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JANUARY 2020



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IDSA JANUARY 2020

1. KILLING OF QASSEM SOLEMANI

Why in news?

Iran's top security and intelligence commander, Major General Qassem Soleimani, was killed in a US drone attack in Baghdad.

Who was General Soleimani?

- General Soleimani was killed in an airstrike, for which the US later claimed responsibility.
- Soleimani, was in charge of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).
- IRGC was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the US in 2019.
- The Quds Force undertakes Iranian missions in other countries, including covert ones.
- Soleimani, who had headed the Quds since 1998, had looked after intelligence gathering and covert military operations.
- He had also drawn immense influence from his closeness to Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.
- He was seen as a potential future leader of Iran, according to various reports.
- Given Soleimani's influence, observers have equated his killing with the killing of a U.S. Vice President.
- More than anyone else, Soleimani has been responsible for the creation of an

arc of influence, which Iran terms its 'Axis of Resistance'.

- It extends from the Gulf of Oman through Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon to the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

What was the role of Soleimani in Iran's Defence?

- He was the architect of Iran's military expansion in West Asia (or the Middle East) through the creation and sustenance of armed militias that acted as Iranian proxies.
- In 1979, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's rebellion toppled the Shah in Iran.
- Soleimani, then 22, joined the Ayatollah's Revolutionary Guard.
- During the Iran-Iraq War, Soleimani was sent to the front with the task of supplying water to soldiers.
- But, he ended up undertaking reconnaissance missions, and earning a reputation for bravery.
- In 1998, Soleimani was made head of the Quds Force, which launched his rise to power.
- Khomeini had created the prototype in 1979, with the goal of protecting Iran and exporting the Islamic Revolution.
- In 1982, Revolutionary Guard officers were sent to Lebanon to help organise Shia militias in the civil war.
- This eventually led to the creation of Hezbollah.



- The IRGC including the Quds Force has contributed roughly 125,000 men to Iran's forces.
- It has the capability of undertaking asymmetric warfare and covert operations.

What was Soleimani's experience with the U.S.?

- As Quds head, Soleimani briefly worked in cooperation with the US.
- This was during the US crackdown in Afghanistan following 9/11; Soleimani wanted the Taliban defeated.
- The cooperation ended in 2002 after President George W Bush branded Iran a nuclear proliferator, an exporter of terrorism, and part of an "Axis of Evil".
- The US was accusing Soleimani of plotting attacks on US soldiers following the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which eventually toppled Saddam Hussein.
- In 2011, the Treasury Department placed him on a sanctions blacklist.
- In recent years, Soleimani was believed to be the chief strategist behind Iran's military ventures and influence in Syria, Iraq and throughout the Middle East.
- Soleimani has sought to reshape the Middle East in Iran's favour, working as a power broker and as a military force.



Why US opted the execution of Soleimani?

- The Department of Defense issued a statement underlining Soleimani's leadership role in conflict with the US.
- General Soleimani and his Quds Force were said to be responsible for the deaths of hundreds of American and coalition service members and the wounding of thousands more.
- He had orchestrated attacks on US coalition bases in Iraq over the last several months.
- The IRGC FTO designation highlights that Iran is an outlaw regime that uses terrorism as a key tool of statecraft.
- The IRGC, part of Iran's official military, is said to have engaged in terrorist activity or terrorism since its inception 40 years ago.
- As per the U.S., the IRGC has been directly involved in terrorist plotting; its support for terrorism is foundational and institutional, and it has killed US citizens.

What are the implications?



- The strike has left the Middle East vulnerable, with possible repercussions beyond the region.
- Iranian President Rouhani said the killing would make Iran more decisive in resisting the US.
- The Revolutionary Guards said anti-US forces would invite revenge across the Muslim world.
- Reportedly, US officials were braced for Iranian retaliatory attacks, possibly including cyberattacks and terrorism, on American interests and allies.
- Israel, too, was preparing for Iranian strikes.
- The killing could have a ripple effect in any number of countries across the Middle East where Iran and the US compete for influence.
- The State Department urged US citizens to leave Iraq immediately.
- Oil prices have already jumped by \$3 a barrel.
- In India, a high-level meeting involving senior officials was held to assess the impact of a price rise and to review contingency measures.

2. US-IRAN RIVALRY, RISING TENSIONS

Why in news?

