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BIMSTEC adopts 'Delhi Declaration' on terrorism

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

India hosted the first-ever meeting of the Home Ministers of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) countries on Tuesday, where the regional bloc adopted a declaration to counter radicalisation, violent extremism conducive to terrorism, prevent the misuse of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes, and tackle terrorist recruitment.

Bangladesh, the chair of BIMSTEC, was represented by Manzur Morshed Chowdhury, Senior Secretary in its Home Ministry, instead of Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed, a key member in Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's Cabinet.

The "Delhi Declaration" signed by Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, also called for curb-



Diplomatic mission: Amit Shah with other delegates during the first meeting of Home Ministers of the BIMSTEC countries. PTI

ing terror financing through adherence to internationally agreed counter-terror financing and anti-money laundering standards, consistent with domestic and international laws.

The declaration said the member states "strongly condemn terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations, including cross-border terrorism, wherever, by whomsoever and for whatever purposes committed; reiterate our determination to prevent, combat

and eliminate terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism in a comprehensive and sustained manner, in accordance with the UN Charter and international law; and in this context, call for effective implementation of the sanctions measures of the UN Security Council, including of the 1267 Sanctions Committee".

The grouping expressed condolences and solidarity with victims of terrorist attacks in member states and their families, as well as the governments of the af-

fected states. It called for those responsible to be brought to justice in accordance with applicable domestic and international law and relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Areas of cooperation

Union Home Minister Amit Shah highlighted five key areas of cooperation: drug control, counter-terrorism and legal cooperation, repatriation of fugitive criminals, cybersecurity and cybercrime investigations, and institutional cooperation and capacity building. He called for a coordinated regional approach to combating illicit financial transactions and terror financing and stressed the need to strengthen cooperation among law enforcement, intelligence, and border management agencies.

"India has always believed in sovereignty and peaceful resolutions to any dispute. We are committed to cooperating to face challenges emanating from In-

ternational terrorism, organised crime and narco-trade," Mr. Shah said.

He said criminal networks run their operations beyond international borders and take advantage of regional lacunae.

"This is why regional cooperation is a must. Their strategy is changing; they are using encrypted communication, social media, drones, cryptocurrency and the dark web to recruit and propagate illegal activities. This is why real-time intelligence-sharing and cooperation is required to check these crimes. None of the member countries should shelter such criminals. We should cooperate in the extradition of such criminals," he added.

Mr. Shah flagged "human trafficking and cyber slavery" as grave concerns. "Sharing of actionable intelligence should be a priority among BIMSTEC countries," he said.

DELHI DECLARATION ADOPTED

During 1st Meeting of BIMSTEC Home Ministers

India reiterates its policy of

Zero Tolerance

towards Terrorism



DELHI DECLARATION ADOPTED

Strengthening Regional Cooperation Across BIMSTEC



Convention against Trafficking in
Persons



Plan of Action on Drug Control



MoU on Capacity Building among BIMSTEC
Countries



Plan of Action on Illicit Financial Flows



Plan of Action on Natural Disasters



Consider the following statements in respect of BIMSTEC :

- I. It is a regional organization consisting of seven member States till January 2025.**
- II. It came into existence with the signing of the Dhaka Declaration, 1999.**
- III. Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Nepal are founding member States of BIMSTEC.**
- IV. In BIMSTEC, the subsector of 'tourism' is being led by India.**

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) I and II**
- (b) II and III**
- (c) I and IV**
- (d) I only**

1. BIMSTEC Adopts Delhi Declaration on Terrorism

GS-2 — International Relations, Regional Groupings and Internal Security

Context: India hosted the first-ever meeting of Home Ministers of BIMSTEC countries, where member states adopted the Delhi

Declaration to strengthen regional cooperation against terrorism, violent extremism and transnational organised crime.

1. BIMSTEC: Basic Facts

- 1. Full Form: Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation.**
- 2. Established: 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration; initially known as BIST-EC.**
- 3. Member States (7): Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.**
- 4. Secretariat: Dhaka, Bangladesh.**
- 5. Regional Significance: Connects South and Southeast Asia, promoting cooperation in trade, connectivity, security, technology and sustainable development.**
- 6. India's Role: India is a founding member and uses BIMSTEC to strengthen regional connectivity, maritime cooperation and security.**

2. Delhi Declaration: Key Provisions

- 1. Zero Tolerance towards Terrorism: Condemns terrorism and violent extremism in all forms, including cross-border terrorism, irrespective of perpetrators or motives.**
- 2. Counter-terrorism Financing: Strengthens action against terrorist financing and money laundering in line with international standards and domestic laws.**
- 3. United Nations Sanctions: Calls for effective implementation of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, including measures administered by the 1267 Sanctions Committee against designated terrorist organisations and associated individuals.**

- 4. Accountability:** Calls for those responsible for terrorist acts to be brought to justice under applicable domestic and international law.
- 5. Emerging Threats:** Addresses the misuse of encrypted communication, social media, drones, cryptocurrencies and the dark web for terrorist recruitment, financing and illegal activities.
- 6. Solidarity with Victims:** Expresses solidarity with victims of terrorist attacks, their families and affected states.

3. Areas of Regional Cooperation

- 1. Counter-terrorism and Drug Control:** Coordinate action against terrorist networks, narcotics trafficking and links between drug trafficking and organised crime.
- 2. Legal Cooperation:** Strengthen extradition, mutual legal assistance and cooperation against fugitive criminals.
- 3. Cybersecurity:** Improve cybercrime investigations and counter technology-enabled terrorism.
- 4. Intelligence and Border Management:** Promote timely intelligence-sharing and coordination among law-enforcement and border-management agencies.
- 5. Institutional Capacity-Building:** Expand joint training, technical assistance and investigative capabilities.

