

Editorial Analysis - 18th and 19th July

Data market in the offing : on non-personal data

Context

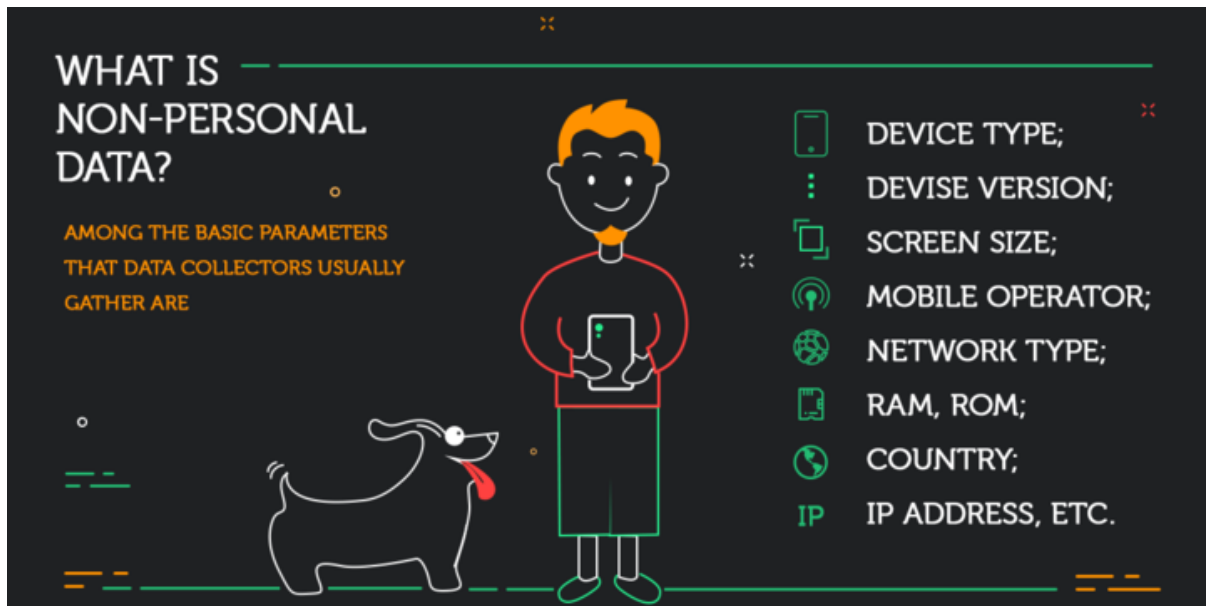
An **expert committee** appointed by the government and chaired by former Infosys CEO **Kris Gopalakrishnan** published its preliminary recommendations on the **regulation of non-personal data**.

Background

- Efforts towards **regulating non-personal data** are taking place in **parallel** to deliberations surrounding the regulation of personal data by the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the **Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019** (PDP Bill).
- The broad idea is to figure out safe ways in which **“India can create a modern framework for creation of economic value”** from the use of non-personal data collected by private and government organisations.
- Since personal data once **anonymised**, falls **outside the scope of the PDP Bill**, knowing exactly when data becomes anonymised is crucial.

Highlights

- The report deals with the **regulation of collection of data** and the creation of a **data market**.
- If it takes the form of a law, India would become **one of the first** countries to have a **data market law in place**.
- **Companies (data fiduciaries)** will need **user (data principal)** consent for the collection of even **anonymised data**, and would need to adhere to **strict rules** so that data cannot be **de-anonymised**.
- While the focus of the draft is **data privacy**, it also has provisions for the **regulation of a data market**. E.g A **Google or a Facebook** cannot have a **data monopoly**, and must share whatever information the government or start-ups deem essential at a reasonable price.
- Different entities of the government will serve as **data trustees**, which will then dispense data.
- The report stipulates that both **companies and the government** will **need to pay for data**.
- It also suggests creation of a **new data regulator** called the **Non-Personal Data Authority** (separate from a Data Protection Authority called for by the pending Data Bill) to **seek and enforce data sharing**.



Source: Thetool.io

What is Non-Personal Data?

