



CURRENT AFFAIRS



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CANCELLING OF FREE MOVEMENT REGIME AT INDIA-MYANMAR BORDER

This article covers 'Daily Current Affairs' and the content details of 'Indian Government to End free movement Regime at Myanmar border'. This content is applicable in the "India and India's neighborhood" section of the UPSC CSE test.

GS 2 : India and its neighborhood

Why in the News?

The Indian government has vowed that it'll no longer allow free movement at the Myanmar border, meaning a visa will be needed to enter India. The Indian Government is planning to make a 300-kilometer smart hedge system between India and Myanmar, and work is anticipated to start soon.

About Free Movement Regime(FMR)-

- In 2018, the Free Movement Regime was brought as part of India's Act East Policy to strengthen India's ties with Myanmar. This allows those who live near to the India- Myanmar border to enter each other's nation for over to 16 kilometres without a visa they may cross with a border pass that's good for a time and stay for an outside of two weeks at a time.
- It's the duty of both governments to apply FMR for people living near to the border.
- The purpose of this governance was to encourage cross-border trade, marriages, and common festivity of leaves in further trans- border communities by the occupants.
- In 2020, the Manipur government formally put a stop to FMR.

Reasons to end the Free Movement Regime-

- **Misused by insurgents :** Insurgent groups use FMR to launch strikes against the Indian side and create unrest in North-East India. Many Insurgent groups like ULFA, NDB, NSCN-K etc. have launchpads in Myanmar.
- **High Influx of Anti-Junta rebels :** The Myanmar military overthrew the civilian government on February 1, 2021, announcing a one-year period of emergency. Since then thousands of anti-junta rebels have entered India creating an economic burden on the North-East part of the country and also deteriorating the relations between India and Myanmar.
- **Illegal activities :** There are worries over gun smuggling, human trafficking, drug smuggling, and illegal immigration as a result of the porous and unfenced border between India and Myanmar.
- **Deforestation:** The Manipur government has accused village heads for facilitating the deforestation by relocating migrants from Myanmar to new villages.

Significance of Myanmar for India

Geo-political significance :

- Myanmar is the only nation that lies at the intersection of India's "Act East" and "Neighborhood First" policies.
- Myanmar is an important member of BIMSTEC, ASEAN, MEKONG GANGA cooperation. Hence, Myanmar is important for India

Geo-economic significance :

- India is developing certain projects like India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) trilateral highway and kaladan multi-modal project in order to link India's landlocked north eastern states to Sittwe port of Myanmar.
- Myanmar has adequate Oil and natural reserves, which is important for India to tackle its concern about Energy security.

Geo strategic significance :

- Important for national security as local armed separatist groups like NSCN-K, NDB, ULFA etc are operating on Myanmar's soil.
- Proximity to Golden Triangle enable the environment for the traffickers to smuggle heroin and psychotropic substances into India
- Increasing China's role in Myanmar is undermining India's leadership role in South Asia. So can't go against Junta rule of Myanmar as it will further deteriorate the relation between India and Myanmar.

Steps taken for better relations between India and Myanmar

- In the Rakhine state of Myanmar, India has manufactured the Sittwe port as part of India's SAGAR Vision. This port is designed to serve as India's response to Kyaukpyu port, which is developed by China and in order to to strengthen China's geostrategic influence
- India signed an MOU with Myanmar for the "Rakhine state's development programme" under which India will build prefabricated housing in Rakhine State.
- India abstained from voting on the Myanmar resolution regarding Junta rule at various times at UNSC and UNGA.

Conclusion:

India needs a cautious and well-rounded strategy to address these issues, taking into account the complexity of the actual scenario. Complete cancellation on FMR will have an impact on the cultural assimilation of the people across the border.

Prelims Question

Q) What is a Junta?

A religious ceremony

Constellation of stars

A legal tender issued by government

A military group that rules a country after seizing power

Answer – **D**

Mains Question

Q) How China is impacting the relation between India and Myanmar and what steps are taken by India to tackle the issue of the rohingya refugee crisis in Rakhine state?

