

The
EXPERT
in
anything
was **ONCE** a
beginner.



Mass messaging

The BJP is recklessly reinforcing ethnic and religious fault lines in the Northeast

Protests in the Northeast, especially in Assam and Tripura, over the Centre's move to push through the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in Parliament highlight the dangerous pre-election adventurism of the BJP. The Bill seeks to confer Indian citizenship to persecuted migrants from the Hindu, Jain, Sikh, Parsi, Christian and Buddhist communities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who came to India before 2014. The Bill, contentious in itself for its exclusion of Muslims, is seen by many as a ploy to legitimise the presence of Hindu Bengalis who had reached the Northeast in the aftermath of the birth of Bangladesh in 1971. The BJP's ally in the Assam government, the Asom Gana Parishad, an ethnic party at its core, called it quits on Monday when the Union Cabinet cleared the redrafted Bill for introduction in the Lok Sabha. It was passed on Tuesday. While the BJP-led governments at the Centre and in Assam have often given the assurance that the extra burden of people is not solely the State's, the Rajendra Agrawal-led Joint Parliamentary Committee's report is categorical: "The Assam Government should help settle migrants especially in places which are not densely populated, thus, causing lesser impact on the demographic changes and providing succour to the indigenous Assamese people." Thus, an alliance with the BJP became politically impossible for the nativist AGP.

The blowback from the Bill in the Brahmaputra valley is not lost on the BJP either. It has tried to offset the impact with two decisions aimed at appealing to the Assamese electorate. These, the constitution of a committee to resurrect and operationalise the crucial Clause 6 of the 1985 Assam Accord stipulating "constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards for the Assamese people", and the proposal to accord Scheduled Tribe status to six major communities that are currently classified as OBCs, are of a piece. They are intended to assuage and assure Assamese speakers that the party can merge Hindutva obligations with local interests. The ST status could turn Assam, which has a 34% Muslim population, into a tribal State with a majority of seats reserved. The panel could recommend reservation of seats in the Assembly and local bodies and in jobs for the indigenous populace. The point, however, is that for now the measures count as messaging. The Citizenship Bill and the ST Bill have yet to be passed in the Rajya Sabha. And the panel on Clause 6 has until July 6 to submit its report. The BJP knows that with reverses expected in the rest of the country in the Lok Sabha elections, it needs to retain, if not augment, its seats from Assam to come anywhere close to its 2014 haul. It is doing all it can ensure that, but with little thought to the ethnic and communal fault lines it is aiding.

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- While Bill is designed to grant citizenship to non-Muslim refugees persecuted in neighbouring countries, NRC does not distinguish migrants on the basis of religion. It will consider deporting anyone who has entered the State illegally post-March 24, 1971, irrespective of their religion.
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like

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Korean consensus?

Kim Jong-un's visit to China is likely to force next steps after the Singapore summit

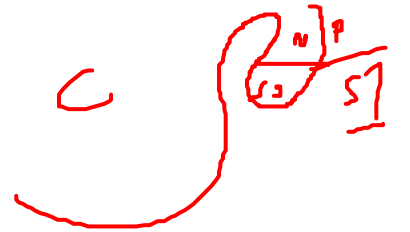
The visit to China of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, at the invitation of President Xi Jinping, is significant for two distinct reasons. It is evidence of the continuing calm in the Korean peninsula for nearly a year since the thaw between Pyongyang and Washington that culminated in the Singapore summit in June 2018. The meeting also coincides with the resumption of trade negotiations this week between U.S. and Chinese delegations in Beijing. Expectations are that the dialogue between the regional neighbours could impact the trade dispute between the world's two largest economies. Whereas Mr. Xi is keen on securing sanctions relief for Mr. Kim, U.S. President Donald Trump will be equally eager that his peace deal continues to resonate in the region and beyond, notwithstanding the practical hurdles it has encountered. The Xi-Kim meeting cannot have overlooked the stalled progress on the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula that Mr. Kim and Mr. Trump agreed on in Singapore. The American and North Korean leaders have in recent days reiterated their willingness to schedule another bilateral summit, a hope they have held out for months. But unlike the ambiguous promises issued in the Singapore declaration, Mr. Kim now wants to talk specifics. This could raise the stakes beyond diplomatic niceties and sound bites. In his New Year address, he emphasised the easing of economic sanctions as a priority, on which Beijing's diplomatic clout could prove critical despite the lack of movement on the nuclear question. In that speech, Mr. Kim also insisted on a permanent end to the annual joint military exercises between the U.S. and South Korea. Another demand was for multilateral negotiations to declare a formal end to the Korean war in place of the truce that has obtained since 1953. The latter issues have acquired greater weight in view of the ongoing rapprochement between Seoul and Pyongyang. This is exemplified by their decision to convert the Demilitarised Zone that separates the two countries into a peace park, and to disarm the joint security area.