Iran launched ballistic missile attacks at American troops in two military bases in Iraq in retaliation for the assassination of Iran's General Qassem Soleimani.

What is the brief history of US-Iran rivalry?

- While the US and Iran have been at loggerheads for over four decades, tensions have sharply risen under the Donald Trump Administration.
- Trump was a vocal critic of Iranian policies and its nuclear programme even before his election in November 2016.
- In May 2018, he withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) signed between Iran and P5+1 (representing five members of the UN Security Council plus Germany) and re-imposed economic sanctions on Iran.
- Since then, the situation in the Persian Gulf has been on the boil with several tit-for-tat actions raising the chances of a direct military confrontation.
- In June 2019, the US and Iran were on the verge of war after Iran shot down an unarmed US surveillance drone over the Strait of Hormuz.
- At the time, President Trump had remarked that the US decided to desist from military action only at the last minute considering the disproportionate casualty Iran would have suffered.
- The situation again came to a head in September 2019 after the drone attacks on Aramco oil processing facilities in Khurais and Abqaiq in Saudi Arabia.



- Though Yemen's Houthi rebels had claimed responsibility for the attacks, both the US and Saudi Arabia blamed Iran for targeting the Saudi oil installations.
- The current escalation is largely a result of the simmering situation in Iraq since October 2019.

How US made use of Iran's internal tensions?

- Iraq has witnessed a series of protests against corruption, ineffective governance and economic hardships as well as Iranian and American meddling in government and politics.
- The protestors had on more than one occasion targeted the Iranian consulates in different Iraqi cities including Najaf and Basra.
- Reports suggest that over 500 Iraqis have lost their lives due to action taken by police and PMF against the protestors in 2019.
- To counter popular discontent against Iran, Kataib Hezbollah, an Iran-backed Iraqi Shiite militia, had organized a protest in Baghdad which culminated in the attack and arson at the US Embassy on December 31.
- The US blamed General Soleimani of authorizing the attack on its embassy.
- It also revealed that the decision to eliminate Soleimani was taken in order to neutralise an imminent attack on the US interests that he was planning.

- According to US Department of Defence Soleimani was "actively developing plans to attack American diplomats and service members in Iraq and throughout the region" and that "this strike was aimed at deterring future Iranian attack plans."

What is the reaction of Iran in this regard?

- Soleimani's killing has evoked angry reactions from Tehran and Baghdad.
- Many senior Iranian and Iraqi leaders have condemned the American strike and have called for avenging Soleimani's death.
- Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called an extraordinary meeting of the Supreme National Security Council to review the situation after the US strike.
- The outpouring of public angst against the US action on the streets of Tehran, Mashhad and Ahvaz during Soleimani's funeral procession indicated the popular sentiment prevailing in Iran.
- Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif tweeted that "The US bears responsibility for all consequences of its rogue adventurism."
- On January 08, Iran attacked important US military bases in Iraq. Khamenei termed the attack as a "slap in the face" of the US. Zarif, however, was more circumspect when he tweeted that Iran took the action in "self-defense under Article 51 of UN



Charter” and that “we do not seek escalation or war.”¹

- After initial speculations about casualties, it became clear that the missile attack did not lead to any American or Iraqi loss of life. President Trump stated that “Iran appears to be standing down, which is a good thing for all parties concerned and a very good thing for the world.”¹² Their statements seem to underline that both parties wish to avoid a full-blown war at the moment.
- However, this does not indicate cessation of hostilities. Both the US and Iran have the ability to indulge in covert activities to harm each other’s interest. Tehran can use its proxies in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon to mount attacks against the US military personnel and installations in the region. Kataib Hezbollah (KH) and other Shiite militias can start insurgency within Iraq to harass the US forces there, especially since their deputy commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis too perished in the attack that killed Soleimani. The KH has launched rockets targeting the US Embassy in Baghdad and the al-Balad airbase nearby, housing the US Air Force personnel, though this also did not lead to any casualty.
- In the long term, Iran might push for the complete ouster of the American military from both Iraq and Syria. On January 05, the Iraqi Parliament

passed a resolution calling “to end the presence of any

How Iran retaliated?

