

11 Jun 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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B. GS 2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [China disregarding historical commitments on Naku La, say defence experts](#)

Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890

That treaty, called the “Convention between Great Britain and China relating to Sikkim and Tibet”, essentially paved the way for the colonial power to annex the small state of Sikkim.

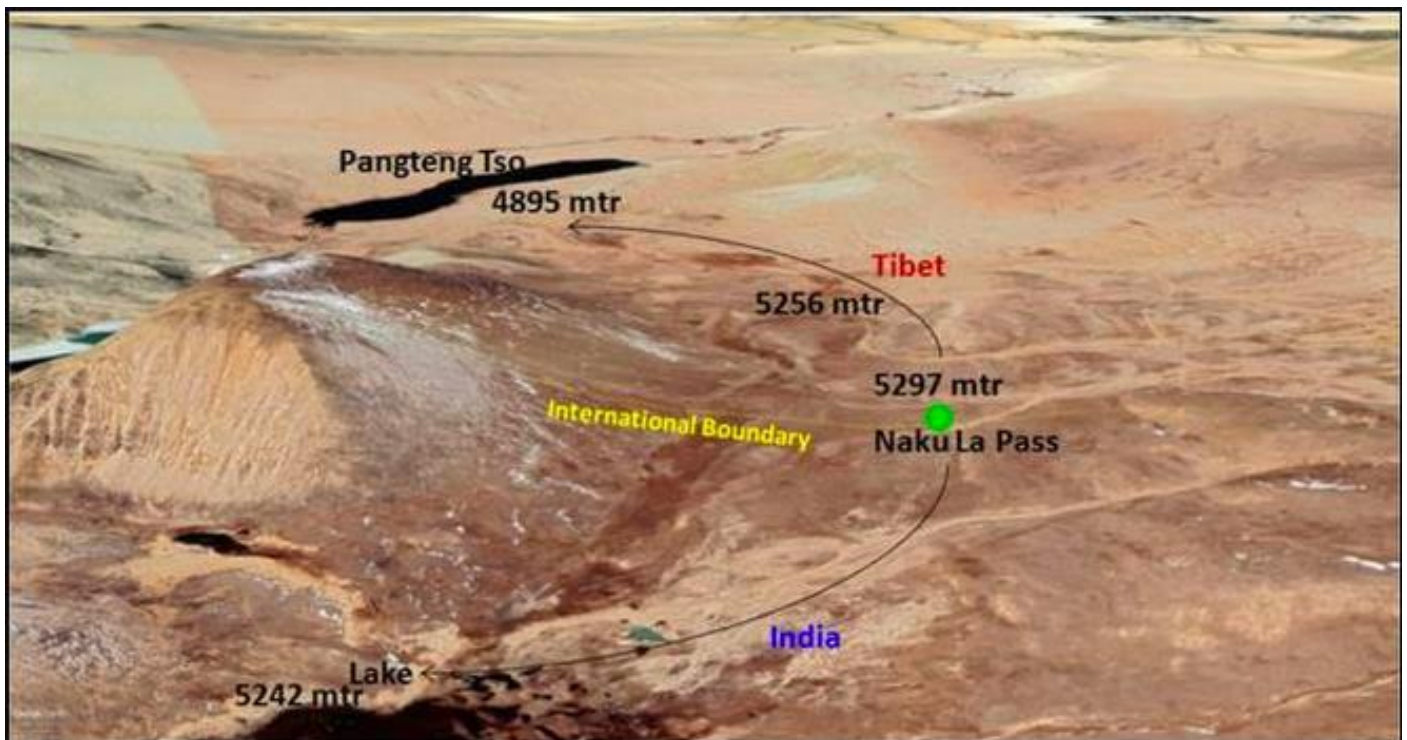
- Under the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890, the Sikkim-Tibet border was agreed upon and in 1895 it was jointly demarcated on the ground.

The treaty's first article has been particularly highlighted by Chinese officials:

- “The boundary of Sikkim and Tibet shall be the crest of the mountain range separating the waters flowing into the Sikkim Teesta and its affluents from the waters flowing into the Tibetan Mochu and northwards into other rivers of Tibet. The line commences at Mount Gipmochi, on the Bhutan frontier, and follows the above-mentioned water-parting to the point where it meets Nepal territory,” Article 1 said.

The second article recognized the British government’s control over Sikkim.