Formal negotiations between North Korea and the U.S. have made little headway since the Singapore summit. Access to North Korea's nuclear installations has proved elusive to U.S. officials. The sudden cancellation of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's visit to Pyongyang last August was an indication of the stalemate. A North Korean test of a new tactical weapon in November was seen as a way to pressure Washington for concessions, if not a return to the hostile posturing of previous years. The uneasy calm that has been sustained on the peninsula for over a year now is no doubt a respite from Pyongyang's successive nuclear tests to rattle the U.S. mainland. But Washington is impatient for information on the North Korean weapons stockpile. Pyongyang is anxious about sanctions relief. Something has to give.



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Judicial evasion and the status quo

In high stakes cases, the Supreme Court must ensure that judgments are timely and clear



On October 26, 2018, a three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court, headed by the Chief Justice of India, was confronted with a straightforward legal question: whether the decision taken by the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) and the Central government to divest Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Director Alok Verma of his powers and functions was legally valid.

- It required the court to interpret three legal instruments: the delhi special police establishment (DSPE) act (that brought the CBI into existence), the CVC act, and the supreme court's own prior judgment in vineet narain.

PI

- **The counsel for Mr. Verma argued :** DSPE Act made it clear that the CBI Director had a guaranteed, two-year tenure, and could not be transferred without the consent of a high-powered committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Chief Justice of India.
- The **Attorney-General, on the other hand,** **argued:** that the **committee's role was purely recommendatory**, that the power vested with the Central government, and that in any event Mr. **Verma had not been "transferred"**.

As the Supreme Court itself acknowledged, what was at stake was a “pure question of law”.

- there were **two parallel proceedings** taking place in the Supreme Court.
- The first was Mr. Verma's original challenge to the process of his divestment — that came up before the court in October, and was heard in December.
- The second — which occupied the court through the month of November, and through the now familiar, **depressing cycle of “sealed covers”**

- Effectively, therefore, by mixing up the two questions, the Supreme Court dragged on for months a case that could have been decided within days. And this was of crucial significance: Mr. Verma retires at the end of January.
- It is questionable what, precisely, **does it really mean for the Supreme Court to “reinstate” him midway through January.**

This is not the first time that an important, time-sensitive case has been dragged on in a manner that materially affects the situation of the parties. In the Aadhaar challenge, for example, the **case was finally heard six years after it was filed**, effectively allowing the government to present a fait accompli to the court.

- Supreme Court finally returned a clear finding that the CVC and the Central government had acted outside their jurisdiction in divesting Mr. Verma.
- However the high-powered committee — would have to consider the allegations against him
- **As a matter of law, this is strange**
was his divestment was procedurally flawed?

The Supreme Court's limited remit was to decide that question.

- To place fetters on his powers as the director, thus presumptively placing him under a cloud of suspicion. All this suggests an attempt to chalk out a “middle ground”,
- In the meantime, mr. Verma was restrained from taking “any major policy decisions”.
- In any event, what exactly is a “major policy decision”?
- None of these is a legal term, and the lack of clarity only raises the spectre of fresh litigation, thus further hamstringing mr. Verma for the remainder of his tenure.

- This, once again, is familiar: in the Supreme Court's Aadhaar judgment, although private parties were banned from accessing the Aadhaar database, the ambiguity in the court's holding meant that different parties interpreted the judgment differently — leading to an amendment to the Aadhaar Act that attempts to circumvent the judgment by letting in private parties through the backdoor.
- This is, once again, a reminder that — much like judicial evasion — ambiguity is not neutral: it primarily benefits the party that has the power to exploit it, and that party is invariably the government.

- During the Constituent Assembly debates, there was a proposal that all cases involving fundamental rights be decided within a month
- In high stakes cases, time-sensitive cases, the court must **ensure two things**: that the **judgment is timely, and that the judgment is clear.**

The Great Game is not a zero-sum deal: on handling Afghanistan

India and China can work together, bilaterally and in multilateral groupings, to build a secure Afghanistan



- There is an air of uncertainty about the U.S.'s intentions in Afghanistan.
- security could hinge on efforts made by regional powers to stabilise Afghanistan

Like India, China never had any intention of contributing troops to NATO's anti-Taliban campaign.

