

## Engage with caution

The latest **disengagement** along the **LAC** is a welcome step, but the border crisis is not over

India and China on September 13 confirmed the disengagement of their troops from a fifth **friction** point in Eastern Ladakh along the LAC. With the latest **withdrawal** of troops from Patrolling Point (PP) 15 in the Gogra-Hot Springs area, **buffer zones** have now been **established** by the two sides in five locations, including in Galwan Valley, north and south of Pangong Lake, and at PP17A in Gogra. The **arrangements** in the four earlier established buffer zones **have so far** helped keep the peace over the past two years. No patrolling is to be **undertaken** by either side in the buffer zones, which have been established on territory **claimed** by both India and China. The latest disengagement came just three days before Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping are to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) **Summit** in Uzbekistan.

**Reflecting** the current **state** of relations, the two leaders have not directly spoken in more than two-and-a-half-years, an extraordinary situation for the world's two most **populous** countries. Whether they meet at the SCO Summit — as of September 14, neither side had confirmed or **ruled out** a meeting — or at the G20 in Indonesia later this year, India will need to proceed with caution as it **inevitably resumes** high-level engagement with China. While the buffer zones may serve as a temporary measure to prevent a **recurrence** of **clashes**, the reality is that this is an arrangement that has been **forced** on India. **The Indian military**, by **holding the line** and showing its capacity to match China's **deployments**, **has** been able to reverse China's multiple territorial **ingresses** of April 2020 in the five areas. That has, however, come at the cost of India's ability to access patrolling points that it was reaching previously, which, **in the view of** some military observers, might have been China's game-plan **all along**, **given** the favourable **logistics** and **terrain** on the Chinese side that enable faster deployments. Moreover, China has neither agreed to resolve **stand-offs** in Demchok and Depsang, suggesting they **pre-dated** the current tensions, nor shown any intent to **de-escalate**, instead continuing to build forward infrastructure aimed at permanently housing a large number of troops closer to the LAC. **Indeed**, signs are that both sides are in for a **prolonged** period of uncertainty on the borders **thanks to** China's decision to **mobilise** tens of thousands of troops in April 2020, in **contravention** of past border agreements. Unless Beijing reverses its recent, and still unexplained, moves to **militarise** the LAC and in the process **undo** the carefully constructed arrangements that helped keep the peace for 40 years, India will have little **incentive** to consider a return to relations as they were prior to 2020. The latest **disengagement**, while certainly a welcome step, **by no means implies** an end to the crisis on the border. **[Practice Exercise]**

- **Prolonged** (adjective) – Lengthy, protracted, long, continued, extended. लंबे समय तक
- Red/blue coloring of words in the sentence indicates subject verb relationship; where 'red' denotes 'subject' and 'blue' denotes 'verb'