- In its most basic form, non-personal data is any set of data which does **not** contain **personally identifiable information**.
- This in essence means that **no individual or living person** can be identified by looking at such data.
- The report focuses on **three types** of non-personal data:
 - 1) "**public non-personal data**", owned by governments
 - 2) "**private non-personal data**", owned by non-government players and derived from assets or processes privately-owned
 - 3) "**community data**" which is the raw data of a group of people that may also be collected by private players.

What is Anonymisation?

- The PDP Bill defines anonymisation as the "irreversible process of **transforming or converting personal data** to a form in which a **data principal cannot be identified**, which meets the **standards of irreversibility** specified by the Authority."

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Benefits

- Once the law is in place, companies would be asked to put data in the public domain to **support the Indian start-up ecosystem**.
- It will **promote and encourage** the development of **domestic industry** and startups that can scale their **data-based businesses**.
- The **government can leverage** this data to improve **public services**. E.g, if Google's mobility trend data is available, then the government can create better **traffic management systems**.
- Similarly, if the government can put data in the public domain, companies can leverage this information for **better service delivery**.
- It will **spur innovation** at an unprecedented scale in the country.

Concerns

- Although a lot of this data sharing happens even now, the **processes are complicated**, and far too often, **obtaining data is difficult**.
- The provisions with regard to the **data authority** are a bit **ambiguous**.
- While **anonymization of personal data** is important to protect privacy, **over-generalization** through an extremely high standard of anonymization can also **render the data less useful** and in some instances, perhaps **not useful at all**.
- If any company **refuses to share data**, it would be incumbent upon the **authority to decide** whether data can be shared or not. Eg, Google may not wish to share the information which it considers proprietary, but it will have to if the authority asks it too.

Way Forward

- Rather than giving the absolute authority to the panel, the government would have done better to **lay down clear rules**.
- There is a strong need to develop a **bright line test** which **delineates personal and non-personal data**.
- A bright line test will be vital to determining whether the PDP Bill or the non-personal data framework will apply to (anonymised) personal data.
- **Regulatory certainty** about the applicable law is crucial, since non-compliance or compliance with the incorrect law could involve significant fines or penalties.

The government has paved the way for data regulation, and once a market is established, consumers will also be able to benefit from it.

MCQs based on Editorial Analysis

Q.1 Which of the following adopted a law on data protection and privacy for its citizens known as 'General Data Protection Regulation' in April 2016 and started implementation of it from 25th May, 2018? (PYQ 2019)

- (a) Australia
- (b) Canada
- (c) The European Union
- (d) The United States of America

Q.2 Consider the following statements:

1. Gopalakrishnan Committee commonly seen in news is related to the Data Protection Framework
2. Justice BN Srikrishna is related to the Non-Personal Data Governance Framework

Which of the statements given above is/are correct:

- a. 1 Only
- b. 2 Only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Editorial Analysis - 20th July

Iran and China

Context

China and Iran are close to sealing an ambitious **\$400 billion deal** on an **economic and security partnership**, a move that has caught the attention of policymakers in India and across the world.

History of Ties

- Relations between Iran and China date back to **200 BC**, when **civilisational contact** was established between the **Parthian and Sassanid empires** (in present-day Iran and Central Asia) and the **Han, Tang, Song, Yuan and Ming dynasties**.
- Iran and China view each other as **successor states** to civilisational empires. Both share a sense of past humiliation in the hands of foreign players.
- **Modern-day diplomatic ties** between Iran and China are just about 50 years old.

- China was invited to the **2,500-year celebration** of the **Persian Empire** in **October 1971**.
- After the **Islamic Revolution in 1979**, China was quick to recognise the new government.
- During the **Iran-Iraq war (1980-88)**, China under Deng Xiaoping, signed **arms contracts** with Iran including for anti-ship missiles.
- Through the 1980s and '90s, China provided direct assistance to **Iran's nuclear and missile development programmes**.