But as Asia's strongest power and challenger to the U.S., China will shed no tears if the U.S. reduces its military strength or calls it a day after 18 years of a protracted and **indecisive war in Afghanistan**



- Sharing part of a border with Afghanistan, China has a great interest in its stability.
- China would be adversely affected by war and chaos, which could spill over into north-western China, Pakistan, and Central Asia.
- As all these areas are vital in its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), peace in Afghanistan is critical

- **Over the last decade**, China has gained considerable economic and diplomatic influence in Afghanistan.
- Unsurprisingly, Afghanistan's President, Ashraf Ghani, made China the destination of his first official trip abroad in October 2014
- **It has joined the U.S. and Russia in several peace talks with the Taliban** and is
- **part of the four-nation Quadrilateral Coordination Group (with Afghanistan, Pakistan and the U.S.)**.
- It is giving military aid to Afghanistan, with the express intent of fighting terrorism and increasing security cooperation.

- Despite the prevailing instability in Afghanistan, China has used diplomacy and finance to appear influential and generous.
- It has invested in projects such as mining, roads and railways, and health.
- A rail link, completed in 2016, and running from far eastern China via Uzbekistan to the river port of Hairatan in northern Afghanistan, could reduce the time taken to make shipments, from six months by road, to just two weeks.
- Infrastructure problems have halted work on the railway for a while, and the three countries are in talks to resume operations

- China's diplomacy has highlighted its contacts with all parties to the conflict and **enhanced its status as a power broker**.
- In 2012, it brought Afghanistan into the regional diplomatic processes by giving it observer status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).
- At the 18th SCO summit at Qingdao, China, in 2018, Chinese President Xi Jinping declared China's readiness to train 2,000 law enforcement officers 'for all parties' in the next three years. The initiative was welcomed by Central Asian countries.
- For example, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, which share a border with northern Afghanistan, are concerned about the Taliban and other terrorist groups becoming powerful in Afghanistan, and posing a threat.
- The **SCO's programme for 2019-21** also calls for combating terrorism, and generally enhancing security cooperation.