4. Other Cooperation Initiatives

- 1. Convention against Trafficking in Persons.**
- 2. Plan of Action on Drug Control.**
- 3. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Capacity-Building among BIMSTEC countries.**
- 4. Plan of Action on Illicit Financial Flows.**
- 5. Plan of Action on Natural Disasters.**

5. Significance for India

- 1. Regional Security: Strengthens collective action against cross-border terrorism, trafficking and transnational criminal networks.**
- 2. Neighbourhood Cooperation: Deepens security partnerships with South and Southeast Asian countries.**
- 3. Maritime Security: Supports coordination across the Bay of Bengal region.**
- 4. Financial Security: Helps disrupt illicit financial networks that may support terrorism and organised crime.**
- 5. Emerging Technologies: Encourages a coordinated response to cybercrime and technology-enabled security threats.**

6. Challenges

- 1. Differences in national laws and enforcement capabilities may impede cooperation.**
- 2. Intelligence-sharing can be constrained by trust deficits and security concerns.**
- 3. Porous borders and maritime routes facilitate trafficking and cross-border criminal activity.**
- 4. Rapid technological change makes terrorist financing, online recruitment and cybercrime harder to detect.**
- 5. Implementation gaps may prevent declarations from translating into measurable outcomes.**

7. Way Forward

- 1. Establish secure, timely mechanisms for sharing actionable intelligence.**

2. Improve coordination on extradition, evidence-sharing and mutual legal assistance.
3. Strengthen joint cybercrime investigations and capabilities to trace illicit digital financing.
4. Conduct regular joint training, exercises and reviews to monitor implementation.
5. Convert regional commitments into measurable outcomes through clear timelines and institutional accountability.

Rollout of fee on UPI transactions put off beyond Deepavali on appeal by traders

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has postponed the implementation of the Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on UPI transactions, originally scheduled for Thursday, to a date “immediately after Deepavali”, without specifying an exact date.

The MDR was to be levied at 0.4% on UPI transactions exceeding ₹2,000 at medium and large merchant establishments. Transactions related to the capital market and those done in strategic sectors will face different MDR rates. According to government sources, the decision to delay the implementation of MDR on UPI was made in the Prime Minister's Office following strong appeals from traders.

The Confederation of



Black ribbon seen across payment codes at a shop in Bhopal last week as traders protested the proposed fee for UPI transactions. ANI

All India Traders (CAIT) described the decision to delay the rollout as “timely and pragmatic”, particularly during the festive and wedding season, when millions of traders and MSMEs depend on higher business volumes.

Move welcomed

Praveen Khandelwal, founder and secretary-general of CAIT and a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP, welcomed the deci-

sion to postpone the MDR roll-out, saying that it would protect traders' interests and sustain digital payment momentum during the festive season.

“The UPI and Services Steering Committee today decided that, keeping in mind the festive season, Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on select Person-to-Merchant (P2M) UPI transactions shall be implemented immediately post Deepavali at a date to be

notified separately,” read a statement issued by the NPCI on Tuesday.

The Supreme Court has directed the NPCI, the Union government, and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to file affidavits by late October explaining the rationale for imposing MDR on specified UPI transactions.

CAIT said the decision followed a meeting on September 30, when a delegation of around 20 trade leaders led by Mr. Khandelwal met Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and “highlighted the implications of the proposed 0.40% MDR on UPI transactions exceeding ₹2,000”. “Additional transaction costs [during the festive season] could have placed an avoidable burden on merchants operating on thin margins and discouraged the wider acceptance of digital payments,” it stated.

Which one of the following best describes the term “Merchant Discount Rate” sometimes seen in news ?

- (a) The incentive given by a bank to a merchant for accepting payments through debit cards pertaining to that bank.
- (b) The amount paid back by banks to their customers when they use debit cards for financial transactions for purchasing goods or services.
- (c) The charge to a merchant by a bank for accepting payments from his customers through the bank's debit cards.
- (d) The incentive given by the Government to merchants for promoting digital payments by their customers through Point of Sale (PoS) machines and debit cards.

2. Rollout of Fee on UPI Transactions Postponed Beyond Deepavali

GS Paper: GS-3 – Indian Economy, Digital Payments and Financial Inclusion

Context: The proposed Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on specified Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions has been postponed following concerns raised by traders.

1. What is MDR?

Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) is a fee charged to merchants for accepting digital payments, helping cover payment-processing and infrastructure costs.

2. Key Developments

- 1. Original implementation date: 15 October 2026; postponed until immediately after Deepavali, with the revised date to be notified separately.**
- 2. Proposed rate: 0.4% on specified Person-to-Merchant (P2M) UPI transactions exceeding ₹2,000 at medium and large merchant establishments, subject to applicable conditions.**
- 3. Reason for postponement: Traders argued that additional charges could increase business costs during the festive and wedding seasons, particularly for businesses with thin profit margins.**
- 4. Important distinction: The proposal does not apply to every UPI transaction; specified merchant payments must be distinguished from person-to-person transfers.**

3. National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)

- 1. Nature:** A not-for-profit company under Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013; it is not a statutory body.
- 2. Establishment:** Incorporated in December 2008 as an initiative of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Indian Banks' Association (IBA).
- 3. Regulation:** Operates under RBI authorisation and oversight within the framework of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.
- 4. Major systems:** UPI, RuPay, Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), National Automated Clearing House (NACH), Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS) and National Electronic Toll Collection (NETC).

4. Economic Implications

- 1. Merchants:** MDR can raise transaction costs, especially for small businesses.
- 2. Payment ecosystem:** A reasonable fee structure may support payment infrastructure, security and operational sustainability.
- 3. Digital inclusion:** Higher costs could discourage merchants from accepting digital payments and slow the transition towards a less-cash economy.

Govt. makes Aadhaar mandatory to avail of power subsidy scheme

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has made it mandatory for domestic consumers to share Aadhaar details to avail of the benefits under the power subsidy scheme.

A notification issued by the Power Department on September 30 states that those seeking electricity subsidy must furnish their Aadhaar number through a government portal or any other mode prescribed by the government. Those who don't yet have an Aadhaar can apply using their Aadhaar Enrolment ID.

It directs the implementing agencies to publicise the information so that beneficiaries are aware of the new condition.

The electricity subsidy

The exercise is vital to ascertain details of those receiving benefits, stated the Sept. 30 notification

scheme is administered through five power dis-coms – BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, BSES Yamuna Power Limited, Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited, the New Delhi Municipal Council and the Military Engineer Services.

The notification states that the expenditure on the electricity subsidy scheme is met from the Consolidated Fund of Delhi and that Aadhaar-based identification is necessary to establish the identity of those receiving the benefit.

