

**1. In what ways did the 1975 national emergency affect the political discourse in India? Examine.**

**Approach**

Candidates are expected to write about 1975 national emergency with its short background and also examine how 1975 national emergency affected the political discourse in India.

**Introduction**

The emergency was declared by the Indira Gandhi government in 1975 and was in place for 21 months. Threat to national security and bad economic conditions were cited as reasons for the declaration. A state of emergency in India refers to a period of governance that can be proclaimed by President of India during certain crisis situations. Under the advice of the cabinet ministers, the President can overrule many provisions of the Constitution, which guarantees Fundamental Rights to the citizens of India.

**Body**

Civil liberties were suspended, media was censored, state and parliamentary elections were postponed, and anyone who wrote or spoke against the Government was put behind bars. Let us look at how it affected the political discourse in India –

- The government made blatant and extensive use of its power of preventive detention. Political personalities were arrested and detained only on the apprehension that they may commit an offence. Negating the judgment of several High Courts, the Supreme Court in April 1976 gave a judgment upholding the constitutional validity of such detentions during the Emergency.
- Acts of dissent and resistance did happen during the Emergency, but these were few. Newspapers like the Indian Express and the Statesman protested against censorship by leaving blank spaces where news items had been censored.
- Just a few months after declaring Emergency, President's Rule was imposed on the two states ruled by the opposition party Gujarat and Tamil Nadu thereby bringing the entire country under the direct control of the central government.
- As a result of a fallout with Sanjay Gandhi, Kishore Kumar's songs were banned from playing on the All India Radio and Doordarshan. Artists like Kumar and Dev Anand, who were vocally critical of the Emergency, later faced unofficial bans from government and state broadcasters.
- In the name of family planning, mass sterilisation drives were organised. While there are no official numbers available, millions of people (both men and women) were forced to get sterilised during this 21-month period. Sanjay Gandhi was seen to have 'extra-constitutional' powers during the Emergency, and enjoyed full impunity.

- Parliament passed the 42nd amendment, giving Parliament unlimited powers to amend the Constitution and not allow Constitutional amendments to be challenged in the courts.
- Over the course of the year, the Constitution was amended to protect 64 laws from any judicial scrutiny, and thousands of people were arrested for opposing the government. Leaders like George Fernandes went underground to continue the resistance. Twenty six political organisations, including the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Jamaat-e-Islami, were banned.
- The Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) was amended through an ordinance to allow the detention of any person who may pose a political threat by voicing opposition, without a trial. The Shah Commission estimated that nearly 1,11,000 people were arrested under preventive detention laws. Torture in police custody and custodial deaths also occurred during Emergency.
- The 21 months of the Emergency had a lasting impact on India. For the first time, a non-Congress government came to power at the Centre, and it was during this period that several contemporary leaders became politically active. The 1977 elections turned into a referendum on the experience of the Emergency, at least in north India where the impact of the Emergency was felt most strongly. The opposition fought the election on the slogan of 'save democracy'.
- The lesson was clear and has been reiterated in many state level elections thereafter governments that are perceived to be anti-democratic are severely punished by the voters. In this sense the experience of 1975 -77 ended up strengthening the foundations of democracy in India.
- The new party accepted the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan. Some leaders of the Congress who were opposed to the Emergency also joined this new party. Some other Congress leaders also came out and formed a separate party under the leadership of Jagjivan Ram. This party named as Congress for Democracy, later merged with the Janata Party.
- The forced relocation and displacements, the forced sterilisations, were mostly concentrated in the northern States. But more importantly, north India had experienced some long term changes in the nature of political competition. The middle castes from north India were beginning to move away from the Congress and the Janata party became a platform for many of these sections to come together. In this sense, the elections of 1977 were not merely about the Emergency.

### **Conclusion**

The provisions of emergencies are provided keeping in view the security and stability in the nation. But they must not be used for political gains or disturbing the democratic structure of the nation. They are meant only to maintain the constitutional machinery only in cases of real crisis situations. If autocratic rule tries to destroy the democratic structure of India, the citizens have the powers to change the rule by general elections as done in 1977.