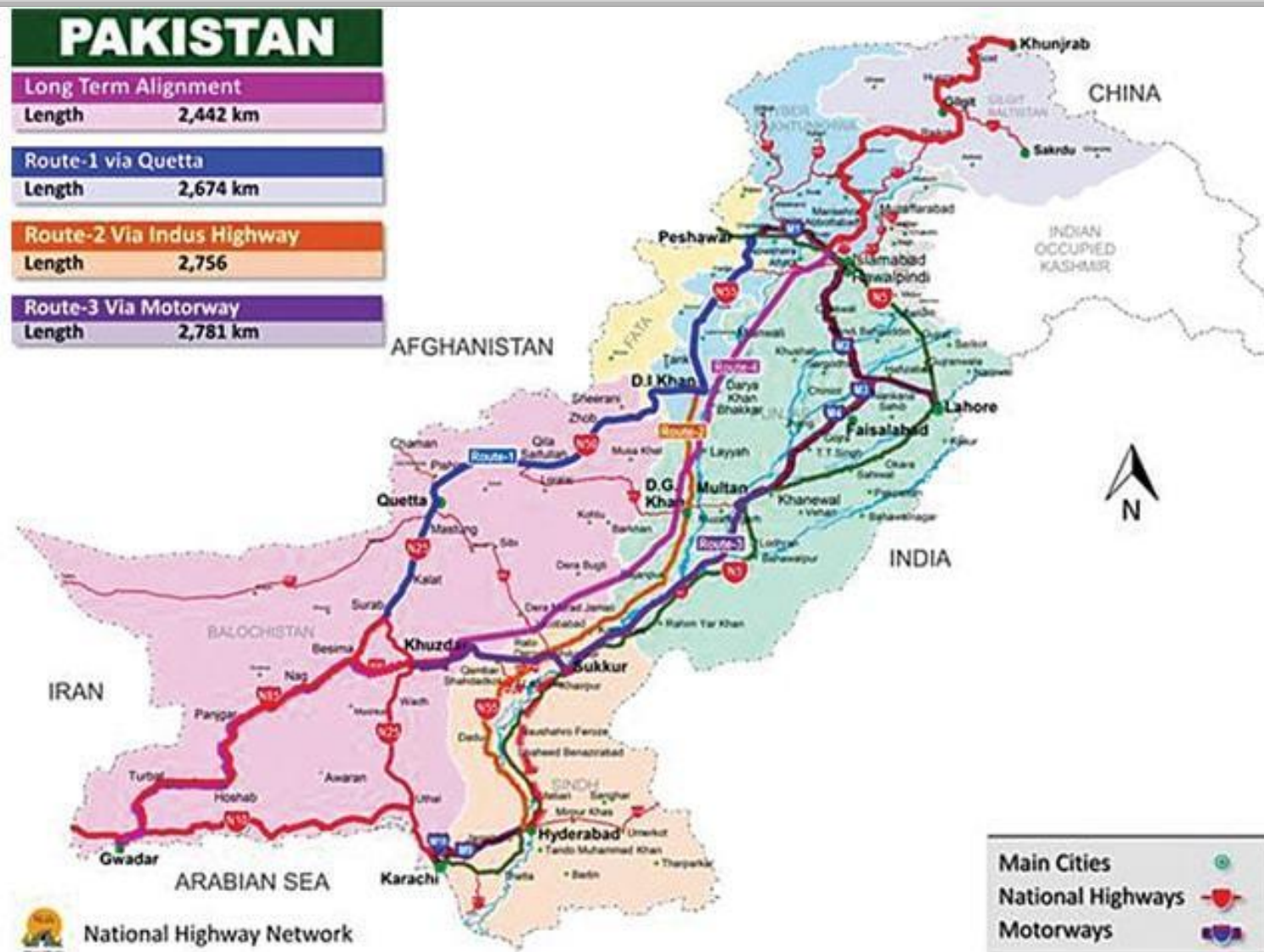
Dealing with Pakistan



- If the U.S. withdrawal exacerbates conflict, **southern Russia will also face the threat of an extremist spillover.**
- Therefore, Russia and its Central Asian ‘near abroad’ would be **willing to** expand their cooperation with China to **curb insecurity.**

How will China deal with Pakistan, its all-weather friend which trains and exports extremists across the Durand Line?

- Pakistan has become a crucial link in the BRI.
- And **China has reportedly invested billions in** the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (**CPEC**), which cuts across disputed territory in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir.



- Since 2011, China has continually blamed Pakistan for exporting extremists to Uighur in Xinjiang, and for extremist attacks on Chinese workers in the CPEC area.
- **But these incidents have not affected their friendship.**

Could China have some leverage over Pakistan?

- **Pakistan remained the largest recipient of Chinese arms imports (2013-17).**
- Would China's strategic and economic interests prompt it to press Pakistan to stop exporting terrorists across the Durand Line? **These are the big questions.**

India supports China's role in international negotiations on Afghanistan, the activation of the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group and other mechanisms of dialogue and cooperation for restoration of peace and development in Afghanistan.

- For its part, India has certainly contributed much 'soft power' ranging from telecommunications to education, Bollywood movies and pop music.
- The building for the National Assembly was built with Indian assistance to support Afghanistan's democracy.
- **Indian reconstruction largesse**, amounting to some \$3 billion, has earned it goodwill and popularity.

- India, which has been against holding talks with the Taliban for a long time, finally sent two retired diplomats, at the 'non-official level', to join them at the Moscow peace parleys in November last year.
- But India's lengthy absence from regional diplomacy has resulted in its limited contribution to the negotiations that are necessary to stabilise Afghanistan.
- The Afghan government would like to see India-China economic cooperation in Afghanistan that could boost progress and enhance human security

- Last October, in a first, India and China started a joint training project for Afghan diplomats. They could expand cooperation by facilitating Afghanistan's full membership of the SCO.
- China's leadership role of the SCO and contacts with all parties (the U.S., the Taliban, the Afghan government, Pakistan, Russia and the five Central Asian states) could give it a vantage in crafting a regional solution on Afghanistan.
- That should not prevent India and China from working together, bilaterally and in the SCO, to build a secure Afghanistan.

Why Adam Smith favoured public education

Contrary to popular opinion, he was not a free market apologist



- The authority of Adam Smith is frequently invoked by supporters of the free market, who argue for extending the market forces to all conceivable goods and services and eliminating any kind of government intervention in markets

- Smith **favoured liberal capitalism over the extant socio-economic arrangement** (elements of feudalism and mercantilism).
- While feudalism was characterised by the rule of the nobility/landowners, mercantilism was characterised by state monopoly over trade
- in this historical context that Smith called for the state to withdraw its monopolistic interventions in both external and internal commerce.
- Contrary to public opinion, Smith presupposed the government provision of legal infrastructure, defence, transport infrastructure and education for the proper functioning of liberal capitalism.

For him, the responsibility of providing institutions “for promoting the instruction of the people” is one of the chief duties of the state.

The state, he said, must undertake this responsibility just as it accepts responsibility “for protecting society from the violence and invasion of other independent societies”.