- Iran launched ballistic missile attacks at American troops in two military bases in Iraq in retaliation for the assassination of Iran’s General Qassem Soleimani.
- Iran targeted Erbil, the capital of the Iraqi Kurdistan in the north.
- Al-Asad in the west, which is some 400 km away from the Iranian border, also faced attacks.
- The attacks were both an act of retaliation and a show of its capability.
- It is the first direct attack on U.S. forces by Iran in the current round of tensions between the U.S. and Iran.
- There were no American casualties, and only minimal damage was caused in the attacks.

What are the concerns with growing US-Iran rivalry?

- The US and Iran have been engaged in an intense geopolitical rivalry, but so far both had largely acted through proxies and regional allies.
- Iran is the only regional power that resists American military dominance in West Asia (or the Middle East).
- Iran may be a weaker power compared to America’s conventional military might, but it is a formidable rival.
- It not only has ballistic missiles and a wide range of rockets but also a host



of militias under its command across the region.

- It could have made an invasion and air strikes on its territories extremely costly for the U.S. and its allies.
- It could also have disrupted global oil supply by attacking the Gulf waterways.
- By any assessment, a direct war would have been catastrophic.

3. SOLVING INDO-BANGLA MIGRANT ISSUES

What is the issue?

If properly implemented NRC would make the India-Bangladesh relationship more sustainable.

What is NRC and its significance?

- The National Register of Citizens (NRC) is a register of all Indian citizens whose creation is mandated by the 2003 amendment of the Citizenship Act, 1955.
- It has been implemented for the state of Assam starting in 2013–2014.
- The Government of India plans to implement it for the rest of the country in 2021.
- According to the Citizenship Rules, 2003, the central government can issue an order to prepare the National Population Register (NPR) and create the NRC based on the data gathered in it.
- The 2003 amendment further states that the local officials would then

decide if the person's name will be added to the NRC or not, thereby deciding his citizenship status.

- No new rules or laws are needed to conduct this exercise in the whole of India.
- Assam, being a border state with unique problems of illegal immigration, had an NRC created for it in 1951 based on the 1951 census data.
- However, it was not maintained afterwards.
- The final updated NRC for Assam, published on 31 August 2019, contained 31 million (3.1 crore) names out of its population of 33 million (3.3 crore), leaving out 1.9 million (19 lakh) applicants.
- These 1.9 million residents who were not on the list were in danger of losing their citizenship.
- The register was created because "illegal migration from Bangladesh has long been a concern" in Assam.
- The Amendment of the 1955 Citizenship Act, in part, helps protect non-Muslims who are not in the register and face arrest or deportation.

What is the status of Indo-Bangla ties?

- The India–Bangladesh relationship is probably going through its best phase. It is one of the few success stories in India's diplomatic notebook in an otherwise troubled neighborhood.



- India and Bangladesh have managed to sort out a number of contentious issues.
- Prominent among them has been the land boundary and the maritime boundary dispute.
- Both the issues were sorted out to the satisfaction of Bangladesh where India ignored significant losses of territory to nurture the bilateral relationship.
- This Indian investment in its relationship with its eastern neighbour has shown result and both sides are now enjoying a period of unparalleled bonhomie, peace and friendship.

What is the issue of illegal migration from Bangladesh?

- A report of the Group of Ministers on National Security, submitted in 2001, estimated that post-1971 approximately 12 million Bangladeshis have illegally migrated into various states of northeast India.
- However, this number is expected to be much larger if one includes illegal Bangladeshi population residing in other parts of India.
- Moreover, the Bangladeshis have been illegally coming to India even after 2001.
- There appears to be no desire in Bangladesh to solve this issue to mutual satisfaction.

- In the past, successive governments in Bangladesh have denied the very existence of this problem.
- The total denial of such a phenomenon only hardens sentiments in India over the issue.

What is statics on religious persecution in Bangladesh?

- A large number of Bangladeshi immigrants are illegally living in India.
- Hindus are said to have migrated after facing religious persecution, whereas most of the Muslim migrants are termed as economic migrants.
- From 1964 to 2013, around 11.3 million Hindus left Bangladesh due to religious persecution and discrimination.
- This means on an average 632 Hindus left Bangladesh each day and 230,612 annually.
- This exodus mostly took place during the time of military governments after independence.
- The properties of the Hindus were taken away during the Pakistan regime describing them as enemy properties and the same were treated by the government after independence as vested property.
- These two measures have made 60 per cent of the Hindus landless in Bangladesh.
- Though the Bangladesh government has been trying to reassure the Bangladeshi Hindus, it has not been able to dispel the sense of fear



prevalent among the Hindu minority population, which is being subjected to various types of discrimination at the societal level, generating in them the impulse for migration.

