

India China clash in Tawang sector

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Why in News?

- Yangtse in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh has been repeatedly targeted by Chinese PLA troops, seeking to dislodge Indian troops from vantage points.

News Summary

- In October 2021, the Chinese came to Yangtse in sizeable strength, close to 100 troops, and were confronted by an Indian patrolling unit.
- Recently, on December 9, army troops of both the countries again clashed in this region.



Image Caption: Tawang on map

Tawang Sector: A contested area

- Soldiers of the two sides clashed in an area called Yangtse, in the upper reaches of Tawang sector in Arunachal Pradesh.
- Tawang, indeed nearly all of Arunachal, is claimed by China.
 - It is one of the more serious dispute points between India and China in the overall border question.
- Within Tawang, there are three agreed areas of differing Indian and Chinese perceptions of the LAC.
 - A majority of these areas – Yangtse included – were identified by the two sides during multiple meetings. This includes:
 - Joint Working Group (JWG) in the 1990s,
 - during exchange of maps for the Middle Sector in 2000, and
 - comparison of maps for the Western Sector in 2002.
 - The remaining contested areas were identified over a period of time due to PLA actions.

IDENTIFYING THE AREAS OF DISPUTE	
IN JWG TALKS (1990S)	
■ WESTERN: Trig Heights, Demchok	north of Kugrang river, area of Kongka La, Spanggur Gap, east of Mount Sajum opposite Dumchele
■ MIDDLE: Barahoti	
■ EASTERN: Namka Chu, Sumdorong Chu, Yangtse, Asaphila, Longju-Bisa	
MAP EXCHANGE (2000)	BY PLA ACTION
■ MIDDLE: Kaurik, Mumri Dogri, Shipki La	■ WESTERN: North bank of Pangong Tso, south bank of Pangong Tso, Chumar, Galwan, Hot Springs
MAP COMPARISON (2002)	■ EASTERN: Dichu area, Dibang Valley (Fish Tail I & II), Lamang
■ WESTERN: North Samar Lungpa, east of Point 6556,	

Image Caption: Areas of dispute between India and China

Current situation in Tawang

- The Tawang sector is dominated by Indian troops who can spot Chinese patrols when they come forward.
- Every time movement is noticed, Indian troops move for a faceoff.
 - In 2016, around 250 Chinese troops showed up, crossing a point which India says marks the LAC.

Historical importance of Tawang sector

- Tawang is the birthplace of the sixth Dalai Lama and an important pilgrimage centre for Tibetan Buddhists.
- The 14th Dalai Lama took refuge in Tawang after he crossed over from Tibet to India in 1959, spending some days in the monastery there before proceeding further.

Context of India-China new crisis at Tawang

- The PLA's motivation for creating a new crisis along the disputed border, this time in the east, appears to be to extend the points of confrontation and keep the issue of India China border alive
- This is at a time when the world is engaged in overcoming multiple crisis emanating from the War in Ukraine.
- The Yangtse incident came days after China said that the joint India-US military exercise Operation Yudhabhyas had violated the terms of the 1993 and 1996 border agreements.
 - The 18th edition of the India-US joint military exercise Yudh Abhyas was held recently in Uttarakhand, about 100 km from the LAC.
 - The 1993 agreement deals with maintaining peace and tranquility along the LAC.
 - The 1996 pact was about confidence building measures in the military field along the LAC with China.

Recent aggressive actions of China in eastern sector

- As part of the Chinese strategy to assert its territorial claims over Indian territory, Beijing, in January 2022, announced Chinese names for 15 places in Arunachal Pradesh.
 - Earlier, in April 2017, its Ministry of Civil Affairs had issued official Chinese names for six places in the state.
 - China's national legislature in October 2021 adopted a new law on the protection and exploitation of the land border areas that came into effect on January 1, 2022.
 - The new law formalizes some of China's recent actions in disputed territories with both India and Bhutan.
 - It has deployed a high number of reserve troops along the LAC in the Eastern Command and has conducted annual training exercises of longer duration in depth areas.
 - Besides increased patrolling activities in the region, it has constructed dual-use border villages and troop habitats which can be used by both military and civilians.
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Q1) What is Tawang known for?

Besides being famous for its natural splendour, Tawang is known for its 400-year old monastery, i.e., Tawang Monastery. It is a Buddhist Monastery and a prominent pilgrim centre among the locals.

Q2) What is the importance of Yangtze to China?

The 700,000-square-mile Yangtze River basin provides water, transport, and food for almost one-third of China's 1.3 billion people and supplies more than 40% of the country's GDP.

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