The move is aimed at

simplifying the delivery of benefits, reducing the need for multiple identity documents and promoting transparency and efficiency in the subsidy system, the department said.

The notification does not specify a deadline for existing beneficiaries to submit their Aadhaar details nor does it spell out a separate procedure for consumers already receiving the benefit.

In August, the government tabled a Comptroller and Auditor General report in the Assembly on “lapses” in the scheme under the Aam Aadmi Party. The scheme's cost rose from ₹2,405.59 crore in 2019-20 to ₹3,161 crore in 2022-23, accounting for up to 70.39% of Delhi's total subsidy expense, it stated.

3. Aadhaar Mandatory for Delhi Electricity Subsidy

GS Paper: GS-2 – Governance, Fundamental Rights; GS-3 – Subsidies and Public Finance

Context: The Delhi government has made Aadhaar details mandatory for domestic consumers seeking electricity subsidies to verify beneficiaries and improve transparency.

1. Key Provision

1. The notification dated 30 September 2026 requires Aadhaar details from consumers seeking the subsidy.
2. Applicants without an Aadhaar number may submit their Aadhaar Enrolment ID.

2. Why Aadhaar-Based Verification?

1. **Targeted delivery:** Identifies eligible beneficiaries and reduces duplicate or fraudulent claims.
2. **Transparency:** Minimises leakages and improves accountability in public expenditure.
3. **Risk of exclusion:** Authentication failures must not deprive genuine beneficiaries of subsidies.

3. Supreme Court Judgments

A. Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017)

1. Recognised the **Right to Privacy as a Fundamental Right** under Article 21 and other constitutional freedoms.
2. Held that privacy restrictions must have a legal basis, a legitimate objective and satisfy proportionality.

B. Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2018) — Aadhaar Judgment

1. Upheld Aadhaar for specified welfare benefits under Section 7 of the Aadhaar Act, 2016, subject to safeguards.
2. Restricted compulsory Aadhaar requirements imposed by private entities and rejected mandatory Aadhaar for school admission and examinations.

4. Where Is Aadhaar Required or Used?

1. **Welfare subsidies:** Specified benefits under Section 7 of the Aadhaar Act, subject to safeguards.
2. **PAN and Income Tax:** Generally required for PAN allotment and linking, subject to exemptions.
3. **PDS and DBT:** Used for beneficiary verification and delivery of eligible government benefits.
4. **Banking:** Used for permitted identity verification and Aadhaar-enabled services; not compulsory for every bank account.

5. Aadhaar, Voter ID, PAN and Citizenship

1. **Aadhaar:** Identity document for eligible residents; not proof of citizenship under Section 9 of the Aadhaar Act.
2. **Voter ID:** Identifies registered electors; only Indian citizens can register to vote, but the card alone is not conclusive proof of citizenship in every proceeding.

3. **PAN Card:** Tax identification document, not proof of citizenship.
4. **Indian Passport/Citizenship Certificate:** Provide evidence of nationality or citizenship under applicable law. India has no universal citizenship card issued to every citizen.

What is preventive detention?

What does the law permit, and where must the State draw the line? What safeguards does the Constitution provide against arbitrary detention? How has preventive detention evolved in India? What is the difference between preventive detention and prohibitory orders?

EXPLAINER

Rizmi Lia M.

The story so far:

The Delhi Police detained more than 5,000 protesters as they tried to reach Jantar Mantar for the protest demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and a rollback of the S.R. In the lead-up to the protests in Delhi, there was a nationwide crackdown on protesters by the police force. Among those detained and brutally manhandled by the Delhi police were leaders of various political factions, former Chief Ministers, the Leader of the Opposition, lawyers, journalists, students, activists, and reportedly people who were not even part of the protest. Police detained people at representatives' residences even before the protest started, and en route to the protest site. However, the Supreme Court on October 11 directed the Centre and the Delhi Police to ensure free movement of people 'subject to law and order'.

This prompts an understanding of what preventive detention is, how it can be imposed, and how it came into practice.

What is preventive detention?

'Preventive detention' means detention of a person without a trial or conviction by a court. The primary objective of preventive detention is not to punish an individual for a past offence but to prevent him from committing an offence in the future.

Power of preventive detention can be exercised by the authorities on the grounds of public order, security of the State, and law and order.

The National Security Act, 1980 (NSA) allows for preventive detention if the government is satisfied that a person's activities are prejudicial to the defence of India, the relations of India with foreign powers, or the security of the State.

What is a prohibitory order under the BNSS?

Section 163 of the BNSS largely retains the spirit of its predecessor, Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. It empowers a District Magistrate, a Sub-Divisional Magistrate, or any other Executive Magistrate specially empowered by the State Government, to issue orders when there is sufficient ground for proceeding and immediate prevention or speedy remedy is desirable. The primary objective is to prevent obstruction, annoyance, or injury to any person lawfully employed, or danger to human life, health, or safety, or a disturbance of the public tranquillity, or a riot, or an affray.

The provision is preventive in nature, designed to avert potential harm rather than to punish past acts. The Magistrate must be satisfied that there is an urgency that necessitates an immediate order, even without prior notice to the affected parties.

The power is extraordinary and is intended for situations where the normal course of law enforcement might be too slow to prevent immediate harm. The order must clearly state the material facts upon which it is based, ensuring transparency and providing grounds for potential challenge.

Furthermore, orders under Section 163 BNSS are subject to judicial review by the High Courts under their revisional jurisdiction. The Supreme Court, in cases like *Babul Parate v. State of Maharashtra* (1961) and *Madhu Limaye v. Sub-Divisional Magistrate* (1971), has consistently



AISA's Neha Bora during a protest march at Connaught Place in New Delhi. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

emphasised that these powers must be exercised judiciously, proportionately, and only when there is an imminent threat to public order, and not as a routine measure.

How has preventive detention evolved?

Preventive detention in India has evolved from a colonial tool used to suppress political dissent into a legal mechanism intended to protect national security and public order. During British rule, laws such as the Rowlatt Act, 1919, and the Defence of India Act, 1939, allowed the authorities to detain individuals without trial, often targeting freedom fighters and political opponents.