How migrant issue can reach a consensus?

- As the India-Bangladesh relationship is currently strong and trust levels on both sides are high, this is the right time to deal with the issue of illegal migration.
- Bangladesh has already documented its citizens and maintains a biometric record of them.
- The National Identity Registration Wing (NIDW) was created within the Bangladesh Election Commission for that purpose.
- The country has now also distributed machine-readable smart national identity (NID) cards among 10 crore citizens, replacing the earlier paper-laminated cards.
- India too is justified in undertaking a similar exercise. This will help India get a grip on the problem.
- Once the documentation of citizens is done in India, both sides can share their database.
- This will help manage the problem in a much more amicable manner.
- The Bangladeshis often claim that their citizens are killed on the border by the Indian paramilitary forces.

- The documentation of citizens on both sides will also help in handling this contentious issue.
- The issue of illegal migration in the India-Bangladesh relationship cannot be swept under the carpet.
- It will continue to be a stumbling block in the sustenance of a stable relationship.
- It will be better if both sides look at the issue dispassionately especially when the trust levels are high.
- While there is no doubt that the implementation of NRC is a complicated issue, but if properly implemented it would make the India-Bangladesh relationship more sustainable.

4. CONTENTIONS ON CITIZENSHIP (AMENDMENT) ACT 2019

Why in news?

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019 has received mixed response.

What are the provisions of the Act?

- The Act states that any person belonging to the Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or the Christian community from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, who entered into India on or before December 31, 2014, without proper documents (passport, visa, etc.), shall not be treated as an illegal migrant and granted citizenship on certain conditions and restrictions, provided



s/he has been in India for an aggregate period of not less than five years.

- In other words, the Act does not immediately grant citizenship to the six religious communities but merely makes them eligible to apply for the Indian citizenship by naturalization, provided they can establish their residency in India for five years instead of the existing eleven years.
- The government stated that amendment to the Citizenship Act was made because the said minorities were subjected to religious persecution and they had nowhere to go but to enter India illegally.
- While the term 'religious persecution' itself is not mentioned in the Act, the government had clarified that "the Bill has been drafted in such a way that it gives reference to the Notifications dated 7th September, 2015 and 18th July, 2016 which mention the term 'Religious Persecution.'"

What are the contentions faced by the act?

- The Act, however, has faced opposition from sections of the society including university students, intellectuals, religious communities, and political parties.
- The primary contention of the opponents is that the Act discriminates against Muslims and undermines the Right to Equality enshrined in the Constitution which,

inter alia, stipulates that the State shall not discriminate against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, and place of birth.

- The other opposition to the Act in the Northeast is on account of it not being in the interest of the indigenous people of the region.
- Of concern, however, is the perceived link between CAA and a nation-wide NRC aimed at rooting out illegal immigrants.
- The contention of the protesters is that when NRC is implemented, non-Muslims would be able to obtain citizenship under CAA even if they do not produce valid documents, whereas Muslims without documents would be declared illegal migrants and sent to detention centres.

What are the clarities on the Act?

- The fact, however, is that CAA does not deal with Indian citizens including Muslims but merely provides for non-Muslim refugees from the three specified countries to acquire Indian citizenship.
- In no way or by any implication this Act disfavours Indian Muslims and therefore any attempt to link it with the rights of Indian Muslim citizens is erroneous.
- This Act is only for those who have faced years of persecution outside and have no other place to go except India."



- Further, CAA has been passed by the Parliament after due process and it is for the Supreme Court, which has been approached in this regard, to rule whether the Act is constitutional or not in terms of its abidance by the Right to Equality.
- Protests are persisting in Assam because of the impression that, by granting citizenship to Bangladeshi Hindu illegal migrants, the Act dilutes the Assam Accord and negates the recently concluded Supreme Court-mandated updation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC).
- The ILP system offers protection for tribal communities in these states against exploitation by the socio-economically more advanced plains people.
- Under the system, any Indian citizen (non-tribal) who wishes to enter these protected areas is required to obtain an ILP, which allows him or her to stay in these states for a specified period subject to stipulated terms and condition.
- The exclusion of tribal areas from the ambit of CAA through the provisions of the Sixth Schedule and ILP system means that the socio-economic and cultural interests of the indigenous people of the Northeast are well protected and the illegal immigrants granted citizenship under CAA cannot own land or settle in these areas.

