the **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai)** had also urged the government to sell off these fibre assets to private players.
- BharatNet is a **flagship mission to connect 250,000 gram panchayats with broadband** being implemented by **Bharat Broadband Network Ltd (BBNL), a special purpose vehicle set up under DoT in February 2012.**
- **National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN)** which was launched in **October, 2011** was renamed as **Bharat Net Project in 2015.**