## 2. What was the mandate of the Mandal Commission? What were the key recommendations of its report? Discuss.

### Approach

Question is straight forward, candidate can start with the brief history of Mandal commission and then elaborate on the recommendations with the impacts it had on the liberalized Indian economy.

### Introduction

On August 7, 1990, the then prime minister V.P. Singh made a historic decision that changed Indian politics and way of ensuring social justice. The then government decided to implement the recommendations of the Mandal Commission, and open up reservations for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in government job. He announced that OBCs would get 27% reservation in jobs in central government services and public sector units. This was perhaps the world largest affirmative action programme.

### Body

History of reservation –

- Establishing First Backward Class Commission: In January 1953, the JL Nehru government had set up the First Backward Class Commission under the chairmanship of social reformer Kaka Kalelkar. The commission submitted its report in March 1955, listing 2,399 backward castes or communities, with 837 of them classified as ‘most backwards’. However, the report was never implemented.
- Establishing Second Backward Class Commission: On January 1, 1979, the Morarji Desai government chose Bindeshwari Prasad Mandal, a former chief minister of Bihar, to head the Second Backward Class Commission. Mandal submitted his report two years later, on December 31, 1980.

**Mandate of Mandal commission –**

- In 1979, it was the Morarji Desai government which set up the Mandal Commission with the mandate to identify socially or educationally backward classes to address caste discrimination. It was chaired by B.P. Mandal, who was once the Bihar chief minister.
- The commission developed 11 criteria to identify the backward classes who were called “**Other Backward Classes**” or **OBCs**. The criteria are classified as social, economic and educational.

**Social Indicators**

- Castes or classes considered socially backward by others.
- Castes or classes that relied on manual labour for their livelihood.
- Castes or classes where:



- At least 10% males and 25% females more than the state average got married below the age of 17 years in rural areas
- At least 5% males and 10% of females more than the state average got married below the age of 17 years in urban areas
- Castes/classes where participation of women in work is at least 25% more than the state average.

**Educational Indicators**

- Castes or classes where the number of children between the ages of 5 and 15 who never attended school is at least 25% more than the state average.
- Castes or classes when the rate of student dropout between the ages of 5 and 15 is at least 25% more than the state average.
- Castes or classes amongst whom the proportion of matriculates is at least 25% less than the state average.
- Economic Indicators
- Castes or classes where the average value of family assets is at least 25% less than the state average.
- Castes or classes where the number of families living in kutcha houses is at least 25% more than the state average.
- Castes or classes where the number of households having taken consumption loans is at least 25% more than the state average.

**Mandal Commission recommendations –**

The Commission reported that 52% of the country's population was comprised of OBCs. Initially, the commission argued that the percentage of reservation in government service should match this percentage. However, this would have gone against an earlier Supreme Court ruling which had laid down the extent of the reservation to under 50%. There was already a 22.5% reservation for SCs and STs. Therefore, the figure of reservation for OBCs was capped at **27%** which when added to the already existing reservation would be below the 50% mark. The Commission also identified backward classes among non-Hindus. The recommendations are briefly mentioned below –

