



Mains Practice Question

Q. "In the wake of recent Galwan Valley incidents, India needs a comprehensive strategy to solve the border issues with the neighbouring country". Discuss. (250 words)

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Approach

- Introduce by briefly highlighting the recent developments in Galwan Valley.
- Discuss in short the reasons that resulted in the Galwan Valley Clash.
- Suggest comprehensive steps to be taken to deal with this problem.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

- Recent border clash between India and China at Galwan valley claimed the lives of many Indian as well as Chinese soldiers.
- The incident represents a watershed in India's relations with China and marks the end of a 45-year chapter which saw no armed confrontation involving loss of lives on the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
- Also, Indian and Chinese armies are engaged in the standoff in Pangong Tso, Demchok and Daulat Beg Oldie in eastern Ladakh.

Body

Causes of the Galwan Valley Clash

- The recent violent clash is the result of the **Chinese side's departure from the consensus to respect the LAC** and attempted to unilaterally change the status quo.
 - It is their way of attaining a political goal with military might while gaining more territory in the process.
- The stand-off has escalated more due to the **infrastructure projects that India has undertaken** in recent years.
 - India is building a strategic road through the Galwan Valley - close to China - connecting the region to an airstrip.
 - China is opposed to any Indian construction in the area.
- **The Line of Actual Control (LAC), is not demarcated**, and China and India have differing ideas of where it should be located, leading to regular border "transgressions" and sometimes lead to such clashes.
 - Both countries' troops have patrolled this region for decades, as the contested 2,200-mile border is a long-standing subject of competing claims and tensions, including a brief war in 1962.

Comprehensive Steps to Deal With the Problem

- **Devolution of comprehensive China strategy:** Strong political direction, mature deliberation and coherence are keys to handling the situation.
 - The Army can make tactical adjustments and manoeuvres to deter the Chinese.
 - Further, a comprehensive China strategy should be devised by the government of India in collaboration with the ground level acting forces.
- **Strategic communication:** The responsibility of effective strategic communication rests with political leadership and diplomatic set up. The Special Representative (SR) mechanism can be best used to establish the proper communication links.
- **Clarification on LAC:** India should take the initiative to insist on a **timely and early clarification of the LAC**. Pockets of difference of alignment as perceived by each side have to be clearly identified and these areas demilitarised by both sides through joint agreement pending a settlement of the boundary.
 - Diplomatic channels must continue to be open and should not be fettered in any way because their smooth operability is vital in the current situation.
- **Counterbalancing China in other areas:** India's leverage and balancing power within the Indo-Pacific and the world beyond stems from its strong democratic credentials, the dynamism of its economy, its leading role in multilateral institutions.
 - The **strategic advantage** of its **maritime geography** is an asset which must be deployed much more effectively to counterbalance the Chinese ingress into this oceanic space that surrounds us.
- **Reconsider RCEP engagement:** India can also reconsider its stand on joining the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)**.
 - If India is to disengage from economic involvement with China and build the capacities and capabilities in manufacturing and in supply chains, it cannot be a prisoner of the short term.
 - Trade between two countries can have the potential to remove the military tensions.

Conclusion

- The events in Galwan Valley should be a wake-up call to India and its neighbouring countries (esp Bhutan) so as to devise a method to deal with Chinese aggressiveness.
- Such clashes provides an opportunity for India to align its interests much more strongly and unequivocally with the U.S. as a principal strategic partner and infuse more energy into its relations with Japan, Australia, and the ASEAN.