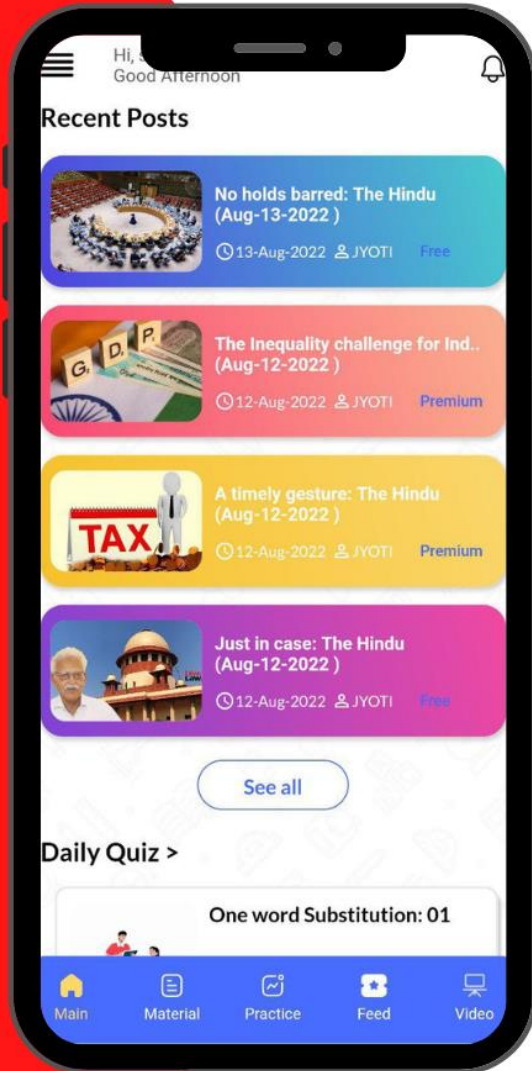
## Vocabulary

1. **Disengagement** (noun) – (military) withdrawal of troops to a more favorable position
2. **LAC** (noun) – a notional demarcation line that separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory.
3. **Friction** (noun) – conflict, antagonism, dissension, strife टकराव
4. **Withdrawal** (noun) – retreat, removal, departure, exit वापसी
5. **Buffer zone** (noun) – an area intended to separate two armies that are fighting
6. **Establish** (verb) – Set up or found स्थापित करना
7. **Arrangement** (noun) – agreement, deal, system; The thing arranged or agreed to व्यवस्था
8. **So far** (phrase) – thus far अब तक
9. **Undertake** (verb) – Start, commence, embark on, carry out शुरू करना
10. **Claim** (verb) – Assert or affirm strongly दावा करना
11. **Summit** (noun) – conference, meeting शिखर सम्मेलन
12. **Reflect** (verb) – Reveal, expose, suggest, signal, indicate, show, display संकेत करना
13. **State** (noun) – condition, situation स्थिति
14. **Populous** (adjective) – Densely populated घनी आबादी
15. **Rule out** (phrasal verb) – dismiss, reject, exclude, discard, prohibit इंकार करना
16. **Inevitably** (adverb) – necessarily, unavoidably, inescapably, needs, surely अवश्य
17. **Resume** (verb) – restart, renew, recommence, reopen, continue पुनरारंभ करना
18. **Recurrence** (noun) – Happening again (especially at regular intervals) पुनरावृत्ति
19. **Clash** (noun) – conflict, fight, dispute, battle लड़ाई, मुठभेड़
20. **Force** (verb) – compel, impose, coerce, constrain थोपना
21. **Hold the line** (phrase) – not yield/surrender to the pressure of a difficult situation. कठिन परिस्थिति के दबाव में न झुकना
22. **Deployment** (noun) – placement, deploy, stationing, तैनाती
23. **Ingress** (noun) – The act of entering; entrance; प्रवेश

24. **In view of** (phrase) – considering, taking into account के मद्देनजर
25. **All along** (phrase) – from the very beginning
26. **Given** (preposition) – considering, bearing in mind, taking into consideration देखते हुए
27. **Logistics** (noun) – The aspect of military operations that deals with the procurement, distribution, maintenance, and replacement of materiel and personnel. संभार-तंत्र
28. **Terrain** (noun) – land, geography, territory, ground, landscape भूभाग
29. **Stand-off** (noun) – stalemate, deadlock, impasse, standstill गतिरोध
30. **Pre-date** (verb) – to be or occur at an earlier date than; precede in time
31. **De-escalate** (verb) – Reduce the level or intensity or size or scope of कम करना (तीव्रता)
32. **Indeed** (adverb) – actually, certainly, really, in fact, truly वास्तव में
33. **Thanks to** (phrase) – owing to, as a result of, because of के कारण से
34. **Mobilise** (verb) – rally, assemble, marshal, organize, muster जुटाना
35. **Contravention** (noun) – breach, violation, infringement, infraction, transgression उल्लंघन
36. **Militarise** (verb) – equip or supply (a place, organization, etc.) with soldiers and other military resources. सैन्यीकरण करना
37. **Undo** (verb) – Cancel, annul, or reverse an action or its effect पूर्ववत करना
38. **Incentive** (noun) – stimulus, motivation, inducement, spur, encouragement प्रोत्साहन
39. **By no means** (phrase) – not at all; certainly not. किसी भी तरह से
40. **Imply** (verb) – suggest, indicate, mean, intimate, insinuate सूचित करना

## Practice Exercise

- **Due to some technical glitches, I am not able to append practice exercise in this editorial PDF. Sorry for the inconvenience.**



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English Madhyam