After Independence, India retained preventive detention, introducing the Preventive Detention Act, 1950, which remained in force until 1969. The Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA), 1971, further expanded detention powers and was widely used against political opponents during the Emergency (1975-1977). It was repealed in 1978.

The National Security Act (NSA), 1980, subsequently established a continuing legal framework for preventive detention. Other laws, including the Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act (COFEPOSA), 1974, also authorised preventive detention for specific purposes.

Meanwhile, amendments to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967, expanded the state's powers to address terrorism and unlawful activities.

Over time, the Supreme Court's interpretation of personal liberty has also evolved. *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India* (1978) established that procedures restricting personal liberty must be just, fair and reasonable. However, concerns over prolonged detention without trial, inadequate judicial oversight and the potential misuse of these laws continue to raise questions about the balance between national security and fundamental rights.

What did the Supreme Court order on October 11?

With respect to the Delhi protests, the Supreme Court convened what it called an "extraordinary, exceptional" Sunday

(October 11, 2026) hearing to direct the Union government and the Delhi Police to stop illegal detentions and allow free and smooth movement of people and traffic, as well as the operations of Metro and rail services, but "subject to law and public order".

The Supreme Court directed that Delhi Metro and railway services operate normally, and that internet services remain available in accordance with the law. It said the movement of people and vehicles across Delhi must not be unnecessarily obstructed and that barricades must be reviewed based on law-and-order and traffic requirements. The court said there must be no unlawful detention and that all detentions must follow the procedure established by law. It also directed that peaceful assemblies be allowed in accordance with the law, except in areas where prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) are in force. Any notice board announcing Section 163 restrictions near the Supreme Court must be removed, if still in place, to ensure access to the Supreme Court and other courts. The court also recorded the assurance that lawyers, journalists and other professionals would not be prevented from performing their duties.

The court issued notice in contempt proceedings alleging violation of its October 9 order and directed the authorities to submit a compliance report by October 13, including details of Metro restrictions and railway advisories. Habeas corpus petitions alleging mass detentions will also be heard with the main cases on October 13. The court said the State must explain the circumstances, manner and legal justification for the alleged detentions, emphasising its duty under Article 32 of the Constitution to protect and enforce fundamental rights.

What have the courts said about preventive detention?

Earlier, in *Babul Parate v. State of Maharashtra* (1961), the Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of Section 144 CrPC but said it could be used only in emergencies to prevent specific threats to public order. The court held that the power was not "unlimited or untrammelled" and had to be exercised within the limits set by law.

In *Khudiram Das v. State of West Bengal*

(1975) Supreme Court observed that the requirement of communication of grounds of detention acts as a check against arbitrary and capricious exercise of power. The detaining authority cannot whisk away a person and put him behind bars at its own sweet will. It must have grounds for doing so and those grounds must be communicated to the detenu, so that, not only the detenu may know what are the facts and materials before the detaining authority on the basis of which he is being deprived of his personal liberty, but he can also invoke the power of judicial review, howsoever limited and peripheral it may be. The detenu has to be afforded an opportunity of making a representation against the order of detention.

In 2012, the Supreme Court criticised the government for imposing Section 144 against a sleeping crowd at Ramilla Maidan in New Delhi during protests against the Congress-led UPA government. "Such a provision can be used only in grave circumstances for maintenance of public peace. The efficacy of the provision is to prevent some harmful occurrence immediately. Therefore, the emergency must be sudden and the consequences sufficiently grave," the court said.

In *Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan v. Union of India* (2018), the Supreme Court set aside a National Green Tribunal order banning all protests along Jantar Mantar Road. The court said a complete ban was excessive, observing that the "solution was not to ban the demonstrations altogether". It directed the authorities to create a system to regulate protests and grant permissions.

The Supreme Court in the case of *Shaik Nazim v. State of Telangana* (2022) observed that powers to be exercised under the preventive detention laws are exceptional powers which have been given to the Government for its exercise in an exceptional situation as it strikes hard on the freedom and liberty of an individual, and thus cannot be exercised in a routine manner.

According to *Ameena Begum v. State of Telangana* (2023), Supreme Court observed that to unchain the shackles of preventive detention, it is important that the safeguards enshrined in our Constitution, particularly under the "golden triangle" formed by Articles 14, 19 and 21, are diligently enforced.

Article 14 ensures equality before the law, Article 19 provides important freedoms such as freedom of speech, expression, assembly, and movement, and Article 21 guarantees the right to life and personal liberty.

What are the safeguards against preventive detention in the Constitution?

Article 22 of the Constitution provides safeguards against arbitrary preventive detention. Under Article 22(4), a person generally cannot be detained for more than three months without an Advisory Board reviewing the case, subject to the constitutional requirements and exceptions. Under Article 22(5), the authorities must communicate the grounds of detention to the detainee as soon as possible and give them an opportunity to make a representation against the order. The grounds must be communicated in a manner that allows the detainee to effectively challenge the detention.

Preventive detention orders are also subject to judicial review. Courts can examine whether the authorities followed the law, considered relevant material and complied with constitutional safeguards. Therefore, the power must be exercised carefully and cannot be used arbitrarily.

THE GIST

Preventive detention allows authorities to detain a person to prevent anticipated threats to public order or security, but it must be distinguished from prohibitory orders and other police action against protesters

Article 22 of the Constitution provides safeguards for detained persons, while laws such as the National Security Act set out the grounds and procedures for detention

Courts can review state action to protect individual liberty, emphasising that restrictions on protest and preventive detention must remain within legal and constitutional limits

4. Preventive Detention: Constitutional Provisions and Safeguards

GS Paper: GS-2 – Constitution, Fundamental Rights, Judiciary and Internal Security

Context: Preventive detention allows the State to detain a person to prevent an anticipated threat, but strict constitutional safeguards are necessary to protect personal liberty.

1. Two Types of Detention

1. Preventive Detention

- A person is detained to prevent a potential future threat to public order, national security or other legally specified interests.
- It does not require a completed offence or a criminal conviction.
- Governed by Article 22(3)–(7) and applicable laws, such as the National Security Act (NSA), 1980.