- “It is admitted that the British Government, whose Protectorate over the Sikkim State is hereby recognised, has direct and exclusive control over the internal administration and foreign relations of that State, and except through and with the permission of the British Government, neither the Ruler of the State nor any of its officers shall have official relations of any kind, formal or informal, with any other country,” the treaty said.



China’s acceptance of Sikkim as integral to India

- The new government of the People’s Republic of China, which took power in 1949, confirmed this position in a formal note to the Government of India in 1959.
- Agreement on this alignment was reiterated in the 2003 Sino-Indian agreement to promote trade between Sikkim and Tibet via Nathu La. China has also formally recognized Sikkim as an integral part of India.

Context

- Major scuffle took place at Naku La.

Issue Area

- The meetings between former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in 2003 and maps exchanged subsequently indicated that India recognised the Tibetan Autonomous Region as a part of China, and Beijing recognised Sikkim as a State of the Indian Union, the **boundary at Sikkim while undisputed, remains undemarcated on the ground.**

- China may now be opening up a front in Sikkim due to the ambiguous official position of the boundary.
- In 2017, after the Doklam stand-off near the India-Bhutan-China trijunction, the then Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar informed the Parliamentary Standing Committee that India accepted the 1890 treaty as “the basis for alignment”, but the treaty had only been “partially implemented on the ground”.

Defence experts' opinion

- With a perceptible shift in stand by China, and incidents of more intrusive patrols by the PLA, experts say that not only will the two sides need to negotiate to resolve the stand-off at Naku La, but India should also have more diplomatic focus on laying down the line firmly to Beijing on the boundary in Sikkim.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT

1. Gujarat's pride grows as it now hosts 674 Gir lions

Context

- Increase in population of Asiatic lions in the Gir forest region.

Details

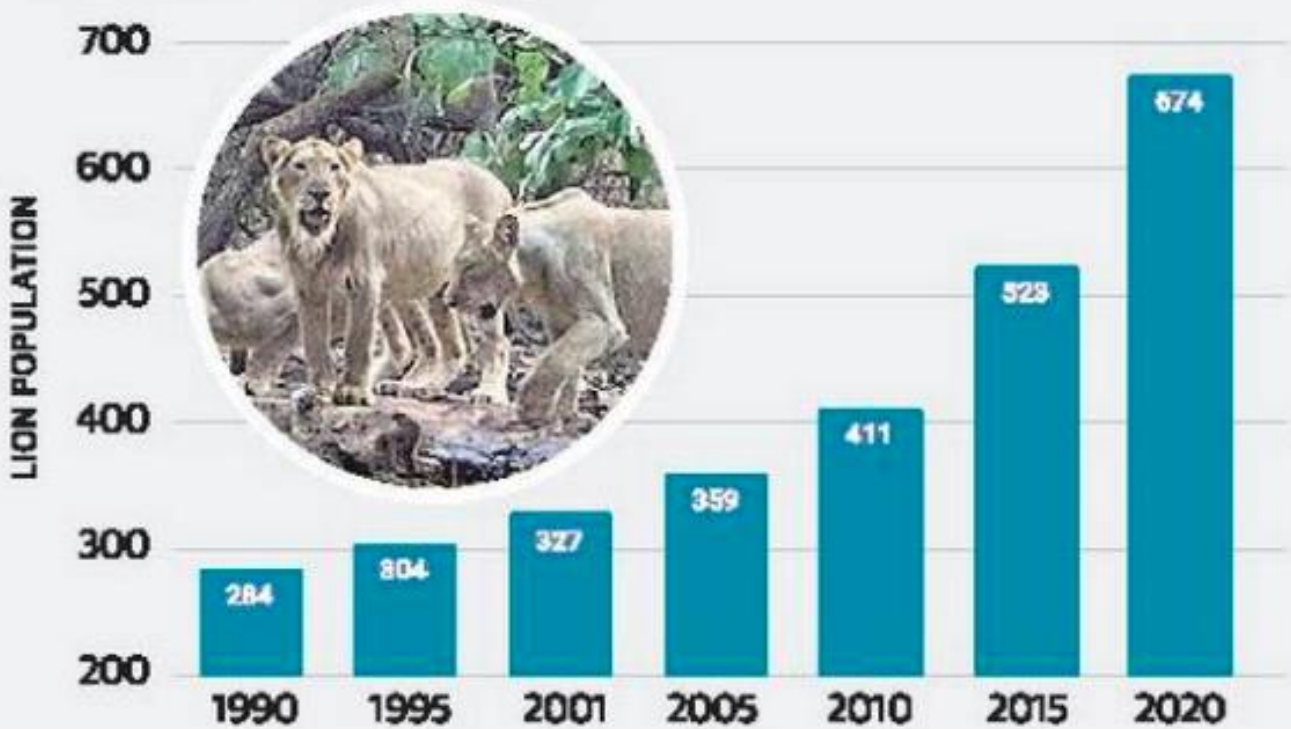
- India has recorded a 29% increase in population of Asiatic lions, living in Gujarat Gir forest, in the past five years — from 523 in 2015 to 674 in 2020.
- The period also saw a 36% increase in the distribution area of the lions from 22000 sq. km in 2015 to 30000 sq. km in 2020.