Will tribal areas get affected due to CAA?

- CAA is not applicable to the tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura which are covered by the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution as well as in areas covered under the “Inner Line” notified under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873.
- At present, total 10 autonomous districts and territorial councils are functioning in the states of Assam, Mizoram, Tripura, and Meghalaya with the power of legislation and administration over land, water, soil, community forest, agriculture, and village and town management in addition to the administration of tribal or local laws. States such as Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and Manipur, where the Sixth Schedule is not implemented, are covered under the Inner Line Permit (ILP) system.
- These special provisions have quietened opposition to CAA in most states of the Northeast except in Assam.
- In response to Assamese concerns, the Centre has stated that CAA does not dilute the sanctity of the Assam Accord as far as the cut-off date of March 24, 1971 is concerned but addresses the concerns of only few identified minorities on humanitarian grounds.

What is the way forward?

- The CAA is a humanitarian act and its enactment is in fulfilment of a longstanding demand to provide relief



to those minorities who have been compelled to flee due to majoritarian impulses in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

- According to the government the Act, illustrates the Indian culture of acceptance, harmony, compassion and brotherhood.
- The efforts of the government to allay apprehensions regarding the Act by countering misinformation is a welcome step.
- A better understanding and appreciation of CAA by the people is expected to reduce opposition to the Act.

5. AUTOMATED KILL CHAINS

Why in news?

United States Air Force has revealed plans for automation of the kill chain during lethal engagements.

What is the role of humans in killing system in defense?

- In a defense system humans would enter the picture only at the last stage of target engagement, while rest of the kill chain – detection of objects, their identification, decision to initiate lethal engagement and assignment of targets to weapons platforms.
- In air defence and missile defence, for example, the time available to take a decision is extremely limited, especially with modern high speed

aircraft and missiles, and it is “either they or us situation” most of the time.

- Here, often computers are trusted to open lethal fire, a human operator in such cases is sitting ready on the ‘abort’ button to exercise his veto power.

What is an automated Kill chain?

- According to US, It plans to make entire process of kill chain an automated one.
- In most kill chains today, there is a human in every step of the loop, but the future would require humans on the loop – not in the loop, making final decisions for lethal or non-lethal fires.

What is the need for automated kill chain?

- With miniaturized electronics and advanced software, multitudes of deceptive weapon designs are also evolving often in the garb of something else.
- The number of entities that could pose a threat is increasing by the day and will multiply in future.
- Human capacity to tackle all such threats effectively in a complex threat environment is only going to fall well short of what would be needed.
- Autonomy brought about by AI has, therefore, become an inescapable feature as it allows functionality where humans could flounder – timely analysis of a threat and action to



counter it effectively in a complex environment.

- Humans would eventually be removed from even the final stages of the threat neutralizing cycle.
- AI would perform all the defense activities and also choose the right weapons to tackle the threat, where needed.

What are the advantages of automated Kill chain?

- The game changer in recent years has been the artificial intelligence (AI), which is no more a thing unfamiliar and is evolving to become more capable, credible and trustworthy with time.
- Better electronics, higher computational power, better sensors, etc. are speeding up military activities and shortening the Observe, Orient, Decide, Act (OODA) cycle, leaving ever reducing times for decision making and action.
- Better propellants that give weapons higher speed and long-range kinetic killers are shortening the time available for defence.
- This development would be in sync with the need for quicker response time to effectively respond to future threats.

What are the concerns with the innovation?

- Leaving the decision to kill or destroy to machines is invariably seen as

cold-blooded and a gross violation of human ethics.

- Even the military league is generally strongly opposed to the idea, In certain cases, such automation is there even now with human on the loop.
- A majority of veterans and doyens in the military still contend that a human will always remain involved in making a decision to kill and this will never change.
- AI is also making offensive weapons formidable – deadlier, speedier, smarter and more difficult to counter. Humans in this case, would invariably fall short.