Modern Diplomacy

- While support to Iran continued under the radar, China was forced to take a position in June 2010 at the **UN Security Council** against the **Iranian nuclear programme** after the **International Atomic Energy Agency** flagged violations.
- UN sanctions on Iran followed and the **P-5+1 (permanent members of the UNSC & Germany)** countries negotiated the nuclear deal with Iran in 2015.
- The seeds for present relations were sown during **Chinese President Xi Jinping's** visit to Iran in January **2016**, when the two sides agreed to establish ties based on a **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**, while announcing discussions would begin aimed at concluding a **25-year bilateral pact**.
- With the **US walking out of the nuclear deal** with Iran in 2018, **China** has moved in to **negotiate broader and deeper ties** with Iran.
- Today, both China and Iran see the **Western Pacific** and the **Persian Gulf** as regions of **contention with the US**.

Strengthening Ties and Interdependence

- Iran is already a signatory of **China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.
- Tehran is desperate to break out of the **American sanctions'** chokehold.
- Tehran's hope that Europe will defy the Trump Administration and prevent Iran's **commercial isolation**, has evaporated.
- **Russia** can certainly create **political space** in Tehran's fight with Washington, but it can't bring the **scale of economic engagement** that **Beijing is capable of**.
- All-encompassing **strategic partnership** with Iran could make **China** the **dominant power of the Gulf region**.
- It involves **China's massive investments** to modernise the **entire expanse of Iran's economy**, from roads and railways to ports, and from telecommunication and digital infrastructure to the oil industry.
- It is also reported to include a significant **expansion of defence and security cooperation** between the two countries, including the construction of a **strategic port** at the mouth of the **strategic Hormuz Strait**, through which the Gulf countries export their oil to the world.
- In **return for its investments**, China is said to get preferential access to **Iranian oil production**.

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Stakes for India

- What is alarming for New Delhi is that Beijing is also concluding a **security and military partnership** with Tehran.
- It calls for “joint training and exercises, joint research and weapons development and intelligence sharing” to fight “the lopsided battle with terrorism, drug and human trafficking and cross-border crimes”.
- Some reports suggest **Kish Island in the Persian Gulf**, located at the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz, may be “sold” to China.
- With a **growing Chinese presence** in Iran, India is concerned about its **strategic stakes** around the **Chabahar port** project that it has been developing.
- The port is close to **Gwadar port in Pakistan**, which is being developed by China as part of its **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor** that links it to the Indian Ocean through BRI.
- India’s pace in developing the project has been slow due to **US sanctions**.
- That has made Iran impatient and last week, it decided to start work on the **Chabahar-Zahedan railway**.

A Tightrope walk

For India

- India finds itself caught in the **geopolitical rivalry** between the **US & China over Iran**.
- While India got a waiver from US sanctions for development of the port it is still not clear whether railway and other projects are exempt from sanctions.
- **India’s dilemma** also stems from the fact that robust **support from the US is essential** when it is locked in a **border stand-off with China**.
- India may want to wait for the results of the November US election.

For Iran

- Within **xenophobic Iran**, there is strong **political opposition** to handing over the economic keys of the proud nation to a **foreign power**.
- Tehran knows that **Beijing will be ruthless** in taking advantage of Iran’s current weakness.
- Although the heat being turned up by the Trump Administration is getting to the regime, Tehran knows the **dangers of jumping from the frying pan into the fire**.
- **Sacrificing Iran’s strategic autonomy** will be too much of a price for the Chinese economic lifeline.

- Iran is also aware that the proposed deal with China will **accentuate the confrontation with the US.**

For China

- Beijing also knows **Iran is not a pliable Pakistan** and will not simply accept China's **harsh terms** for the bailout.
- China is also aware that pushing ahead with the Iran deal at this juncture will add another element to the deepening **political contestation with the US.**

Road Ahead

- Having teased out the prospects for a historic agreement, Tehran and Beijing are likely to wait till the outcome of the US presidential elections in November.
- Iran and China hope that Trump's defeat will **encourage Washington to reconsider its current hostility** towards Tehran and Beijing.
- If Trump gets re-elected, Tehran and Beijing might decide there is no option but to take some risks.
- In the interim, the proposed deal helps the Biden campaign argue that President Trump has foolishly **pushed Iran into China's lap.**

MCQs based on Editorial Analysis

Q.1 The term 'Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action' commonly seen in news is related to:

- a. India-Iran partnership for developing Chabahar Port
- b. Iran Nuclear Deal
- c. Iran - China proposed strategic partnership
- d. Russia - India - Iran infrastructure development agreement

Q.2 Consider the following statements:

1. The P 5 + 1 countries include Afghanistan
2. Kish Island lies in Gulf of Oman

Which of the statements given above is/are correct:

- a. 1 Only
- b. 2 Only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Editorial Analysis - 21st July

Rule of mob: On mob lynching in several States

Context

The **lynching of three people**, alleged cattle thieves suspected to be Bangladeshi nationals, in southern Assam's Karimganj district on July 18 has once again brought to light the **menace of mob lynching**.

