

Strategies to Tackle Global Turbulence

What is the issue?

Experts say that, nevertheless the resilience of the Indian people, much fireproofing is needed within Indian society and the information domain for the country to stand firm.

Firefighting and fireproofing as national responses to crises are concepts that merit serious study in the emerging global geopolitical, geo-economic and security landscapes.

What is firefighting?

- Firefighting attaches itself to **reactive responses to crises** that arise from the
 1. Lack of preparedness,
 2. Lack of capacity, and
 3. Lack of national will and cohesion between different instruments of statecraft.
- These are among several other factors that could act singly, or coalesce together to dent national power significantly.
- India is no stranger to firefighting in domains as diverse as fixing societal fault lines, plugging economic fissures and scrambling to recover from national security setbacks.
- In some cases, the governments have ridden on the **resilience of the Indian people** to mitigate the adverse effects of the crisis.
- In others, **good leadership**, albeit reactive in nature, has often stopped the spread of the fire. They have initiated measures that have helped in ensuring better preparedness for future contingencies.

What is the need for specific strategies?

- India has visions of a 5-trillion-dollar and a 10-trillion-dollar economy in the decades ahead.
- So, it needs to see whether it needs to develop fireproofing strategies to insulate itself sufficiently from the plethora of crises raging across the world, as all these crises can slow down or even derail India's rise.
- While globalisation led to widespread economic prosperity, it also forced countries to peel off some of the inbuilt insulation that existed within the international economic order and created several vulnerabilities.
- Extremism, hyper-nationalism, the unequal distribution of wealth, migration and the adverse impacts of climate change are fissures that have impacted the whole world and need to be addressed globally.
- But there are specific issues that individual nations need to develop strategies to counter.

- **India-specific issues** - India needs to run two races simultaneously the next few years.
- The first race is the long distance one of achieving the status of a developed country by 2047.
- The second race being the more daunting middle-distance run that has already begun in the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine crisis and growing Chinese power. India needs new strategies to handle these races.

What must India do to fireproof?

- Fireproofing is one such strategy that India needs to consider across the Diplomacy, Information, Military & Economics (DIME) paradigm, with an added S (Society) creates a DIMES challenge for India to navigate.
- The strategic autonomy in a multi-polar world may be an aspirational outcome, with balancing and hedging emerging as key Indian diplomatic strategies.
- But with rising China's national power, hard choices must be made on the recalibrating existing strategic partnerships and exploring alliances.
- While there is optimism on the economic front that India is resilient enough to weather a global energy crisis or a financial depression, there is still considerable distress at the bottom of the pyramid.
- This is where the fireproofing of the economy in the medium term must concentrate on
 1. poverty alleviation on a war footing;
 2. universal education and health care;
 3. creation of jobs and raising the other parameters of the human development index.
- This is where India's economic insulation lies.

What was previously India's method of fireproofing?

- **Deterrence** has always been at the heart of India's fireproofing against both internal and external threats since Independence.
- However, the flavour of deterrence has largely been reactive and rarely kept pace with the rapidly changing character of war and mechanisms of internal dissent.
- In recent times, there have been attempts to migrate to a more proactive and even preventive strategy of deterrence, though a lack of capacity and doctrinal guidance will hamper this in complex situations.
- **Credible coercive capabilities** against external threats and better strategic communication to plug internal fissures and cracks should form the heart of fireproofing strategies in the security realm.
- Evolving societies are subject to periodic churn, and in India's case this churn has coincided with several events on the global stage such as the weaponisation of the information domain and social media.
- With its large and ethnically diverse population, staying cohesive will present the biggest challenge to India's leaders.
- This demands sagacity and statesmanship of the highest order if India is to stay the course over the next decade.
- Also, fireproofing will demand greater discipline from the Indian people.

Reference

1. [The Hindu | Fireproofing India from global turbulence](#)