What lies ahead?

- Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) are already emerging as products of AI and other associated modern technologies mentioned earlier.
- LAWS have been described as the third revolution in warfare, after gunpowder and nuclear weapons.
- The debates on LAWS are, however, mainly focused on the ethics of warfare, including responsibility and accountability if things go wrong. Considering the loss of tactical advantage that would come about by not adopting automation and autonomous weapon systems in future, militaries would invariably be obligated to adopt the concept of full



automation while keeping humans on the loop.

- As far as national level stances and policies are concerned, till about halfway through the previous decade, 'human in the loop' was a strongly contested view by militaries as well as policymakers.
- Thus a changeover to the automation of kill cycle with human on the loop seems inevitable in the not too distant future.

6. PAKISTAN MEDIA UNDER STRESS

Why in news?

Pakistan Administration is imposing various regulation that curtails media freedom.

How Pak administration curtails media freedom?

- Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) issued a directive calling upon news channels to ensure that anchors "[exclude] themselves from their personal opinions, biases and judgments on any issue.
- The directive further stated that "anchors hosting exclusive regular shows should not appear in talk shows whether own and other channels as subject matter experts.
- They were also told to select their guests with "due care."
- The directive drew widespread criticism from media personnel and opposition parties.

- Later PEMRA issued another advisory to the private channels, quoting orders of the Accountability Court, asking them "to stop maligning the courts for their political motives."
- Given the political nature of accountability trials being conducted in Pakistan targeting opposition leaders, PEMRA's directives confirm the ruling dispensation's extreme sensitivity to media criticism.
- The directive was clearly aimed at restraining the anchors and commentators in news channels from expressing their views or speculating on sub-judice matters in a manner that "[derogated] and maligned judiciary and institutions."
- However, point 6(d) of the directive, which sought to stop anchors from participating in talk shows and airing their views, was certainly an act of over-reach.

What is government response to the allegations?

- PEMRA is a federal institution formed in 2002 through an ordinance with the mandate "to regulate electronic media in Pakistan" and to improve the standard of information and provide good analysis.
- But it has frequently been used by the government to gag the media.
- In the wake of such criticism, PEMRA issued a rejoinder a day later stating that its orders were "misinterpret[ed]"



and that “there is no advisory to ban participation of journalists in talk shows.”

- However, PEMRA’s rejoinder somewhat restored the balance in favour of media anchors and journalists.

How vulnerable Pakistan Journalists are?

- In Pakistan, where democracy is still struggling to take roots, media has been under perennial threat from unelected but powerful institutions.
- The religious parties do not approve of media reporting and analysis that they consider sacrilegious.
- Similarly, the security agencies are sensitive to how they are reported and portrayed in popular imagination by the media.
- Arguably, fair reporting has cost many journalists their lives in Pakistan.
- Attacks on journalists, who allegedly speak either against the high-handedness of state institutions or in favour of minorities, are on the rise since 2008.
- A report on the press freedom by Reporters Without Borders in 2019 said that in Pakistan, journalists operate in a “difficult situation.”
- Several journalists have borne the brunt of politicians, military, secret agencies and extremists in Pakistan.
- Sometimes they are hit and killed, sometimes warned and at times they

are picked up by the agencies and roughed up.

- The authorities have not demonstrated any credible commitment to pursue cases that involve attacks on or killing of journalists critical of religious groups, military, politicians or state institutions.

How PTI led administration destroys media rights?

- The present PTI government of Imran Khan is becoming overly sensitive to media criticism.
- Due to these factors, the space for free journalism and fearless reportage is shrinking by the day.
- In view of growing criticism from sections of the media for his economic policies and political situation prevalent in the country, especially amid allegations that the government was using National Accountability Bureau (NAB) as a political tool against the opposition leaders, Imran Khan’s government is keeping a close tab on the media.
- In contrast to the promise made in 2018 poll manifesto that “PEMRA will be made autonomous so it does not become a political tool in the hands of any government to target the freedom of the electronic media,”
- The PTI-led government is using the same regulatory body to stifle the media.