Modern appropriators of Smith also make abundant use of the “invisible hand” metaphor. But Smith used this metaphor only once in Wealth of Nations, and twice in his other writings in different contexts.

Education is not a commodity



- Smith conceived of education in a broad manner.
- Education for him not only includes the “study of wisdom” but also the learning of good moral sentiments such as virtue, sympathy, gratitude and benevolence.
- Since Smith considered education as central to a flourishing society, he did not treat it as a commodity.
- He argued that the costs of education should be such that “even a common labourer may afford it”.

Parliament passes Bill to provide 10% quota for poor

Rajya Sabha clears proposed law after nine-hour-long heated debate

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Parliament on Wednesday cleared the Constitutional Amendment Bill guaranteeing 10% quota in education and employment to economically weaker sections in the general category, following an approval by the Rajya Sabha.










The Upper House nod came following an over nine-hour-long heated debate, during which the Opposition accused the government of bringing the Bill in haste with an eye on the coming Lok Sabha election.

Walkout by AIADMK

The AIADMK staged a walkout vehemently opposing the move, while some other political parties, including the DMK, the Left and the AAP demanded that the Bill be sent to a Select Committee.

DMK's Kanimozhi, supported by several members, sought a division of vote on her motion for referring the Bill to a Select Committee. However, it was defeated with just 18 votes in favour. Then the CPI and the AAP members walked out in protest.

The Bill was passed with a majority of 165 against seven

Dissenting voices	
	 The first PM Jawaharlal Nehru brought in the first Amendment... he expressly excluded the word "economic"... What data does the government have to justify this 10%? KANIMOZHI, DMK
 There are three hurdles the Bill has to face. First is complete absence of mind. Second is the constitutionality. And then the hurdle of implementation... Has the govt. collected any demographic data on the economically weaker sections? KAPIL SIBAL, Congress	  The way this Bill is brought must concern every citizen of the country. The attitude of the govt. is to undermine the Constitution, and Parliament D. RAJA, CPI
  This govt. brought several Money Bills to bypass the Rajya Sabha. You could have brought even this as a 'Money Bill' RAMGOPAL YADAV, SP	  Is the new poverty line ₹2,100 per day... since the Bill says ₹8 lakh will be the slab. This scheme is to cheat India DEREK O'BRIEN, Trinamool Congress

votes. It will be now sent for Presidential assent.

The Constitution (124th Amendment) Bill was introduced by Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment Thawar Chand Gehlot, who later in his reply said that the existing reservation to the SCs, STs and OBCs would not be touched by the amendment.

Clarifying the Bill's provisions, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the reservation would be applicable to jobs in both Central

and State governments, adding that the legislation gave powers to States to determine the economic criteria for identification of beneficiaries. He responded to the Opposition's charge of political intent by terming the government move a "slog-over six", with many more to come.

Earlier, during the debate, Congress leader Anand Sharma said provisions under Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution were for the backward and weaker communities. In

the past, attempts were made twice to extend reservation beyond their scope, but the Supreme Court struck them down. The same happened in several States.

Stating that it took the BJP-led government over four years to bring the Bill in the last session, Mr. Sharma questioned the circumstances in which it was taken up – pointing out that the party had lost recent Assembly polls in five States.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 10

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Terrorism a critical risk, says Sushma Swaraj

Minister flags proliferation of weapons, and climate change

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT



Brainstorming meet: Narendra Modi, Norway PM Erna Solberg and Sushma Swaraj at the Raisina Dialogue.AFP

Tehran proposes a new regional forum for West Asia

'It should render international boundaries inviolable'

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE



Regional matters: Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says the West is no longer in a dominant position.AFP

Trump insists on steel wall with Mexico

The barrier will stop the shedding of American blood by illegal immigrants, says U.S. President

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE





MCQ 1

China shares border with

1. Uzbekistan
2. Kyrgystan
3. Afghanistan
4. Tajikistan

(A) 1,2,4

(B) 1,2,3

(C) 2,3,4

(D) All

MCQ 2

Allowed provisions in the constitution of india are

1. Reservation for depressed classes
2. Reservation of unrepresented classes
3. Proportional Reservation
4. Adequate representation

(A) 1,2,3

(B) 1,2,4

(C) 2,3,4

(D) All

MCQ 3

Gulf cooperation council members are

1. Iran
2. Qatar
3. Saudi Arabia
4. Bahrain

(A) 1,2,4

(B) 2,3,4

(C) 3 & 4

(D) All

Mains Practice

Aghanistan is equally an problem and an opportunity for regional powers like India and China

Comment on all aspects (500 words)