2. Punitive Detention (following arrest and prosecution)

- A person is arrested in connection with an alleged offence, investigated and prosecuted under criminal law.
- Guilt must be established through the judicial process; arrest does not itself establish guilt.
- Article 22(1)–(2) provides safeguards, including access to legal counsel and production before a magistrate within 24 hours, excluding necessary travel time, subject to applicable law.

2. Constitutional Safeguards: Article 22

1. **Article 22(1)–(2):** Provides safeguards against ordinary arrest, including the right to consult a lawyer, be informed of grounds of arrest and be produced before a magistrate within 24 hours.
2. **Article 22(3):** Excludes enemy aliens and persons detained under preventive-detention laws from the protections in clauses (1) and (2).
3. **Article 22(4): Three-month rule:** Detention generally cannot continue beyond three months without the required Advisory Board opinion, subject to constitutional exceptions and applicable law.
4. **High Court judge requirement:** The Advisory Board must consist of persons who are, have been, or are qualified to be appointed as High Court judges. It is not necessarily composed only of sitting High Court judges.
5. **Article 22(5):** The detainee must be informed of the grounds of detention as soon as possible and given the earliest opportunity to make a representation against it.

6. **Article 22(6):** Authorities may withhold facts considered against the public interest to disclose, subject to constitutional safeguards.
7. **Article 22(7):** Parliament may prescribe circumstances, classes of cases and maximum periods of preventive detention within the constitutional framework.

3. Three-Month and Six-Month Rules

1. **Three months:** The general constitutional threshold for obtaining the required Advisory Board opinion under Article 22(4).
2. **Six months:** There is no universal constitutional rule that preventive detention automatically lasts six months. The permissible duration depends on the applicable law and constitutional provisions.
3. **Advisory Board review:** The Board examines whether sufficient cause exists for detention; it does not conduct a criminal trial.
4. **Maximum period:** Different preventive-detention laws prescribe different rules and limits.

4. Major Preventive-Detention Laws

1. **National Security Act (NSA), 1980:** Covers specified threats involving national security and public order.
2. **COFEPOSA, 1974:** Addresses specified activities involving foreign exchange and smuggling.
3. **BNSS Section 163:** Allows urgent preventive orders in cases of nuisance or apprehended danger; it is not itself a general preventive-detention provision.

5. Important Supreme Court Judgments

1. **Khudiram Das v. State of West Bengal (1975):** Preventive-detention orders are subject to judicial review for illegality, mala fides and reliance on irrelevant material.
2. **Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978):** Procedures affecting personal liberty must be fair, just and reasonable.
3. **Re: Ramlila Maidan Incident (2012):** Restrictions on peaceful assemblies must be justified and constitutionally proportionate.
4. **Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan v. Union of India (2018):** Favoured reasonable regulation of demonstrations rather than a blanket ban at Jantar Mantar.

6. Constitutional Concern

Preventive detention is an exceptional power because it permits detention without a criminal trial. Its use must comply with Article 22, applicable legislation and judicial review, while respecting Articles 14 and 21 and preventing arbitrary deprivation of liberty.

The other G2, and three lessons for India



RAJA MANDALA

BY C RAJA MOHAN

FEW IDEAS cause greater anxiety in the Indian strategic community than a "G2". It invokes fears of a US-China partnership that might produce geopolitical duopoly over Asia. But Delhi should also reflect on another G2—a strategic accommodation between America and Russia. India has fewer reasons to fear it, although it would bring complications of its own.

US President Donald Trump's decision last week to ease sanctions on Russian diesel puts that possibility, distant though it might be, back in focus. After a telephone conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Trump announced Russian supplies for American and global markets. Washington authorised diesel imports until April 2027. With diesel above \$6 per gallon and the question of inflation hovering over congressional elections on November 3, cheaper fuel for farmers and truckers is an urgent political priority for Trump.

The irony is plain. Just weeks ago, Trump signed legislation giving him sweeping powers to impose tariffs of up to 100 per cent on countries like India buying Russian oil. Hypocritical? Of course. But hypocrisy is part of international life. For all the grandstanding on global issues by major powers, we know that all politics is local.

For Delhi, better US-Russia relations could reduce the friction its Russian partnership creates with Washington. Many would hope that, having carved out an exemption on diesel for himself, Trump would hesitate to impose fresh oil sanctions on India. More interesting, though, is the prospect of an entente between Washington and Moscow that Trump has long championed.

Trump's desire for better relations with Russia is hardly a secret. In his first term, he pressed for Moscow's return to the G8, which suspended Russia after its annexation of Crimea in 2014. At Helsinki in 2018, he resisted calling Russia an adversary. He has repeatedly invoked the US-Soviet alliance in World War II as a sensible precedent for a new partnership.

But Trump's first term also showed how difficult it is to build an internal American consensus on engagement with Russia. Democrats devoted considerable energy to portraying Trump as "Putin's puppet" and arguing that Russian interference had helped put him in the White House. After taking the House in 2019, they pursued investigations into his Russian connections. If Democrats regain Congress, or even the House, they could use investigations, sanctions legislation and control over spending to obstruct a rapprochement with Moscow. Entrenched Republican opposition to concessions for Putin adds another constraint.

Some on America's Christian right favour engagement with Putin, whom they see as a defender of traditional Western values against liberal cultural extremism. But that support cannot overcome the wider opposition.

Despite Washington's well-

known resistance to Russian engagement, Trump wasted no time in his second term pursuing better relations with Russia. Talks in Riyadh in February 2025 reopened high-level engagement. Putin's investment envoy, Kirill Dmitriev, offered opportunities in energy, Arctic development and minerals. The Alaska summit that August brought the two presidents together but failed to end the war so far.

Trump's envoys, Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, met Putin in Moscow last month. Trump could meet Putin at November's APEC summit in Shenzhen, where the Kremlin has floated a meeting including China's Xi Jinping. He might also host Putin at December's G20 summit in Miami. Moscow has yet to accept that invitation. Neither encounter is assured, but the diplomatic possibilities are expanding.

Commerce is central to Trump's outreach to Russia. He wants economic cooperation to open a path to peace, rather than follow a settlement. Profitable ventures, he believes, can soften political antagonisms. American access to Russian energy and minerals could create a constituency for better relations. Trump also sees the Ukraine war as an obstacle to business and has pressed Kyiv to stop attacking Russian refineries.