- Moreover, the government's decision to set up media courts is another sinister move against the freedom of media.
- In September 2019, the federal cabinet chaired by Imran Khan approved a plan to set up media tribunals under the pretext of seeking speedy disposal of media-related cases within a time limit of 90 days.
- So far, cases pertaining to media were being dealt by PEMRA and the Press Council of Pakistan.
- However, under the new plan, all new as well as pending cases will be sent to these tribunals.

What lies ahead?

- The current elected government in Pakistan appears less tolerant of media criticism than its predecessors.
- The government and the military appear quite determined to either silence or censor media by all means.
- This may prove counter-productive since such restrictions can fuel further criticism, especially at a time when the government seems unable to fulfil its promises and meet the expectations of the people.
- It also raises serious questions about Imran Khan's promises on strengthening country's democratic institutions that he keeps invoking to muster popular support.
- In such circumstances, media in Pakistan will be walking a tightrope

and looking over their backs, unsure of what the future holds for them.

7. COP-25 – A LOST OPPORTUNITY

Why in news

The 2019 United Nations Climate Change Conference, or COP25, ended without any significant progress.

What are the significance of COP25?

- The Paris Agreement signed by 195 nations in December 2015 is aimed at capping the global warming below 2 degree Celsius.
- It demanded all Parties to do it through 'nationally determined contributions' (NDCs) and revisit their climate pledges by 2020.
- COP25 was expected to finalize the rules for global carbon market, carryover of carbon credits, and compensate the loss and damage of climate emergency.
- Similarly, 2020 was also the deadline for providing \$100 billion in finance to the developing countries, a promise made by the developed countries in Paris.
- It was the last conference before 2020, a pivotal year for the Paris Agreement.
- Madrid Summit offered a central role to the contribution of the scientific community in climate negotiations.
- COP25 was the first 'Blue COP' that gave particular focus on the world's most crucial carbon sponge – the oceans.



- It aimed to enhance global awareness about the critical role of oceans in climate mitigation and adaptation and elevating the protection and restoration of oceans as vital to climate progress.
- COP25 was the final conference before the official exit of the United States (US) from the Paris Agreement.

What is the role of India in Climate change?

- India is the third largest carbon emitter globally; however, its CO₂ output (seven per cent) is far lower than both China (29 per cent) and the US (16 per cent).
- India's commitment under its NDC is to reduce the emission intensity of its GDP (GHG emissions per unit GDP) by 33-35 per cent over 2005 levels by 2030.
- Besides, India also pledged to ensure that 40 per cent of its installed power capacity is from non-fossil sources (renewables, hydroelectric and nuclear) by 2030 and introduced carbon tax on coal production.
- As per the latest UNEP Emission Gap Report, India is the only major country, which is on track to meeting greenhouse gas emissions target.
- The report, in the case of India, also projects a potential overachievement of the target by more than 15 per cent.
- Moreover, India, for the first time, ranked among the top 10 in this

year's Climate Change Performance Index presented at COP25.

- According to Climate Action Tracker, if all countries were to follow India's approach, warming could be held below 2°C.
- This spectacular performance owes several ambitious measures that the country adopted for clean and renewable energy, achieving lower emission intensity in the automobile and transport sector, non-fossil based electricity generation and building sector based on energy conservation.

What went wrong in the COP25 negotiations?

- The central purpose of COP25 was to scale up ambitions and foster the decarbonization targets set under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement that addresses how countries can reduce their emissions using international carbon market.
- However, Article 6 had become one of the most significant casualties with parties failing to reach an agreement.
- Similarly, COP25 could not make any progress on Article 8, which focuses on loss and damage that the developing countries have suffered due to the climate crisis and how they will be compensated.
- Even after a marathon two-week talks, issues such as creating an international carbon market and climate financing were pushed to the next year.



- Madrid Conference was also supposed to have bridged fissures in the developing and developed blocs on various issues.
- However, while countries like China and India demanded billions of dollars to finance climate goals, the developed groups, including the US and EU, opposed this move.
- Furthermore, the clashes about carrying over carbon credits certified under the Kyoto Protocol to future commitments were also manifested in the conference.
- Due to this conflict of interest, the conference postponed all the relevant issues that the scientists highlighted as climate emergency.
- The concept is to enable developed countries to pay for the advancement of low carbon projects in developing countries.
- Indian companies have accumulated about 345 million such carbon credits.
- Nevertheless, since this happened under an earlier climate agreement - the Kyoto Protocol - COP25 was expected to frame rules for a new global carbon market before the commencement of the post-2020 framework.
- If the new framework does not allow to carry over the old carbon credits, it would be a serious blow not only for India but for the future of climate negotiations since it is an issue of trust.
- Taking all these together, COP26, next year in Glasgow, will be more difficult to negotiate for India and the rest.