DEFINITION OF SLUM , ITS CHANGING NARRATIVE AND THEIR INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

UPSC MAINS SYLLABUSGS1 PAPER: URBANIZATION THEIR PROBLEM AND THEIR REMEDIES

WHY IN NEWS?

Recent article by **Nipesh narayan in The hindu newspaper on slums and changing narrative about their definition** issues challenges and their empowerment.

WHAT IS SLUM?

A slum is a neighborhood that has subpar housing that is unmaintained, crowded, and/or inadequately served, making it unsafe, unhealthy, and socially unattractive. While a single residence may meet this criteria, the phrase “rural” or “urban” is typically used to refer to larger areas. Like the impoverished who live in them, slums have always existed, but their numbers increased as industrial cities grew.

TIMELINE OF CHANGING PERCEPTION ABOUT SLUMS

First era (1950-60)-

The slums were viewed as a legacy of the country’s creation, the product of partition and the influx of a massive population into small, decaying residential zones. Example-old delhi’s katras. Introduction of the Slum Areas Act of 1956 which marked a pivotal moment that made government intervention plausible after an area was officially notified as a slum. After this act slums became legal entity and their citizenship rights were also ignored , there sites were very prone to demolition by government.

Second era (1970-80)-The narrative around slums changed from one of a place that needed to be eradicated to one of as a necessary evil that required advancement. Town planning became crucial in the governance.

Third era (mid 1980-late 90)- in 1985 National Commission on Urbanisation published its first report , where cities were consider as an asset than liabilities. Interventions in cities were justified based on economic considerations rather than social ones . Town planning suffered a setback while housing policy saw a major shift toward a more comprehensive strategy that addressed land, finance, and infrastructure concerns. During this time, the first two National Housing Policies were implemented. In addition, the National Slum Launching the Development programme brought back targeted funding for slum reconstruction from the union government. It was all based on data because the period depended on economic growth and the emphasis was on a variety of social and physical infrastructure.

Fourth era(2000-2014)-The definition of slums expanded with the aid of the census of 2001, giving rise to numerous specialized programs. Slums were formerly social issues but are now technical, economic items, emphasizing the effectiveness of implementation and economic growth.

CHALLENGES FACED BY SLUMS

Overcrowding: Tight quarters with little room for occupants are a common feature of slums. **Housing of poor quality:** Many slum dwellings are made of improvised materials and lack facilities and adequate

e foundations. **Water Scarcity:** Access to dependable, clean water sources is frequently limited in slum regions. **Poor Sanitation:** Unsanitary conditions raise the risk of disease because of inadequate sewage and waste disposal systems. **Absence of Essential Services:** Healthcare: Restricted availability of medical services and facilities. **Education:** Lower literacy rates are a result of inadequate educational facilities and resources. Poverty and Joblessness: **Limited Economic Opportunities:** Slum inhabitants frequently struggle to obtain steady jobs, which feeds the cycle of poverty. **Low Income:** Most people living in slum areas usually live below or on minimum income.

Discrimination: People who live in slums may experience prejudice and social stigma, which can cause them to become marginalized and shut out of normal society. The susceptibility to calamities **Lack of Resilience:** Slums are more likely to be affected by natural disasters since they are frequently situated in high-risk regions like floodplains or steep slopes. Low levels of security and high rates of crime: **Limited Law Enforcement:** There may not be enough police presence in slum areas, which raises crime rates and makes people feel uneasy. **Informal Settlements:** Because they frequently do not have a valid land title, people living in slums are at risk of being uprooted and evicted. **Health Issues:** Disease Outbreaks: Respiratory infections, waterborne illnesses, and vector-borne illnesses are among the diseases that are made more likely to spread when living circumstances are poor.

MEASURES TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT FOR THE AMELIORATION OF SLUMS

Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM)- The Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programmes (IHSDP) and Basic Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP) are being implemented with an emphasis on integrated slum development and basic services to the urban poor.

Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY)-

to give the urban poor who are unemployed or underemployed gainful employment. It does this by promoting self employment among those who fall below the poverty line, offering skill development opportunities, and paying wage workers for their labor when public assets are being built that will benefit society and the economy. This program is applicable to all of the nation's cities and towns.

Rajiv awas yojana-

Under the Scheme, States that agree to grant slum inhabitants property rights in exchange for providing them with a respectable place to live, basic civic and social services, slum redevelopment, and the construction of an inventory of inexpensive homes are given financial support.

The Interest Subsidy Scheme for Housing the Urban Poor (ISHUP), which offers a 5% interest subsidy on loans up to Rs. one lakh, is being implemented to help the urban poor get credit for housing loans at reasonable rates. RAY and this plan go hand in hand.

CONCLUSION- SINCE A VERY LONG TIME TIME URBAN POORS WERE SEEN IN BAD LIGHT , BUT IN RECENT TIMES DUE TO SOCIAL AS WELL AS POLITICAL CHANGES THEIR EMPOWERMENT AS WELL AS AMELIORATION HAS BECOME THE SUBJECT OF DEBATE.

PRELIMS QUESTION

Q1 What is the main reason why urban slums are spreading so quickly in developing nations?

- A) Absence of governmental directives
- B) Rapid migration from rural to urban areas
- C) Recession in the economy
- D) Insufficient progress made in technology

Answer B. Main reason for rising urban slums is rapid migration from rural to urban areas

MAINS QUESTION

Q- Explain the reason that leads to the accumulation of slums and mention measures taken by government for their amelioration?

Anuj Yadav

GLOBAL NUCLEAR ORDER

UPSC MAINS SYLLABUS GS2 PAPER: EFFECT OF POLICIES AND POLITICS OF DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ON INDIA'S INTERESTS

WHY IN THE NEWS?

1. With increasing polarisation in Russia – USA relations on the issue of the ongoing **Russia-Ukraine war** & subsequent eastward expansion of the **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)**, the **Global Nuclear Order** established through various treaties during and post Cold war period has come under severe tension.
2. In this light, **India's Nuclear policy** and its role as “**balancing power**” in the world holds tremendous importance.

ESTABLISHMENT OF GLOBAL NUCLEAR ORDER (GNO):

1. Under the “**Manhattan project**”, with efforts of Robert Oppenheimer, USA became the **first country** to possess Nuclear weapons in 1945 during the World War II period.
 2. The devastating effects of Nuclear weapons became known to the world after its use in the bombings of the **Hiroshima & Nagasaki**, Japan by USA to provide deathblow to the war.
 3. As Russia (erstwhile USSR) & USA entered into the **Cold war period (1945-1989)**, a **nuclear weapon race** ensued with both nations trying to outdone each other by developing ballistic missiles.
 4. Following the **1962 Cuban Missile Crisis**, when US & Russia came perilously close to launching a nuclear war, both U.S. President **John F. Kennedy** and Russia's General Secretary **Nikita Khrushchev** understood two political realities:
 1. First, as the two nuclear superpowers, they needed **bilateral mechanisms** to prevent tensions from escalating to the nuclear level.
 2. And, second, nuclear weapons are dangerous and, therefore, their **spread should be curbed**.
 5. It was this convergence on the issue of curtailing the spread of Nuclear weapons which created the **Global Nuclear Order (GNO)**.
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GLOBAL NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT POLICY:

1. The hotline established between Russia & USA in 1963 gradually developed into **nuclear risk reduction centres**.
2. It was followed by **arms control negotiations** as the two nuclear superpowers sought to manage their nuclear arms race and maintain strategic stability.
3. The **Geneva Convention 1965** to curb the spread of nuclear weapons was followed by the **Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT)** in 1968.
4. The NPT has proved to be successful as despite dire predictions of more than 20 countries possessing nuclear weapons by the 1970s, (there were actually 5 in 1968 – the U.S., U.S.S.R., U.K., France, and China), only 4 countries have since gone nuclear, i.e., **India, Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan**.
5. Further, in 1969 **SALT-1 (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks)** concluded with both sides agreeing not to build new Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) silos.
6. However, such arms control did not end the U.S. – U.S.S.R. nuclear race; as in fact, their arsenals grew from 28,000 bombs in 1962 to over **65,000 bombs** in the early 1980s.