Putin has reasons to bargain.

Sanctions relief promises revenue, investment and technology. Engagement with Washington restores standing and could reduce dependence on China. A settlement recognising Russian territorial gains would let him claim victory at home. But translating these shared interests into concrete results has proved difficult. Ukraine will resist a bargain that rewards in-

vasion or compromises its security. Just as Asian countries worry about a US-China compact, Europeans fear that a Trump-Putin bargain could leave them exposed to Russia's geopolitical assertions.

Three lessons follow for India. First, US-Russia relations are not static. Their confrontation need not last forever. Delhi should consider the opportunities from US-Russian cooperation as carefully as the costs of hostility. A thaw could ease American pressure on India's Russian energy purchases and defence ties.

Second, Moscow does not see confrontation with America as a "sacred ideological obligation", as some in Delhi might believe. Russia values engagement with America as a great-power peer, even if it is no economic equal. In the early 1990s, Russia's eagerness to build relations with America pushed India down Moscow's priorities. Delhi should remember that experience.

Third, India's stakes in Europe have risen dramatically. Trade, technology, investment and defence give Delhi a direct interest in European stability. Even if Trump and Putin strike a deal, Russia's confrontation with Europe could continue. An American-Russian accommodation would therefore meet only part of India's needs.

Delhi should contribute wherever it can to peace in Ukraine. It should also encourage direct dialogue between Russia and Europe on ending the war in Ukraine and shaping a sustainable security order in Europe and more broadly in Eurasia.

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Just weeks ago, Trump signed legislation giving him sweeping powers to impose tariffs of up to 100 per cent on countries like India buying Russian oil. Hypocritical? Of course. But hypocrisy is part of international life

5. The Other G2 and Three Lessons for India

GS Paper: GS-2 – International Relations, India–US Relations, India–Russia Relations

Context: US President Donald Trump's decision to ease restrictions on Russian oil supplies highlights changing US–Russia relations and their implications for India's energy security and strategic autonomy.

1. What Is the "Other G2"?

1. **Meaning:** The "Other G2" refers to US–Russia engagement, distinct from the US–China G2 framework.
2. **US policy shift:** The article reports that Trump authorised Russian oil supplies for American and global markets through April 2027.
3. **Domestic constraints:** Opposition within the US, concerns over alleged Russian interference in American elections and disagreements over Ukraine constrain closer relations.
4. **Significance for India:** Reduced US–Russia tensions could ease pressure on India over Russian oil purchases and defence cooperation.

2. Why Does It Matter for India?

1. **Energy security:** Russian oil contributes to India's energy supply; sanctions and tariff changes affect import costs and inflation.
2. **Defence cooperation:** India depends on Russian-origin military equipment for maintenance, spare parts and operational readiness.
3. **US partnership:** Trade, technology, investment and defence cooperation with Washington remain important to India.
4. **European security:** The Russia–Europe conflict affects global energy markets, supply chains, trade and investment.
5. **Strategic autonomy:** India must protect independent foreign-policy choices while maintaining relations with competing powers.

3. Three Lessons for India

1. Great-Power Rivalries Can Change

1. Major-power relations evolve with leadership, economic interests and strategic calculations.
2. India should maintain diplomatic engagement with Washington and Moscow rather than depend excessively on either.

2. National Interests Matter More Than Ideological Alignment

1. Countries cooperate when strategic and economic interests converge, even when political differences remain.
2. India should pursue pragmatic, issue-based partnerships aligned with its energy, defence and economic priorities.

3. European Security Affects India Directly

1. The Russia–Europe conflict influences energy prices, trade, technology and investment.
2. India should support dialogue and a negotiated, durable peace in Ukraine to promote wider Eurasian stability.

4. Key Challenges for India

1. **Sanctions and tariffs:** US restrictions or tariff measures can disrupt Indian oil purchases, exports and economic planning.
2. **Energy vulnerability:** Dependence on imported crude exposes India to geopolitical shocks, price volatility and supply disruptions.
3. **Defence dependence:** Reliance on Russian-origin platforms creates risks involving spare parts, maintenance and supply chains.
4. **Balancing major powers:** India must preserve Russian defence ties while deepening cooperation with the US and Europe.

5. **Uncertain US–Russia relations:** Domestic political opposition and disagreements over Ukraine may limit rapprochement and sustain pressure on India.
6. **European instability:** Prolonged Russia–Europe confrontation can undermine trade, investment, connectivity and India’s wider Eurasian interests.

5. Way Forward

1. **Energy diversification:** Diversify crude oil imports and accelerate renewable energy adoption to reduce geopolitical vulnerability.
2. **Defence indigenisation:** Strengthen domestic manufacturing, maintenance and spare-parts production to reduce dependence on foreign suppliers.
3. **Balanced diplomacy:** Maintain strong relations with the US, Russia and Europe without aligning exclusively with any power bloc.
4. **Economic resilience:** Diversify export markets, technology partnerships and supply chains to withstand sanctions and tariff disruptions.
5. **Peace and stability:** Support dialogue and a negotiated settlement in Ukraine while protecting India’s energy and security interests.
6. **Strategic autonomy:** Make foreign-policy decisions according to national interests, international law and long-term economic priorities.

India's problem of overtreatment, overmedication

Modern medicine has never been more capable than it is today. Tests detect illness earlier, scans reveal invisible abnormalities, medicines prevent and treat diseases, and interventions and procedures can save lives within minutes. Yet, the same system that can do more is increasingly tempted to overtreat and overmedicate.

Overtreatment and overmedication are not simply the use of an unnecessary medicine but often a chain: a test detects an incidental abnormality, which leads to another test, a diagnosis and then a prescription that may become permanent. What begins as prevention can end in long-term medication or surgery. Then, in India, overtreatment coexists with undertreatment: unnecessary interventions are offered to some, while many others still lack essential primary care, affordable medicines and timely treatment.

Health packages and tests

The rise of overtreatment is the result of a convergence of several factors. The first driver of overtreatment is unnecessary and excessive testing – both screening and diagnostic – which creates a cascade of care. A review article in the prestigious *National Medical Journal of India* in 2016 found that routine health-check packages often include unwarranted tests that can lead to false-positive results, anxiety, further investigations, overdiagnosis and overtreatment. The truth is that the ability to test has expanded faster than our ability to decide who actually needs testing.