What are the impacts for India?

- At Madrid, India's approach was guided by principles and provisions of the Paris Agreement, particularly the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC).
- India took the lead in calling for more finance for the developing countries for climate action.
- The failure of COP25 to finalise the rules for developing a market for trading in carbon credits is a significant setback for the Indian renewable energy industry.
- Carbon trading is a market-based system aimed at reducing GHG emissions.

8. INTRODUCING AIR DEFENCE COMMAND

Why in news?

Following the appointment of CDS in Army, proposal to create an Air Defence (AD) Command to be prepared by June 30, 2020.

What is the significance of CDS?

- General Bipin Rawat, former Chief of Army Staff (COAS), has been appointed as India's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS).



- As CDS, he will head the newly created Department of Military Affairs (DMA) within the Ministry of Defence (MoD).
- The DMA, once fully operational, will deal with all three wings of the armed forces and focus on promoting jointness in procurement, training and staffing through joint planning and integration besides restructuring of military commands through the establishment of joint/theatre commands.
- The CDS will also administer tri-services organisations and commands.
- The first CDS is mandated to bring about jointness in operation, logistics, transport, training, support services, communications, repairs and maintenance of the three Services by December 2022.
- Thereafter, based on track behavior and correlation with known flight plans, it is identified as friendly or hostile.
- Interception of hostile track is initiated with all kinetic tools available at that juncture.
- For the outermost layer of air defence, combat aircraft equipped with air-to-air missiles are employed.
- In the second layer, surface-to-air guided weapons (SAGW) are employed and the inner air defence cover is provided by close-in weapon systems and anti-aircraft artillery guns.
- Based on the type of threat, reaction time and lethal range of the available weapons, the most suitable weapon is deployed for interception and final destruction.
- In the Indian context, the responsibility of air defence rests with the Indian Air Force (IAF).

How an Air Defence system works in India?

- Air defence, now commonly called aerospace defence, is an activity with four subsets - Detection, Identification, Interception and Destruction (DIID).
- In the first step, a likely threat using the medium of aerospace is detected with the help of radars, electronic sensors and observers.
- The threat could be in the form of an aircraft, helicopter, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), glide weapon, cruise missile or a ballistic missile.

What are the bottlenecks in Air Defense?

- Accordingly, based on threat analysis, IAF deploys combat aircraft and SAGW at critical points.
- However, both the Indian Army and the Indian Navy have sizeable assets for defending combat assets against an aerial attack.
- All Indian naval ships are equipped with one or more types of weapons systems to thwart an aerial attack.
- Besides, the carrier battle group (CBG) has combat aircraft to defend the assets from an aerial attack.



- Indian Army is equipped with mobile SAGW systems to guard combat forces on move or in tactical battle areas.
- To support these weapon systems, all three wings of the Indian armed forces have a number of radars, sensors and electronic warfare systems.
- To perform the same task of air defence, the three services have procured surveillance and weapon systems from multiple sources in India and abroad.
- Same is the case with communication systems deployed in conjunction with air defence weapon systems.
- This has led to a major bottleneck as each system with a unique communication protocol needs to be integrated to achieve synergy within the service and thereafter with other two services.
- The most significant aspect of the creation of a nodal air defence command will be the generation of common communication protocols that generate a comprehensive air picture with inputs from various types of data and voice inputs.
- Owing to the nature of operations in different domains, all three services have distinct air defence needs.
- Accordingly, all three services independently train and procure for their respective air defence set-ups.
- In this context, the challenge emerges from a single domain and therefore an integrated approach is operationally essential and setting up an Air Defence Command is functionally viable.
- Moreover, integration of equipment, systems, training, maintenance, and cutting out duplication will conserve resources and a singular command with clearly articulated responsibilities will enhance operational efficacy.

What are the proposals on Air Defense Command?

- First, proposal to create an Air Defence (AD) Command to be prepared by June 30, 2020, and second, proposal to create common logistics support pools in stations by December 31, 2020.