Details

- It was the **second such event** of the week.
- On June 1, a 43-year-old Bangladeshi national was lynched in **Putni Tea Estate**, Assam situated about 3 km from the **India-Bangladesh border**.
- According to the **National Crime Records Bureau's** 2017 data, Assam has one of the highest crime rates in the country.

Why is it a cause of concern?

- Irrespective of whether they are thieves or smugglers, such killings point to a **lack of faith** in the **rule of law**, leading to a **general lawlessness**.
- The varying standards of prosecution of crimes across the country add further **challenges to the rule of law**.
- Such incidences weaken the **social fabric** of the nation.
- Lynchings are a uniquely unsettling **derailment of governance**.
- An act of mob violence is itself a sign of **failure of law enforcement**, it is committed in an apparent consideration that there can be no legal recourse.
- It signals a **trust deficit** in **democratic institutions** and promotes **mobocracy**.

Why mob violence is on the rise?

- **Wild conspiracy theories** spreading fast through **social media**.
- **Misinformation and rumors** like **child lifting**, false accusations of **cow slaughter, witchcraft** etc.
- **Polarising diatribes**, often initiated by **political leaders**, related to cow protection, movement of people across the border and religious issues.
- Rising **intolerance** towards others as mentioned by the Supreme Court in **Tehseen Poonawalla case (2018)**

Way forward



- There must be **stringent intervention** by the police to bring an end to mob violence.
- The **political leadership** has a role to play in questioning the **social consent** that allows mob violence.
- Implementation of the Supreme Court's directives in **Tehseen Poonawalla vs Union of India (2018) case**
- Recommendations made by the **law commission of UP** which prescribes a **jail term** for a range of 7 years to life imprisonment can also be considered to have a deterrent effect.

MCQs based on Editorial Analysis

Q.1: With reference to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) consider the following statements :

1. It functions under the aegis of ministry of statistics and programme implementation.
2. It is a statutory body.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.2 : Which of the following states share a land boundary with Assam?

1. Mizoram
2. Nagaland
3. Manipur
4. Meghalaya
5. Tripura

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- a. 1, 2, 3 and 4 only
- b. 2, 3, 4 and 5 only
- c. 1, 3, 4 and 5 only
- d. All of the above

Editorial Analysis - 22nd July

It's time for a national vaccination strategy

Context

With several **vaccine trials** showing promising results, there needs to be an advance planning regarding the administration of vaccine as and when it is available.

Background

- The COVID-19 crisis has **wreaked havoc** on **national economies** and their **health infrastructure**.
- The medical scientists around the world have been working tirelessly to have a vaccine for the **Coronavirus**.
- Hopes of a vaccine being available by next year have risen on positive news this week from **Oxford University's** alliance with drug company **AstraZeneca**.
- Early **human trials** of their vaccine suggest that it may confer **adequate immunity** against the illness caused by coronavirus.
- Earlier, **encouraging results** were witnessed in the early-stage trials of vaccine development in **China, USA and Russia**.
- Vaccines by **China's CanSino Biologics** and the **US-based firm Moderna** have also shown a ray of hope.
- **India** will also be starting with the human trials of **Bharat Biotech's Covaxin** in the coming few days.

Why do we need a vaccination strategy?

- Adequate supply doesn't ensure that every citizen in need has **real and effective access** to it, neither does it secure near universal demand for the vaccine **to further herd immunity**.
- It is imperative on the Indian government, therefore, to create a robust vaccination plan and commensurate systems around its delivery to one of the largest and densest populations in the world.
- **India's Routine immunisation** methodology will be **time consuming** and **inadequate**.
- **India's routine system is primarily targeted at children** below five years and needs an overhaul to cater to all ages

What kind of strategy should India adopt?