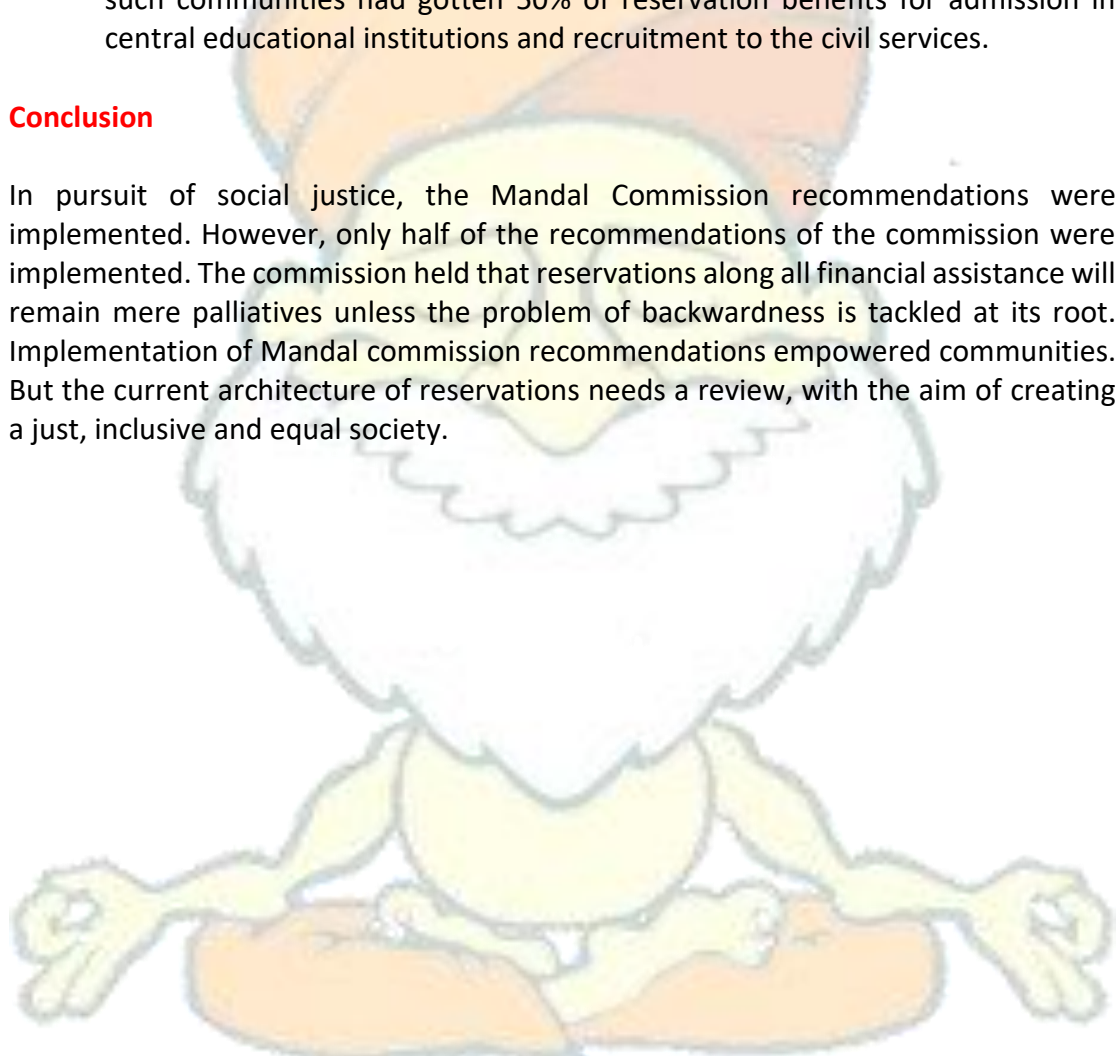
1. Reservation of 27% public sector and government jobs for OBCs for those who do not qualify on merit.
2. Reservation of 27% for promotions at all levels for OBCs in public service.
3. The reserved quota, if unfilled, should be carried forward for a period of 3 years and deserved after that.
4. Age relaxation for OBCs to be the same as that for SCs and STs.
5. A roster system should be prepared for the backward classes on the pattern of that for the SCs and STs.
6. Reservations to be made in PSUs, banks, private sector undertakings receiving government grants, colleges and universities.
7. The government to make the necessary legal provisions to implement these recommendations.

**Effects of Mandal commission –**

- Opposition to report- on two grounds, that reservation would compromise the merit and can the reservation be given on economic lines.
- However, it revolves around vote-bank politics which defeats the original purpose of reservation policy.
- Defeating the Intended Goal of Reservation Policy: In order to fulfil populists demands, political parties continued to expand reservation to the extent that communities who are well-off, avail reservation quotas.
- Unequal Benefits and Creation of Political Divide: According to the Rohini Commission, out of almost 6,000 castes and communities in the OBCs, only 40 such communities had gotten 50% of reservation benefits for admission in central educational institutions and recruitment to the civil services.