EVOLUTION OF INDIA'S NUCLEAR POLICY:

1. India's Nuclear policy embarked under the "**Dual Intent strategy**" of First Prime Minister JL Nehru & Homi J. Bhabha.
2. The **Atomic Energy Commission (AEC)** was established under Atomic Energy Act 1948 with Homi J. Bhabha as the Chairman.
3. After **Indo-China War 1962** and development of Nuclear weapons by China in 1964, it became imperative for India to develop its own arsenal to ensure National security.
4. Thus, India **refused to sign NPT in 1970** on the following grounds:
 1. The NPT defines "nuclear weapons states" as those that **tested devices before 1967**, which means India cannot ever be one
 2. **No fixed timelines** have been mentioned for disarmament
 3. NPT is unfair treaty as nuclear weapon states have no obligation to give them up while **non-nuclear states are not allowed to equip themselves**
5. In 1974, India conducted its first nuclear test known as **Smiling Buddha** under Srimati Indira Gandhi.
6. Subsequently, India conducted its 2nd nuclear test called as **Operation Shakti in 1998** under Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and declared itself as "**de-facto**" Nuclear state.
7. Due to this Internationally not sanctioned test, India was ousted from the **Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG)**, which seek to **prevent nuclear proliferation** by controlling the export of materials, equipment and technology that can be used to manufacture nuclear weapons.
8. India finally managed to have some relief when the US relented and agreed to sign a civil nuclear deal with India in 2008 also known as **the 123 Agreement**.

Under this, India signed a civil-military separation plan and **India-IAEA safeguard agreement**. In return, US diplomacy helped us to get NSG waiver.

INDIA'S CURRENT NUCLEAR DOCTRINE:

In the year 2003, India adopted a Nuclear doctrine based on "**NO FIRST USE**" (NFU) policy. Certain key aspects of the draft were:

1. India would **not initiate** a nuclear attack on any country.
 2. India would not use nuclear weapons on **non-nuclear states**.
 3. India's nuclear arsenal will be used for the **sole purpose of defence** and would serve as a deterrent against external nuclear attacks.
 4. The retaliatory 2nd strike to a first nuclear attack would be massive and would inflict unacceptable damage on opponent.
 5. India would adopt the **Nuclear triad model** to develop capability of launching nuclear attacks on 3 fronts i.e. **land, air, and water**.
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RISING ISSUES AFFECTING GNO:

Growing polarisation between Russia & USA due to expansion of NATO has brought the initiative of Nuclear Disarmament to a standstill:

1. For example, in 2002, the U.S. withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (**ABM Treaty**) & Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (**INF Treaty**) on grounds that Russia was violating it.
 2. The only remaining agreement, **New START**, will lapse in 2026 as its verification meetings were suspended during the COVID19 outbreak and never resumed.
 3. Russia de-ratified the CTBT to bring it on a par with the U.S., raising concerns about the resumption of nuclear testing.
 4. More recently, the nuclear submarine **AUKUS deal** (Australia, U.S., U.K.) with Australia, a nonnuclear weapon state, is raising concerns in the NPT community
 5. With **China** developing its own Nuclear capable missiles & submarines, it has become imperative for India to **revive & restore Global Nuclear Order (GNO)**.
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WAY FORWARD:

Moreover, Russian nuclear sabre rattling to warn the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the U.S. against escalation in Ukraine has *revived nuclear concerns*. The old definitions of strategic stability no longer hold and thus it is important for India to ensure that its "**balancing role**" between two extreme blocs bear fruits to curb the use & production of Nuclear weapons.

UPSC MAINS 2024 PRACTISE QUESTIONS:

Q: In the context of the recent developments in Global Nuclear Order, critically analyse India's Nuclear policy. Also provide suggestive measures to restore the "disarmament policy" in increasingly polarised world. (15M, 250 Words)

Suyash Rai