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ANALYSIS**

TOPIC

**Undefined Borders Have Set India
Back Economically**

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UNDEFINED BORDERS HAVE SET INDIA BACK ECONOMICALLY

In Context

- National Security Adviser Ajit Doval said that the undefined borders in the west and north have adversely affected the country

Border management in India

- India currently has more than 15000 km of land borders and more than 7500 km of maritime borders.
- It shares borders with seven countries including Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar.
- India's border management comprises border region development, communication, and coordination with the neighbouring states and programs to enhance the national interests of India.

Need

- Undefined borders in the west and north have adversely affected the country and its weight on internal security in terms of terrorism, radicalism, drug trafficking is a liability for the nation.
- Border security also has a bearing on socio-economic security of the country such as the coming of radicalisation.
- The borders need security to regulate trade, travel, and illegal cross-border movements.

Issues and Challenges

- India has the most difficult task of managing its multi-nature borders that run through plains, hills, mountains, snow-covered peaks, deserts, riverine territories, jungles and marshes.
- India shares an undefined border with China in the north, while a large area has been occupied by Pakistan in the west.
- Lack of effective consultation between the central and State governments on the issue.
- The slow investment in technology for border
- Development in India has resulted in weak border management for the Armed forces.

Steps

- The **development of border infrastructure** has contributed to boosting trade and economic growth in border regions, particularly with Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh.
- **Improved road and rail connectivity** facilitates smoother movement of goods and people across borders, thereby promoting cross-border trade and economic exchanges.
- **The construction of integrated checkpoints** and trade facilitation centers has streamlined customs clearance procedures and reduced trade barriers, further facilitating trade and commerce along India's borders.
- The **Border Area Development Programme [BADP]** was started in the year 1986-87 for balanced development of border areas of States bordering Pakistan, namely, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Gujarat and Rajasthan and subsequently it was extended to all the land borders.
- Government has approved **Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP)** as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on 15th February, 2023 for comprehensive development of the select villages in border in the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and UT of Ladakh.
- Government has decided to **construct a fence along the entire 1643-kilometer-long Indo-Myanmar border.**

Conclusion and Way Forward

- In the next 10 years India will be a \$10 trillion economy and will become self-reliant in military power.
- There is the need for technological advancements in border management.
 - ♦ Use of technology like satellite imagery, UAVs could be used to monitor the border area development in real time.
- **Infrastructure development** should be specific to theatres and roads, mobile towers should be built but every theatre has got its unique challenge.
 - ♦ Tactical intelligence is the most important
- Paramilitary organizations need to consider the idea of “seamless interoperability” and creating “joint command structures” in different theatres of operation, similar to the armed forces
- There is a serious need to reorganize, re-equip and re-task these border guarding forces to optimize their capabilities.

Mains Practice Question

- Q.** In the context of India’s strategic geopolitical environment, how can the nation’s border management policies be restructured to effectively address the evolving security threats?