- A pandemic of such a huge scale and proliferation needs a **targeted campaign-styled mass vaccination strategy**.
- Campaign-styled approach is **more immunogenic** and demonstrates a dramatic and immediate impact.
- India should target **both an 'attack' strategy** through a **campaign** to attain enough coverage and a **'maintain' strategy** to ensure all newborns and infants are vaccinated through routine channels.
- An attack-contain strategy alone might be unsuccessful in interrupting transmission in India's because of our rapidly exploding population.

What should be the components of India's national vaccine strategy?

- The Centre must set aside a **sizeable budget for a mass vaccination** programme.
- A proper **selection criteria** needs to be laid down for the **state injected vaccine**.
- Not only **availability** but **effectiveness, cost calculations**, and the **ability to produce** sufficient quantities of it should also be considered before selecting the vaccine.
- Once a vaccine is selected, the Centre should be prepared to **invest in new production facilities** to meet the demand.
- The **logistical aspects** of vaccine distribution should be worked out to suit a strategic order of priority.
- People with the **highest risk of coronavirus exposure** will have to be administered a vaccine first.
- To **optimize coverage**, bulk loads would have to be dispatched speedily to **hotspots** across the country.
- Subsequent supplies should be sent to **emerging infection zones**, as forecasted by an analysis of data taken from **Aarogya Setu**.
- Efforts to cover everybody else could follow these steps.

What proportion do we need to cover?

- Epidemiologists suggest that "**herd immunity**" could be achieved once two-thirds of a local population gets vaccinated, but we should aim for a **comprehensive vaccination plan**.
- As a matter of principle, every individual should be a beneficiary.

Way Ahead

- We would need a **robust and well functioning logistical backbone** of a fail-safe cold chain network.
- **India's Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN)** could be used as it is well known for its logistics management.
- **Outside the box thinking** early on can help **weave innovations** into the organic design of interventions.

- Effectively combating the pandemic through vaccination needs to optimise the **integration of technology** and **innovation in planning**.
- The scale of this challenge may seem daunting, given our population and diversity, but we can **recruit an army of healthcare workers and train them** in advance for executing the strategy efficiently.
- A **decentralised system** should be devised with the proper allocation of responsibilities.
- With efficient coordination and ample funds, we can surely overcome the menace of COVID-19.

MCQs based on Editorial Analysis

Q.1: With reference to SARS-CoV-2, consider the following statements

1. It does not have DNA or RNA.
2. It belongs to the same family as adenovirus.
3. ELISA test can be used to detect if the person has been exposed to SARS-CoV-2 in the past.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 2 only
- d. 3 only

Q.2: Consider the following statements:

1. India is home to the largest number of tuberculosis patients in the world.
2. No vaccine is available against tuberculosis.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct:

- a. 1 Only
- b. 2 Only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Editorial Analysis - 23rd July

Justice, slow but sure

Context

A Mathura court sentenced **11 policemen** including a then Deputy SP to life imprisonment for the murder of '**Raja**' **Man Singh**, then titular head of the **Bharatpur** erstwhile princely state in Rajasthan, in 1985.

Details

- The case was first heard in a Rajasthan court but got shifted to Uttar Pradesh on instructions from the Supreme Court.
- It took more than **1,700 hearings** and **35 years for a judgment** to be pronounced.
- Shiv Charan Mathur, the Congress Chief Minister, incidentally had to resign within days of the killings.

Snail-paced Indian judicial system

- There are several **long-delayed trials** that spanned generations.
- The trial of the men who assassinated **Railway Minister L.N. Mishra** in January 1975 ended in conviction in 2014, **39 years later**.
- The **Hashimpura case**, in which nearly 40 Muslims were massacred in 1987, ended with an en masse acquittal in 2015, but the Delhi High Court restored some faith in the judicial process by slapping lifelong prison terms on 16 men three years later.
- Last week, the **Supreme Court** decided a case that started in **1955 in Coimbatore**, Tamil Nadu, over a will that **went on for 65 years** at various levels of the hierarchy of courts.
- A staggering **60,000-plus cases** are pending in the **apex court** itself, **44 lakh in high courts**.

