



US Imposes New Sanctions on China

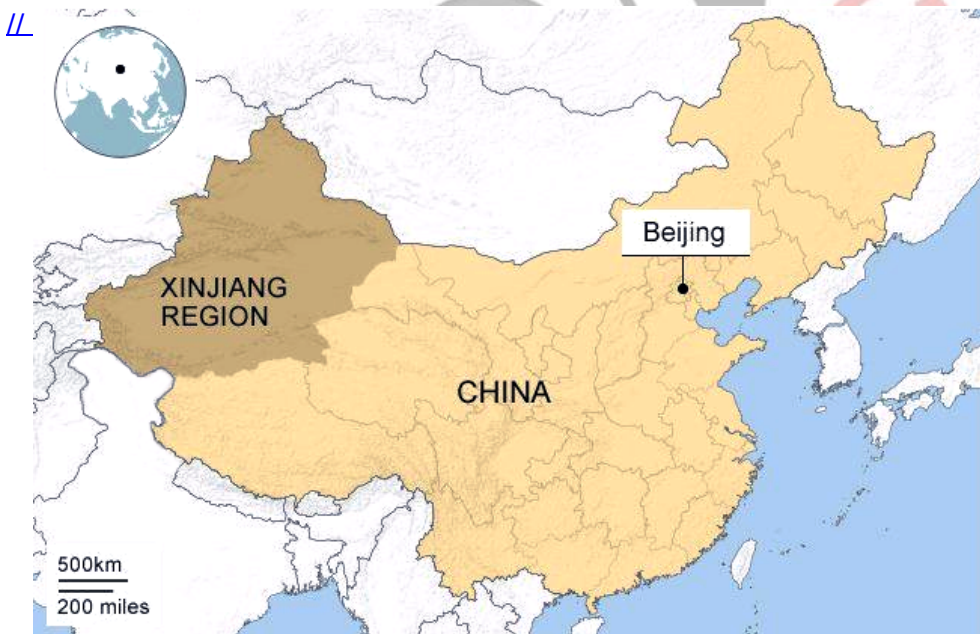
For Prelims: Uyghurs Muslims, Declaration for Uyghur Muslims, location of Xinjiang

For Mains: Sanctions on several Chinese biotech and surveillance companies, Human right violations in world, Issues related to Uighur Muslims

Why in News

The U.S is imposing new **sanctions on several Chinese biotech and surveillance companies** and government entities over **human rights abuses of Uyghur Muslims** in the **Xinjiang region** of China.

- **Xinjiang** is technically an **autonomous region within China** — its largest region, rich in minerals, and sharing **borders with countries like India, Russia, Mangolia and Afghanistan**.



Key Points

- **US Sanctions:**
 - The **US Commerce Department** is targeting **China's Academy of Military Medical Sciences** and its 11 research institutes that focus on **using biotechnology to support the Chinese military**.
 - The US Treasury Department is also set to **issue penalties** against several Chinese entities.
 - The move will **bar American companies** from selling components to the entities

without a license.

- The US administration supported **bipartisan legislation** that **bans imports into the U.S. from Xinjiang** unless companies can demonstrate the goods were not produced by forced labour.
- Earlier, in 2020 the **United States House of Representatives** approved a legislation calling for [sanctions on Chinese officials responsible for oppression of Uighur Muslims](#).
 - The bill calls for sanctions against those responsible for repression of Uyghurs and other Muslim groups in China's Xinjiang province.
 - The bill also calls on USA companies or individuals operating in the Xinjiang region to take steps to ensure their products do not include parts using forced labor of Uyghurs.
- **Declaration for Uighur Muslims:**
 - Recently, **43 countries have signed a declaration**, calling on China to ensure full respect for the rule of law for the Muslim Uighur community in Xinjiang.
 - The declaration was signed by the US and other countries accusing China of **human rights violations** and **ethnic cleansing against the Uighur Muslims**.
 - Similar [declarations](#) in 2019 and 2020 condemned China for its policies in Xinjiang, where United States has accused Beijing of carrying out genocide.
 - It also called for access to Xinjiang for independent observers, including the [UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#).
 - It noted the **existence of a large network of 'political re-education' camps** in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, where over a million people have been arbitrarily detained.
 - However, China claims its camps to be 'educational centres' where the Uighurs are being cured of "extremist thoughts" and radicalisation, and learning vocational skills.
- **China's Stand:**
 - China claims that Uighur groups want to establish an independent state and, because of the Uyghurs' cultural ties to their neighbours, leaders fear that elements in places like **Pakistan may back a separatist movement in Xinjiang**.
 - China has denied any abuses and says the steps it has taken are necessary to combat terrorism and a separatist movement.
- **India's Stand:**
 - The Indian government has maintained near **silence on the Uighur crisis**.

Uyghurs Muslims

- **About:**
 - The Uyghurs are a predominantly **Muslim minority Turkic ethnic group**, whose origins can be traced to Central and East Asia.
 - The Uyghurs speak their own language, similar to Turkish, and see themselves as culturally and ethnically close to Central Asian nations.
 - The Uyghurs are considered to be one of the **55 officially recognized ethnic minority communities in China**.
 - However, China recognises the community only as a regional minority and rejects that they are an indigenous group.
 - Currently, the **largest population of the Uighur ethnic community** lives in the Xinjiang region of China.
 - A significant population of Uyghurs also lives in the neighbouring Central Asian countries such as **Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan**.
 - **Xinjiang** is technically an autonomous region within China — its largest region, rich in minerals, and **sharing borders with eight countries**, including India, Pakistan, Russia and Afghanistan.
- **Persecution of Uyghurs:**
 - **Intrusion of Majority Han Chinese:** Over the past few decades, as economic prosperity has come to Xinjiang, it has brought with it in large numbers the majority Han Chinese.
 - They have cornered the better jobs, and left the Uyghurs feeling their livelihoods and identity were under threat.

- This led to **sporadic violence, in 2009** culminating in a riot that killed 200 people, mostly Han Chinese, in the region's capital Urumqi.
- **Suppression by State:** Uighur Muslims for decades have **suffered from abuses including persecution, forced detention, intense scrutiny, surveillance** and even slavery.
- **Systematic Effort to Suppress Uyghurs:** U.S. intelligence has established that China has set up a **high tech surveillance system** across Xinjiang that uses **biometric facial recognition** and has **collected DNA samples** from all residents, ages 12 to 65, in Xinjiang as part of a systematic effort to suppress Uyghurs.
 - China is choosing to **use these technologies to pursue control over its people** and its repression of members of ethnic and religious minority groups.

Way Forward

- All the countries should reconsider their position and **urge China to immediately stop the persecution of Muslims and the prohibition of Islam in Xinjiang.**
- It should adopt **multiculturalism** and accept the Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims of China as ordinary citizens equal to native Chinese.

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