**Conclusion**

In pursuit of social justice, the Mandal Commission recommendations were implemented. However, only half of the recommendations of the commission were implemented. The commission held that reservations along all financial assistance will remain mere palliatives unless the problem of backwardness is tackled at its root. Implementation of Mandal commission recommendations empowered communities. But the current architecture of reservations needs a review, with the aim of creating a just, inclusive and equal society.



**3. Discuss the circumstances under which the new economic policy was announced in 1991. What were the prominent changes introduced by the policy?**

**Approach**

The question is asking you to discuss that is a written debate where one has to use your skill at reasoning, backed up by deliberately selected evidence to make a case for and against an argument, or point out the advantages and disadvantages of a given context.

**Introduction**

Almost half of India is born after 1991 economic reforms. New Economic Policy of India was launched in the year 1991 under the leadership of P. V. Narasimha Rao. This policy opened the door of the India Economy for the global exposure for the first time.

**Body**

**THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY WAS ANNOUNCED IN 1991**

- The historic 1991 reforms ushered in liberalization transforming India into a growth engine that it is today. Prior to that, India suffered greatly under the sanctions of the 'License Raj'
- The data reveals that fiscal deficit during 1990-91 was as large as 8.4 percent of GDP. The License Raj created a 'scarcity economy', and this scarcity also applied to foreign reserves since we practiced 'swadeshi'.
- The Balance of Payment crisis arose in the 1970s and worsened towards the end of 1980s. The balance of payments situation came to the verge of collapse in 1991, mainly because the current account deficits were financed by borrowings from abroad.
- The economic situation of India was critical; the government was close to default. With India's foreign exchange reserves at USD 1.2 billion in January 1991 and depleted by half by June, an amount barely enough to cover roughly three weeks of essential imports, India was only weeks way from defaulting on its external balance of payment obligations.
- India was in the need of an International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout. The price of the bailout was the License Raj.

**THE PROMINENT CHANGES INTRODUCED BY THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY**

- Free determination of interest rate by the commercial Banks: Under the policy of liberalisation interest rate of the banking system will not be determined by RBI rather all commercial Banks are independent to determine the rate of interest.

- Increase in the investment limit for the Small Scale Industries (SSIs): Investment limit of the small scale industries has been raised to Rs. 1 crore. So, these companies can upgrade their machinery and improve their efficiency.
- Freedom to import capital goods: Indian industries will be free to buy machines and raw materials from foreign countries to do their holistic development.
- Freedom for expansion and production to Industries: In this new liberalized era now, the Industries are free to diversify their production capacities and reduce the cost of production. Earlier government used to fix the maximum limit of production capacity. No industry could produce beyond that limit. Now the industries are free to decide their production by their own on the basis of the requirement of the markets.
- Abolition of Restrictive Trade Practices: According to Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices (MRTP) Act 1969, all those companies having assets worth Rs. 100 crore or more were called MRTP firms and were subjected to several restrictions. Now these firms have not to obtain prior approval of the Govt. for taking investment decision. Now MRTP Act is replaced by the competition Act, 2002.
- Sale of shares of PSUs: Indian Govt. started selling shares of PSU's to public and financial institution e.g., Govt. sold shares of Maruti Udyog Ltd. Now the private sector will acquire ownership of these PSU's. The share of private sector has increased from 45% to 55%.
- Disinvestment in PSU's: The Govt. has started the process of disinvestment in those PSU's which had been running into loss. It means that Govt. has been selling out these industries to private sector. Govt. has sold enterprises worth Rs. 30,000 crores to the private sector.
- Minimisation of Public Sector: Previously Public sector was given the importance with a view to help in industrialisation and removal of poverty. But these PSU's could not able to achieve this objective and policy of contraction of PSU's was followed under new economic reforms. Number of industries reserved for public sector was reduces from 17 to 2.
- Reduction in tariffs: Custom duties and tariffs imposed on imports and exports are reduced gradually just to make India economy attractive to the global investors.
- Long term Trade Policy: Forcing trade policy was enforced for longer duration.