Reasons for Delays and Pendencies

- While the **Code of Civil Procedure, 1908**, applicable to civil courts, states that judgements **should be delivered within 30 days** of arguments being closed, **no such time restriction** is found in the context of **Section 353 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1974**, which prescribes the manner in which a judgement is to be delivered in a **criminal case**.
- No provisions exist for the time to be taken in delivering judgements by the high courts and the Supreme Court.
- The causes of pendency range from **inadequate staff support** and lawyers asking for **frequent adjournments** to **witnesses not turning up** and the lawyer being underprepared.

- On average, a **district judge** has about **50 to 60 cases listed** before him daily. It is impossible to meaningfully hear so many cases in a day. Multiple adjournments thus become inevitable.
- The number of judges appointed to the High Courts has steadily dipped since 2017. **Judicial appointments to High Courts** have nearly halved in 2019 compared to 2017 and 2018.
- Centre has blamed the **collegium system** for delays in appointments.

Needed Reforms

- The **retirement age** of SC judges may be increased to 67 years, and **HC judges to 65 years**. This is based on increased life expectancy, and in line with international practice.
- HC Chief Justices may appoint **retired judicial officers** as **ad hoc judges**, to deal with the increase in pending cases.
- **Greater transparency** in the process of appointment of judges of higher courts must be ensured.
- **If fast-track courts** are possible, so is a serious relook at suggestions such as tweaking working hours, coming down hard on **frivolous petitions**, **discouraging government litigation**, **encouraging settlement** and **term-bound handling** of election-related complaints.
- Particular attention is needed to put a **cap on appeals and adjournments**.
- The Supreme Court has held in **Anil Rai vs State of Bihar** case that parties can file an application in the high court seeking an early judgement if it's not delivered within three months of it being reserved.
- An urgently needed reform is a **separate full-time judicial administration cadre**.
- The most critical mantra is to harness the **power of technology** to streamline the functioning of the judiciary like the **e-courts project**.
- It is time to move beyond a siloed approach to **digital transformation** and look at transforming the entire justice system into a digital platform.

When cases take two to three decades to be settled, **public confidence in the efficacy** of the judicial system, routinely described as broken, is bound to be low.

The **rule of law** is the only acceptable way, but so is the law taking its **own course without delay**.

MCQs based on Editorial Analysis

Q. 1. Consider the following statements :

- 1) The judge of the Supreme Court can resign his office by writing to the Chief Justice of India.
- 2) The judge of the Supreme Court can be removed from his office by the President on the recommendation of the Chief Justice of India.

3) The judges of the High Court can remain in office till the completion of 62 years of age.

Which of the statements given above is / are correct :

- a) 1 only
- b) 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1 and 3 only

Editorial Analysis - 24th July

Calibrated balance: On India and non-alignment

Context

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar recently said that Non-alignment is an old concept today, but India will never be a part of an alliance system.

Key Takeaways

- In separate statements this week, he laid out **India's world view** in the face of **global challenges**, many of which pull it in different directions.
- Mr. Jaishankar's contention was that non-alignment as a concept belonged to a **bygone era**.
- The **multipolarity** in the world necessitated that India **would have to take a definite stand**, and even take "**risks**" on issues such as **connectivity, maritime security, terrorism and climate change**.
- However, he made it clear that **India does not reject non-alignment** in its entirety, and that while it would **no longer remain disentangled** from difficult decisions, it would **not compromise** on its independence.
- More importantly, he said that India has "**never been part of an alliance system, nor will it ever be**".
- He added that even the U.S. must look beyond its present alliances, and **engage with** more **multilateral arrangements**.

A Balanced Approach

- Mr. Jaishankar explained that while **non-alignment** worked for India during the **Cold War era** between the **U.S. and the Soviet Union**, the fact that India and China share

a land boundary would always be a factor in a **“new cold war”** between the **U.S. and China**.

- He spoke of **Indo-U.S. cooperation** in many fields, and the **growing maritime collaboration** in particular.
- However he left unsaid the hard reality that **military collaboration on land** would prove **problematic** given **India’s disputed boundary with China**.
- His comments are a clear-eyed **assessment of India’s constraints and avenues** for its potential growth.

