

22. Galwan Valley

- It's been a year since the armed forces of **China and India clashed in Galwan.**
- India and China share a 3,440-kilometer-long border with overlapping territory claims.
- At three sites along the Line of Actual Control in 2020, Indian and Chinese soldiers were embroiled in a tense standoff – **the Galwan River Valley, the Hot Springs area, and the Pangong Lake.**
- **The strategic significance of the Galwan River Valley (GRV) is as follows:**
 - ✓ The Galwan River is the highest ridgeline, allowing the Chinese to control **the Shyok route.**
 - ✓ It is located near **Aksai Chin**, a disputed area claimed by India but controlled by China, on the western side of the LAC.
 - **Why have tensions in this area has suddenly risen:**
 - ✓ India is attempting to build a **feeder road** between **Darbuk-Shyok Village with Daulat Beg Odi (DS-DBO road).**
 - ✓ This road follows the **Shyok River** and is **the most important communication link between LAC and the rest of the world.**
 - ✓ As a result, the Chinese were desperate to retain this territory, fearing that the Indian side may use the river valley to threaten their position on the Aksai Chin plateau.

What is the Line of Actual Control (LAC)?

- The LAC is the demarcation that **separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory.**
- India considers the LAC to be 3,488 km long, while the Chinese consider it to be only around 2,000 km.
- The India-China LAC in Ladakh is an outcome of the territory illegally retained by China after the 1962 conflict.
- The Chinese occupation of parts of **Aksai Chin** is not supported by historical or legal documents.
- It is divided into three sectors:
 - ✓ the eastern sector which spans Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim.