

## Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

### What is the issue?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the launch of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).
- This happened at the UN Secretary General's Climate Action Summit in New York recently.

### What it proposes to do?

- CDRI is to be seen as an **international knowledge platform**.
- Here, countries can collaborate to make their existing and new infrastructure strong enough to withstand natural disasters.
- It is the fruition of at least **3 years of discussions** that India has had with more than 40 countries on this subject.
- It tries to bring countries together to share and learn from the one another's experiences to protect their infrastructure against disasters.
- The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is operating as the interim secretariat of CDRI as of now.

### What is the need to protect infrastructure?

- Many countries, including India, have over the years developed robust disaster management practices that have sharply reduced human casualties in a disaster.
- However, the **economic costs of a disaster** remain huge, mainly due to the damage caused to big infrastructure.
- A World Bank estimate - Cyclone Fani which hit Odisha in May 2019, caused damage to the tune of \$4 billion.
- Kerala government's report - The losses in the Kerala floods in 2018 could be in excess of \$4.4 billion.
- In the US, there were 10 climate change disasters in 2019 in which losses exceeded \$1 billion.

### What could be done to protect infrastructure?

- Many developing countries are still building its basic infrastructure and many developed ones are in the process of replacing old infrastructure.
- Future infrastructure should take into account the risks arising out of the

increased frequency and intensity of adverse impacts of climate change.

- Existing infrastructure would need to be retrofitted to make them more resilient.
- Disaster-proofing a project would involve changes in design, and use of newer technologies.
- These involve additional costs which are only a fraction of the losses that a disaster can bring.

### **What is the need for an international forum?**

- Disaster preparedness and infrastructure creation are largely national endeavours.
- However, modern infrastructure is also a web of networked systems, not always confined to national boundaries.
- Damage to any one node can have cascading impacts on the entire network.
- This will result in loss of livelihoods and disrupts the economic activity in places far away from the site of a disaster.
- To make entire networks resilient is the main thought behind CDRI.
- The platform is not meant to plan or execute infrastructure projects nor finance infrastructure projects.

### **What will CDRI do?**

- It will seek to identify and promote best practices, provide access to capacity building.
- It will work towards standardisation of designs, processes and regulations relating to infrastructure creation and management.
- It may identify and estimate the risks to, and from, large infrastructure in the event of different kinds of disasters in member countries.
- It may have countries, organisations like UN bodies, financial institutions, and other groups working on disaster management as its members.
- It seeks to help member countries integrate disaster management policies in all their activities.
- It will also help them in setting up institutions and regulatory provisions to ensure creation of resilient infrastructure, and identify and use affordable finance and technology.

### **Is there any connection between CDRI and BRI?**

- CDRI is seen as India's response to the Belt Road Initiative (BRI), China's ongoing programme to recreate the ancient Silk Route trading links.
- China is building massive new land and maritime infrastructure in several countries.

- India and some other nations view this as an attempt by China to use its economic and military heft to usurp strategic assets in other countries.
- Unlike BRI, CDRI is not an attempt by India to create or fund infrastructure projects in other countries.
- Having said that, international initiatives like these are not without any strategic or diplomatic objective.

### **Is there any connection between CDRI and ISA?**

- ISA is a treaty-based organisation that aims at a collective effort to promote the deployment of solar energy across the world.
- Its objective is to mobilise more than \$1 trillion into solar power by 2030, and to deploy over 1,000 GW of solar generation capacity in member countries by that time.
- India hosts ISA, with its headquarters in Gurgaon.
- The CDRI secretariat too would be based in New Delhi.
- While it is not envisioned to take the shape of a treaty-based organisation, CDRI can be seen as complementing ISA's efforts.
- ISA is about climate change mitigation - deployment of more solar energy would bring down the reliance on fossil fuels, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- While CDRI, on the other hand, is about adapting to climate change, a need that is inevitable.

### **What is India's aim?**

- With these two initiatives, India is seeking to obtain a leadership role, globally, in matters related to climate change.
- CDRI is more than just a climate change initiative.
- It does not matter whether the infrastructure is risk from climate-induced disasters or those taking place due to geophysical reasons, like earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides or tsunamis.
- The infrastructure needs to be strengthened to cope with all these.

**Source: The Indian Express**