



Ramping Up Border Infrastructure

Prelims: Border Infrastructure & Management, Border Area Development Programme

Mains: Significance of Border Infrastructure & Management in Securing Borders.

Why in News?

Recently, the Minister of External Affairs provided a briefing to the parliament **regarding the government's projects on border infrastructure and connectivity.**

- The report was released in the wake of an official Security Conference report that said **Indian forces have lost access to 26 of 65 patrolling points along the LAC since 2020.**

What are the Border Infrastructure Developments?

- **Multi-Pronged Approach:**
 - **Improving connectivity to the [Line of Actual Control \(LAC\)](#)** through roads, bridges and tunnels.
 - For instance, the length of roads constructed in the China border areas in the period from 2014 to 2022 (6,806 km) is almost double the length constructed from 2008-2014 (3,610 km).
 - **Improving cross-border connectivity to neighbouring countries** via highways, bridges, inland waterways, railroads, electricity lines and fuel pipelines.
 - Modernising and constructing **Integrated Check Posts (ICPs)** at all the border crossings to smooth trade, and funding and constructing infrastructure projects in neighbouring countries.
- **Neighbourhood Projects:**
 - **Nepal:**
 - **South Asia's first cross-border petroleum products pipeline [Motihari - Amlekhgunj Pipeline.](#)**
 - The **[Mahakali motorable bridge](#)** over the Mahakali River connecting Dharchula (India) with Darchula (Nepal), under Indian grant assistance.
 - **Bangladesh:**
 - **[Maitri Setu](#)**, High Speed Diesel pipeline with Bangladesh that will reduce petrol prices and road congestion.
 - **Myanmar:**
 - **[Sittwe port project, Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project \(KMTP\).](#)**
 - **Bhutan:**
 - **Dry port in Pasakha bordering West Bengal** is being developed under an Indian government grant.

What is the Importance of Border Infrastructure?

- India faces **long-standing territorial and boundary disputes with China and Pakistan** and **porous borders along difficult terrain.**
 - For instance, successive **skirmishes with the Chinese People's Liberation Army in Chumar in 2014, Doklam in 2017.**
 - The **ongoing standoff along the entire LAC since April 2020** when the Chinese army amassed troops along the border, which resulted in the **Galwan clashes.**
- Despite border wars and conflicts, the state of infrastructure at India's borders is inadequate and borders are **manned by different military, para-military, and police forces, lacking in coordination.**
- **Smugglers, drug traffickers, and terrorists** often take advantage of poor surveillance and infrastructure at borders.

What are the Other Initiatives to Secure Borders?

- **Vibrant Villages Programme:**
 - **Border villages with sparse population, limited connectivity and infrastructure** will be covered under the new Vibrant Villages Programme, announced in the **Budget 2022-23.**
 - The activities will include **construction of village infrastructure, housing, tourist centers, road connectivity, provisioning of decentralized renewable energy,** direct to home access for Doordarshan and educational channels, and support for livelihood generation.
 - The move has been taken **to counter the Chinese 'model villages' close to the LAC.**
- **The Border Area Development Programme (BADP):**
 - BADP was initiated in the border areas of the western region during the **Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90), for ensuring balanced development of border areas** through development of **infrastructure and promotion of a sense of security** among the border population.
 - The programme aims to meet the special development needs of the people living in remote and inaccessible areas situated near the international border.
- **Smart Fencing in India (CIBMS):**
 - Two pilot projects covering about **71 Kms on Indo-Pakistan Border (10 Kms) and Indo-Bangladesh Border (61 Kms)** of Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) have been **completed.**
 - **CIBMS** involves **the deployment of advanced surveillance technologies** such as thermal imagers, infra-red and laser alarms, aerostats, ground sensors, radars, sonar systems, fiber-optic sensors and a real-time command-and-control system to secure borders.
 - **BOLD-QIT** (Border Electronically Dominated QRT Interception Technique) under CIBMS on the Indo- Bangladesh border in Dhubri district of Assam is also being used.
- **Border Road Organization:**
 - **Founded in 1960,** the organisation plays a **major role in providing defence infrastructure** including roads, bridges, highways, airports, tunnels, buildings and other such structures.

A Gist of Border Infrastructure Development

	Main Threat	What needs to be done?	What has been done?
Pakistan	War, insurgency, smuggling.	C.I.B.M.S. monitoring with a well-trained and larger BOLD-QIT, more than one route connecting far flung areas, especially Jammu and Kashmir	C.I.B.M.S. in some stretches, 3 rd route to Leh to be opened by 2023.
China	War	Armored vehicle capable infrastructure, high altitude airfields.	Daulet Beg Oldie airfield running, some bridges and tunnels armored vehicle capable.

Bangladesh	Smuggling, human trafficking	C.I.B.M.S. monitoring with BOLD-QIT throughout including riverine stretches	Brahmaputra river covered, rivulets still remaining.
Nepal	Smuggling, human trafficking	C.I.B.M.S. monitoring with BOLD-QIT	Planning stage.
Bhutan	Smuggling	Armored vehicle capable road connectivity till Bhutan-China border.	B.R.O. working on it.
Myanmar	Smuggling, insurgency, trafficking.	C.I.B.M.S. monitoring with bigger and more efficient BOLD-QIT to tackle insurgency, roads for swift troop movements	Some roads present. C.I.B.M.S. planning stage.

Way Forward

- **Continued investment in physical infrastructure** such as roads, bridges, and other border infrastructure in regions along the border with China.
- **Investment in telecommunications and transportation networks to improve connectivity** with neighbouring countries.
- **Enhancing the ability of border security forces** to effectively patrol and monitor the border region through technology upgradation.
- **Collaboration with neighbouring countries** to develop mutually beneficial infrastructure projects and increasing **economic and cultural exchange** with neighbouring countries to strengthen relationships and build trust.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Department of Border Management is a Department of which one of the following Union Ministries? (2008)

- (a) Ministry of Defence
 (b) Ministry of Home Affairs
 (c) Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways
 (d) Ministry of Environment and Forests

Ans: (b)

- In January, 2004, the Department of Border Management was created **under the Ministry of Home Affairs** to pay focused attention to the issues relating to the management of international land and coastal borders.
- It is entrusted with strengthening of border policing and guarding, creation of infrastructure like roads, fencing and flood lighting on the borders and implementation of the Border Area Development Programme over Border Out Posts (BOPs) and Company Operating Bases (COBs) along the IndoPakistan, Indo-Bangladesh, Indo-China, Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan borders.
- India has 15,106.7 km of land border and a coastline of 7,516.6 km including island territories. **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q1: Analyse the multidimensional challenges posed by external state and non-state actors, to the internal security of India. Also discuss measures required to be taken to combat these threats. **(2021)**

Q2: For effective border area management, discuss the steps required to be taken to deny local support to militants and also suggest ways to manage favourable perception among locals. **(2020)**

Q3: Analyse internal security threats and transborder crimes along Myanmar, Bangladesh and Pakistan borders including Line of Control (LoC). Also discuss the role played by various security forces in this regard. **(2020)**

Q4: Border management is a complex task due to difficult terrain and hostile relations with some countries. Elucidate the challenges and strategies for effective border management. **(2016)**

[Source: TH](#)

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