Road to Strategic Autonomy

- The assertion of India’s **strategic independence and resistance** to joining any alliance comes as a timely reminder amid speculation that tensions with China will push India into a **stronger clinch with Washington**, which is on its own **collision course with Beijing**.
- It is significant that despite multiple references by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to the India-China clashes and his call for India and the **U.S. to jointly “counter” China**, the government has **rightly chosen not to raise its tensions with China** in any forum other than **bilateral talks with Beijing**.
- Equally significant is the **government’s outreach to Moscow**, including a visit by **Defence Minister** Rajnath Singh and the participation of Mr. Jaishankar in the **Russia-India-China trilateral** last month.
- The External Affairs Minister also emphasised that **India** should also seek to build **coalitions with “middle powers”**, such as the **European Union and Japan**.

A time of crisis often clarifies priorities.

At a time of a **double crisis for India** — battling the **novel coronavirus** pandemic in the country and **Chinese aggression at the border** — the message from New Delhi is one of a **carefully calibrated balance**.

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Escalating tensions: On U.S. closing Chinese mission

Context

The United States has told China to close its **consulate in Houston**, further **deteriorating bilateral ties**.

Background

- The US in the past has announced **visa restrictions** on students and imposed **sanctions on Chinese officials** over a **Hong Kong security law**.
- It is reportedly considering a **sweeping travel ban** on the millions of members of **China's ruling Communist Party**.
- The consulate decision is by far the **most drastic measure**.

Reasons for the Decision

- The decision marks an **unprecedented escalation** in the steadily **deteriorating ties** between the world's two largest economies.
- The Trump administration has **accused the consulate** and other **Chinese diplomatic missions** in the country of **economic espionage, visa fraud** and **attempted theft of scientific research**.
- Beijing is also considering shutting the **U.S. consulate in Wuhan** in retaliation.
- This is the **first time** a Chinese mission is being closed in the U.S. since both countries **normalised diplomatic relations in 1979**.

Deteriorating Ties

- The **U.S.-China tensions** are **no longer** about **trade and technology**.
- Since the **tariff war** that **President Trump** launched in 2018, **China** has **retaliated** against every hostile move by the U.S.
- China made matters worse by providing **refuge in its San Francisco consulate** to one of the **Chinese researchers** against whom the U.S. has issued an **arrest warrant** because she allegedly lied to the authorities about her ties to the Army.
- What started as a **trade war** has snowballed into a **larger geopolitical contest** between the two superpowers.
- Many scholars are comparing it with the **hostile competition** between the **U.S.** and the **Soviet Union during the Cold War**.

World Order in Crisis

- What makes the crisis **dangerous in the long term** is that there is a **growing consensus** in Washington that a **hostile China**, resorting to **large-scale espionage**, **poses a serious threat** to the **U.S.-dominated international order**.
- The Washington establishment is in line with the President in his **confrontational policy towards China**, which has already done **serious damage** to **bilateral relations** that **cannot be reversed easily**.
- Incidentally, the U.S.-China crisis is unfolding at a time when **Beijing** is also acting more **assertively in Asia**, picking fights with countries in its neighbourhood, from **India to Vietnam and Malaysia**.
- The **message from China** is that it is ready for a **long game of escalation**, as long as the U.S. keeps playing it.
- This is a **cyclical trap** — measures and countermeasures keep taking ties to new lows with **no possibility of an exit**.
- If this deterioration is not arrested immediately, the U.S. and China risk a total **breakdown in diplomatic relations**. That is bad news for the whole world.

MCQs based on Editorial Analysis

Q.1 Southeast Asia has captivated the attention of the global community over space and time as a geostrategically significant region. Which among the following is the most convincing explanation for this global perspective? (UPSC PYQ)

- a. It was the hot theatre during the Second World War
- b. Its location between the Asian powers of China and India
- c. It was the arena of superpower confrontation during the Cold War period
- d. Its location between the Pacific and Indian oceans and its pre-eminent maritime character

Q.2 The term 'One Country Two Systems' commonly seen in news is related to :

- a. Israel and Palestine
- b. US and Alaska
- c. China and Hong Kong
- d. North Korea and South Korea