### **Conclusion**

The 1991 economic reforms were focused primarily on the formal sector, and as a result, we have seen significant boom in those areas that were liberalized. Sectors such as telecom and civil aviation have benefited greatly from deregulation and subsequent reforms. However, liberalisation and economic reforms still have a long way to go, especially for the informal sector—including the urban poor who hold jobs as street vendors or rickshaw pullers, the agricultural sector, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and tribal. The slow growth and stagnation in these sectors which have not seen any reform further highlights the significant role of the 1991 reforms in helping India's economy become what it is today.



#### 4. Analyse the evolution of coalition politics and its impact on Indian polity.

##### Approach

Question is very straight forward in its approach, students are expected to provide a detailed analysis about evolution of coalition politics in India and its impact on Indian polity, and also examples are needed to substantiate points properly.

##### Introduction

A coalition is formed when multiple political parties cooperate, join forces and come together (which can happen prior or post-elections) which reduces the dominance or power of any single political party. A coalition is usually formed when no single political party is able to secure a working majority in the Parliament, there is possibility for a deadlock to be created when two parties are even, in such a situation one of the parties would need an ally to gain majority. The 1967 elections – the fourth in the series – saw for the first time a real challenge to the Congress party. While it gained the majority in the Lok Sabha, it lost in several state assemblies. That was the first time when the phenomenon of tandem voting got a jolt. People voted differently for the Vidhan Sabha and the Lok Sabha.

##### Body

**Evolution** – It was the Indian National Congress which was in power both at the centre and the state levels. It was essentially a one-party dominance. But it is equally interesting to note that the Congress as a unit of political power was also a combination of many interests and issues. So structurally it was a one-party affair, but inwardly it was a coalition of many interests, issues, and objectives. So, it may not be incorrect to say that coalition of political interests was there in Indian politics right from the beginning. The course of Indian politics underwent substantial changes after the Fourth General Elections in 1967. For the first time some non-congress governments were formed in some states. This was the beginning of coalition politics in India.

##### Timeline of coalition governments in India –

- Morarji Desai for 857 days (between March 1977 and June 1979): These were the first elections held after the National Emergency. The Janata Party won these elections and Morarji Desai took charge as the prime minister and formed the first non-Congress government. However, the Janata Party was an amalgamation of several parties and the government fell in 1979 when several parties in the Janata alliance pulled out, forcing Desai to step down.
- Charan Singh for 171 days (between July 1979 and January 1980): As Morarji Desai's government collapsed, Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD) leader Charan Singh (who was a part of the Janata Party) took charge as the prime minister.



However, the government fell after Singh couldn't prove majority in the Parliament and fresh elections were declared.