The second driver is the fragmentation of health and medical care. Its most visible manifestation in India is an excessive focus on specialist and super specialist care. A person with a common health problem often goes directly to a specialist or superspecialist. A person with chronic conditions may consult several specialists, each optimising one part of care without necessarily paying attention to the person's other health problems. The patient is treated in parts, while the human body does not live in specialties.

This matters particularly in older adults. A systematic review and meta-analysis of Indian studies, published in *Frontiers in Pharmacology* in 2021, reported polypharmacy in about 49% of older adults. Another study, published in *Scientific Reports* in 2025, found that roughly one-third of older adults were taking five or more prescribed medicines (polypharmacy), with potentially inappropriate medicines identified in 28.8% of cases.

These figures do not mean that everyone taking several medicines is being overtreated. They do, however, show why medication reviews



Chandrakant Lahariya

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Unnecessary tests, prescriptions and procedures are part of the growing overtreatment problem

and deprescribing must become routine.

A third force is the transformation of health care into a marketplace. Laboratory tests, radiological investigations, procedures, supplements and monitoring devices have become products to be sold – sometimes products in search of potential customers. As a result, the boundaries between those who genuinely need these interventions and those who do not can become blurred. A linked aspect is that much of health care and medical care in India operates on a fee-for-service model, which can reward activity rather than restraint. Many patients consider a medical consultation complete only when several medicines and investigations have been prescribed.

Health insurance is a proven solution for financial protection from health-related expenses, as the cost is borne by the insurer. However, it can create both 'ex-ante' and 'ex-post' moral hazards, discouraging preventive care and encouraging hospitals and patients to favour costlier interventions. What is forgotten is that while someone else may bear the financial cost, it is the patient's body that undergoes the intervention. Paying insurance premiums for years does not mean that one must 'recover' the money by undergoing a relatively unnecessary procedure or surgery.

Fourth, patient beliefs and expectations arising from advances in medical care where people want certainty when they are worried and may feel that something tangible should follow a consultation. Reassurance can look like inaction; observation can feel inferior to a scan; lifestyle advice can appear less serious than medication. Doctors may respond to these expectations, particularly in crowded clinics where explanation requires time.

The fifth driver is the rise of 'defensive medicine', in which clinicians, fearing that they might miss a rare diagnosis, may consider ordering another test as the safer option. What is often forgotten, however, is that every test carries potential risks, both from the test itself and from the discovery of abnormalities that may never have caused harm.

Choosing wisely

India is not alone in facing this problem. Overtreatment first became widely recognised in high-income countries and is now increasingly visible across many middle-income nations. This gave rise to the global Choosing Wisely movement, which encourages people to choose health-care interventions more carefully. It is against this backdrop, between 2012 and 2023, that nearly 80 specialty societies worldwide published close to 700 recommendations identifying hundreds of tests and treatments that

clinicians and patients should question. The message is that medicine requires stronger mechanisms for self-correction. The solutions are about practising better medicine. Halting and reversing overmedicalisation requires the engagement of all stakeholders, including individuals, communities, professional societies and health policymakers.

First, India needs to rebuild stronger and functional primary care and restore the family physician as the first point of contact for most non-emergency health needs. A general physician can decide which problems require specialist expertise, reconcile multiple prescriptions and recognise when treatment can safely be reduced. Initiation of care by a general physician, followed by continuity through the referral pathway, protects patients against overmedication and excess surgeries.

Second, every medical prescription should carry a review date and, where appropriate, a possible stop date. Medicines should not become lifelong simply because nobody asks whether they are still needed. Older adults and people taking five or more medicines should periodically undergo a structured medication review assessing indication, benefit, duplication, interactions and opportunities for deprescribing.

Develop India-specific lists

Third, professional medical societies and the Indian Council of Medical Research should develop Indian lists of low-value tests, treatments and procedures – similar to Choosing Wisely – and embed these principles in medical training, accreditation and quality-improvement programmes. Hospitals should measure not only whether recommended care was provided, but also whether unnecessary care was avoided.

Fourth, before starting any test or treatment, patients should note that these four questions matter: Why do I need this? What happens if I wait? What are the possible benefits and risks? What are the alternatives? These questions can substantially improve clinical conversations and outcomes.

Fifth, payment systems and health insurance must reward outcomes, clinical reasoning and continuity of care rather than volume alone. A health-care system should not make it financially easier to order a scan than to explain thoughtfully why that scan may be unnecessary.

Medical advances will continue – and they should. However, the next stage of medical progress will come not only from discovering more tests, medicines and procedures, but also from learning when not to use them. Good medicine requires action when action helps. In an age of medical abundance, it increasingly requires something more difficult – restraint.

6. India's Problem of Overtreatment and Overmedication

GS Paper: GS-2 – Health, Governance and Public Policy

Context: India faces a dual burden of unnecessary medical interventions and inadequate access to essential healthcare.

1. Major Drivers of Overtreatment and Overmedication

1. **Excessive diagnostic testing:** Unnecessary screening and scans generate false positives, leading to further tests and avoidable treatment.
2. **Fragmented healthcare:** Multiple specialists may prescribe overlapping medicines without reviewing a patient's complete medical history.
3. **Commercial incentives:** Fee-for-service models can encourage hospitals to prioritise the volume of tests and procedures over their necessity.
4. **Defensive medicine:** Doctors may recommend additional investigations to avoid potential allegations of negligence.
5. **Patient expectations:** Patients may perceive more tests, medicines and procedures as indicators of better treatment.
6. **Inadequate medication review:** Long-term prescriptions continue without regular assessment of their necessity, particularly among older adults.