- VP Singh for 344 days (between December 1989 and November 1990): In the 1989 elections, the Janata Dal formed the National Front government with the external support of the BJP and Left parties. VP Singh became the prime minister, but had to step down after Chandra Shekhar broke away from the party.
- Chandra Shekhar for 224 days (between November 1990 and June 1991): In 1990, Chandra Shekhar became the prime minister with the external support of Congress. Even this experiment lasted only for a short while, forcing general elections in less than a year.
- AB Vajpayee for 13 days in May 1996: The BJP's strength grew in the elections held in 1996 as the Congress came into elections facing allegations of corruption. The BJP won 161 seats, Congress' tally stood at 140, and the Janata Dal won 46 seats. The regional parties won 129 seats. As per the norm, the BJP was invited to form the government. Vajpayee attempted to form a coalition but the government lasted for 13 days – and Vajpayee stepped down ahead of the trust vote.
- Deve Gowda for 325 days (between June 1996 and April 1997): As the Vajpayee government collapsed, Deve Gowda became the prime minister with the support of regional parties and Congress from outside. However, the Congress decided to withdraw support and Deve Gowda's government collapsed in 11 months.
- IK Gujral for 333 days (between April 1997 and March 1998): Deve Gowda's resignation made way for IK Gujral, who became the prime minister. The Congress was once again supporting this United Front government but as they pulled support, the government collapsed.
- AB Vajpayee for 394 days (between March 1998 and April 1999): In 1998 elections, the BJP emerged as the single largest party with 182 seats of the 543 seats in Lok Sabha. The BJP formed the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) with regional parties and formed the government. AB Vajpayee once again was sworn in as the prime minister. But the government fell in 13 months after AIADMK withdrew support from NDA.
- AB Vajpayee from 1999 to 2004: In 1999, the BJP won 182 seats of the 543 seats in Lok Sabha. The regional parties won 158 seats and the Congress won 114 seats. However, the BJP was able to form a stable alliance which lasted for a full five-year term.
- Manmohan Singh (UPA I - 2004 to 2009): The Congress emerged as the single largest party in 2004 and won 145 seats, while the BJP won 138 seats. The Congress then went on to form the UPA (United Progressive Alliance) with the support of regional parties and outside support of Left parties, under Manmohan Singh's leadership.
- Manmohan Singh (UPA II - 2009 to 2014): As the elections were held in 2009, the UPA came back to power. The Congress also improved its tally from 145 to 206 seats, while the BJP could only win 116 seats. Manmohan Singh was elected as the prime minister for a second term.

- The present government (NDA), which has been in power since 2014, is also a coalition government since the BJP's alliance partners are also part of the government. But the BJP won 282 seats in the 2014 elections and was above the half-way mark on its own.

#### **Impact on Indian Polity –**

- It led to the concept of "governance through consensual approach." A number of issues that attracted attention of the Political Parties and which demanded national consensus were electoral reforms, centre-state relations, settlement of inter-state water dispute, welfare or the weaker sections and above all issues relations to economic reforms. In this connection an interesting point can be cited where major national parties came to agreement on vital issues like constitutional amendments and making adequate room for the regional parties to play major role in the governmental policy making process.
- Deepening of Democracy- Regional political parties could capture power in states like Assam, Haryana, Bihar, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and others. To the observers, this development was a healthy sign for the prospect of cooperative federalism besides ensuring national unity.
- It also led to the harmonization of national and state interests through a consensus based approach between state and central governments.
- Coalition government formed with the support of regional parties allows them to have a say in the decision making. They can put forward issues and concerns related to their region and expect a serious discussion. One-size-fits-all approach will not work in Indian context. A health care policy which will work for northern states like UP and Bihar might not be relevant in states like Tamil Nadu and Kerala which are already doing good in the field of healthcare. Thus coalition government give the regional parties a power to tailor the policies in accordance with their region.
- India is a land of diverse cultures and demographics. The coalition government enables people from diverse cultures to represent themselves. Thus, having a coalition government does empower the regional parties and gives voice to regional aspirations, strengthens the federal setup in India.

However Coalition politics has also impacted Indian polity in negative ways as well some of them are listed as follows –

- Coalition government slows down the decision making. Multi party agreements are required before taking any decision and this adds to the delay already present in passing a new bill.
- Coalition government sometimes allows regional interest to take precedence over the national interest. This happened when the UPA government did not conclude the water sharing agreement with Bangladesh because West Bengal(WB) government was of the idea that this would hamper WB development.

- There are occasions when particular issues become a focal point of public indignation and agitation. The corruption involved in the alleged payment of commission to secure the contract for guns by the Swedish company Bofors was exposed in the press and Parliament. Also commonwealth games scam, coal auction scam and 2G scam became basis for agitation against corruption in 2012. This led to exposure of issues like differential power centres in the union cabinet where coalition partners used to pull the strings of governance thus creating inefficiency and governance deficit.
- In coalition governments foreign policy becomes a tool of political bargain, with increasing influence of states in foreign matters creates a deadlock. Examples in this case are, India's dealing of Tamil issue in Sri Lanka, Nuclear deal with USA, Teesta river water issue with Bangladesh.