2. Major Concerns

1. **Patient safety:** Unnecessary medicines increase the risk of adverse drug reactions, drug interactions and complications from avoidable procedures.
2. **Financial burden:** Unwarranted tests and treatments increase out-of-pocket expenditure and may push vulnerable households into financial distress.
3. **Antimicrobial resistance:** Inappropriate antibiotic use accelerates the emergence of drug-resistant microorganisms.
4. **Overdiagnosis and overtreatment cycle:** Detecting abnormalities that would never cause harm can lead to anxiety, repeated investigations and unnecessary interventions.
5. **Polypharmacy among older adults:** A 2025 study published in *Scientific Reports* found that 33.7% of its study participants experienced polypharmacy and 28.8% received potentially inappropriate medications. These figures relate to the study sample, not the entire Indian population.
6. **Healthcare inequality:** Resources spent on unnecessary care divert attention and funds from people who lack essential medicines, timely diagnosis and affordable treatment.
7. **Declining trust:** Unnecessary procedures and conflicting prescriptions can undermine public confidence in doctors and healthcare institutions.

3. Way Forward

1. **Strengthen primary healthcare:** Promote family physicians as the first point of contact, ensuring coordinated treatment and appropriate specialist referrals.
2. **Promote rational prescribing:** Conduct periodic medication reviews, check drug interactions and discontinue medicines when clinically appropriate.
3. **Develop Indian-specific guidelines:** The Indian Council of Medical Research and medical associations should identify low-value tests, treatments and procedures.
4. **Ensure informed decision-making:** Doctors should explain the necessity, benefits, risks and alternatives before recommending investigations or treatment.
5. **Reform healthcare incentives:** Link payment and hospital performance to clinical outcomes and quality rather than the volume of procedures.

6. **Strengthen professional accountability:** Encourage evidence-based clinical practice, prescription audits and monitoring of unnecessary interventions.
7. **Improve public awareness:** Educate patients that more medicines and tests do not necessarily mean better healthcare.

China says 'never recognised' U.T. of Ladakh; India hits back

Beijing opposes Survey of India move to standardise names of specific features in Ladakh, calls it 'illegal and void'; New Delhi says 'no amount of denial by Chinese side' can change established fact

Suhasini Haidar
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India and China on Tuesday sparred over New Delhi's decision to standardise the names of 28 features in Ladakh, including some along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) that had seen skirmishes between the Indian Army and the People's Liberation Army during a four-year stand-off.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry on Tuesday said it has "never recognised" the Union Territory (U.T.) of Ladakh, which was created in 2019, and called the naming of the areas by the Survey of India as "illegal and void", a charge that New Delhi rejected.

"The U.T. of Ladakh is an integral and inalienable part of India. No amount of denial by the Chinese side can change this established fact," said External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal. "Identifying these [28] places formally on the Survey of India map of the U.T. of Ladakh is aimed at facilitating their accurate recognition and better awareness among the public at large," he explained.



The spokesperson was responding to comments made by the Chinese Foreign Ministry earlier in the day. To a question at the Chinese Foreign Ministry briefing, spokesperson Mao Ning said that China has "never recognised the so-called 'Union Territory of Ladakh' unilaterally and illegally established by India, and firmly opposes the so-called 'standardised names' publicised by India."

"This move by India is illegal and void, and does not change the fact that the western sector of the China-India boundary belongs to China," she added, referring to the August 5, 2019 decision by the Indian go-

vernment to bifurcate the State of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories and dilute Article 370 of the Constitution.

At the time, Beijing had issued a sharp statement accusing India of undermining "China's territorial sovereignty by unilaterally changing its domestic law." Beijing had also made such a claim in September 2020 reacting strongly to an Indian project to construct high-altitude roads in eastern Ladakh.

A first in two years

This is the first such spat in the past two years, however, since the two sides re-established diplomatic and travel links between the

two countries in an effort to normalise relations after the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2024, indicating that the map remains a major point of contention.

The comments came 10 days after the Survey of India announced the standardisation of the names of specific relief features in Ladakh, including 11 peaks, five mountains, six land areas, two glaciers, two passes, one valley, one river, one lake, and one other waterbody.

Both features about Patrolling Point 15 (PP-15), which had seen heavy mobilisation during the India-China tensions at the LAC after the deadly clashes at Galwan in June 2020. The two armies agreed to stand down from the PP-15 point in September 2022, as part of a series of disengagement negotiations.

Both India and China have been reinforcing their territorial claims in both the Western and Eastern sectors by naming features in official maps and creating administrative jurisdictions in a series of cartographic tit-for-tat measures going back many years.

7. China Rejects Ladakh's Union Territory Status; India Hits Back

GS Paper: GS-2 – India–China Relations; GS-3 – Internal Security and Border Management

Context: China opposed India's standardisation of names of 28 geographical features in Ladakh, while India reaffirmed Ladakh's status as an integral part of the country.

1. Major Developments

1. **India's move:** The Survey of India standardised names of 28 geographical features in Ladakh, including 11 peaks, five mountains, six land areas, two glaciers, two passes, one valley, one river, one lake and one other waterbody.
2. **China's objection:** China called the move "illegal and void" and reiterated its opposition to the creation of the Union Territory of Ladakh in 2019.
3. **India's response:** The Ministry of External Affairs asserted that Ladakh is an integral and inalienable part of India and that Chinese objections cannot alter this established fact.

2. Major Concerns for India

1. **Territorial sovereignty:** China's claims challenge India's territorial integrity and administrative authority over Ladakh.
2. **Border tensions:** The western sector of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) remains disputed, particularly following the Galwan Valley clashes of June 2020.
3. **Strategic infrastructure:** Roads and other infrastructure in eastern Ladakh are essential for military mobility, logistics and border security.
4. **Diplomatic mistrust:** Competing territorial claims and unilateral actions complicate normalisation of bilateral relations.
5. **Cartographic contestation:** Naming geographical features and depicting them on official maps can be used to reinforce competing territorial claims.

3. Way Forward

1. **Diplomatic engagement:** Continue negotiations through established military and diplomatic mechanisms to resolve outstanding border issues.
2. **Border stability:** Implement disengagement understandings, maintain peace along the LAC and prevent escalation.
3. **Infrastructure development:** Strengthen border roads, communications and logistics while ensuring preparedness in strategically important areas.
4. **Consistent territorial position:** Maintain clear official maps and geographical records to reinforce India's sovereignty claims.
5. **Broader bilateral dialogue:** Restore trust and normalise relations through progress on border stability, diplomatic engagement and people-to-people contacts.