### Conclusion

The concept of coalition government is good, however, its success depends on the manner in which the coalitions are forged and how governance percolates down. That is equally true of single party governments. With all their ills, coalition governments are actually far more inclusive than single party majority governments. However, both can be two sides of the same coin of fascism as long as the will of the people is not represented properly. In the present-day democracy, the decentralization of power is a must. This is possible on a real scale only if regional parties are adequately represented at the centre. Seeking majority should not be the sole purpose of creating coalition. National parties should keep the idea of Pan India progress in mind and try to form coalition with parties which represent the regional people.



**5. Comment on the recent agreement on disengagement at the Ladakh border. Why should India be more cautious now? Examine.**

We need to mention and comment on provisions of agreement on disengagement at the Ladakh border. Further after mentioning positive outcomes, we need to mention reasons to be cautious.

**Introduction**

After 10 months of an intense standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh on the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Defence minister in parliament said both sides had begun the process of disengagement in Pangong Tso area.

**Body**

**Main provisions of recent agreement on disengagement at the Ladakh border –**

- India will move its troops back to Finger 3, while China will move back to Finger 8 along the peaks surrounding Pangong Tso Lake in Eastern Ladakh.
- The agreement also entails that any structures that had been built by both sides since April 2020 in both north and south bank area will be removed and the landforms will be restored.
- There is also a moratorium on patrolling in this area until resumption is discussed by both sides through diplomatic and military talks.
- Once complete disengagement is achieved at all friction areas, both sides will undertake de-escalation along the LAC.

**Disengagement is a welcome step due to following reasons –**

- Triumph of peaceful bilateral dialogue: Even after violent Galwan clash, both sides realized potential of peaceful bilateral dialogue. It took 9 rounds of talks to come up with current disengagement understanding.
- Preventing a costly affair: Heavy troop and equipment deployment in difficult terrain and extreme climatic conditions put heavy cost. Thus current agreement prevents not only economic drain but also saves lives of personnel.
- It provides opportunity to discuss and resolve other standoffs especially Depsang plains. Even long standing sticky issues like demarcating Line of Actual Control (LAC), etc. can be discussed for a long term and sustainable peace.

**However, India needs to be more cautious now due to following reasons –**

- 1962 experience: in July, 1962, the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had welcomed the 'partial' withdrawal of Chinese troops from Ladakh. However, China invaded Indian territory barely three months later in a blatant act of betrayal.

- Galwan conflict: The Galwan Valley clash that killed 20 Indian soldiers on 15 June, 2020. It had taken place during a verification process after both sides had agreed to disengage from the location. Thus, India needs to maintain cautious approach while current disengagement as per the agreement.
- Other pending standoffs: standoff in Depsang Plains, Hot Springs, Gogra, Charding Ninglung Nallah junction in Demchok sector, etc. are not part of the current disengagement plan. Though not tense currently but they need an amicable resolution to prevent future escalation.
- Restrictive terms of disengagement: As per agreement Indian troops cannot patrol in area between Finger 4 to Finger 8, which Indian troops patrolled before the standoff. Thus, as per current disengagement process nothing stops the Chinese from coming back later.
- Heavy troop deployment: China and India has deployed more than 50000 troops in the standoff region. Understanding on withdrawal of troops is still pending and continues to be a major reason of worry.
- Apprehension of conflict in other areas: Still, there is confusion over the reason for current stand off by Chinese side and also no clarity on why disengagement now, why not earlier or later. Thus, many analyst fear of unknown Chinese activities possibly in Indo-Pacific region, on Sikkim-Arunachal border and on Western border especially in CPEC area.

### Conclusion

The 1962 experience lies at the heart of the apprehensions about Chinese intentions, where China used deception and smokescreen to mount a full-frontal attack on India at multiple locations. Thus, India needs to maintain firm resolve and seek 'distrust and trust but verify' approach while dealing with China.