Population estimation of Asiatic lions

- It is conducted at an interval of five years.
 - The first Lion Census was conducted by the Nawab of Junagadh in 1936; since 1965, the Forest Department has been regularly conducting the Lion Census every five years.
- Unlike in previous years, this year's count was estimated not from a Census, but from a population “observation” exercise called **Poonam Avlokan (full-moon night estimation exercise)**.

More the merrier

The number of Asiatic lions in Gir forest in Gujarat has increased by nearly 30% between 2015 and 2020, the highest rise between two census years



Strategies and interventions implemented by State Forest Department

- Community participation
- Use of technology
- Habitat management and increase in prey base
- Human-lion conflict mitigation
- Healthcare including import of vaccines after some lions were infected with Canine Distemper Virus (CDV).

Poonam Avlokan

- It is a monthly in-house exercise carried out every full moon.
- Field staff and officers spend 24 hours assessing the number of lions and their locations in their respective jurisdictions.
- It was a mechanism developed by the Forest Department in 2014 as part of preparations for the 2015 Lion Census.

How is this 'observation' different from a regular census?

- The Lion Census involves larger participation. Around 2,000 officers, experts and volunteers were involved in the 2015 Census. That makes the Census more transparent.

- **The lion ‘observation’** was conducted by around 1,400 forest staff and a few experts.
- The Lion Census usually runs for more than two days, including a preliminary census and a final census.
 - It is done using the **Block Counting Method** — in which census enumerators **remain stationed at water points in a given block and estimate abundance of lions** in that block, based on direct sighting of lions who need to drink water at least once in 24 hours during the summer.
- A **‘lion observation’** is an in-house exercise, conducted only by forest staff.
 - The methodology too is different as, **instead of remaining stationary at water points, teams keep moving** in their respective territories and make their estimates based on inputs provided by lion trackers and on chance sightings.

2. New guidelines for import of exotic species

Context

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MOEFCC) has issued an advisory saying people importing “exotic live species” will have to make a voluntary disclosure.

Exotic Live Species

- It includes animal or plant species moved from their original range (location) to a new one.
 - Several exotic species of birds, reptiles, small mammals, fishes and even some plants are imported.
- The Ministry has said “exotic live species” shall be construed to mean only “the animals named under the Appendices I, II and III of the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species ([CITES](#)) of Wild Fauna and Flora”.
 - CITES Appendix I, no trade happens
 - Appendix II, trade can happen with prior permission
 - Appendix III, there are a large number of animals and birds which can be traded

Guidelines

- The advisory highlights a period of six months (from the date of the official order) to be given for voluntary disclosure for persons in possession of exotic live species in India. The disclosure needs to be made before the Chief Wildlife Warden of each state.
- **For new “exotic live species”**, the importer should obtain a no-objection certificate from the Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW) of the State.
- For **existing species, stocks** “shall be declared by the owner/holder (stock, as on 1 January 2020) to the Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW) of the concerned State or UT”.
- The advisory also has provision of “registration of progenies of imported animals” to the respective CWLW within 30 days after their birth.
- Forest officials will physically verify the submissions, check whether the facilities where the species are being housed are safe, and issue online certificates to owners within another six months from the date of disclosure.

Why was the decision taken?

- The move comes as the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) has raised global concerns about illegal wildlife trade and [zoonotic diseases](#).
- It will create a process where all imports will be screened.

Significance

- It is a welcome step towards curbing illegal exotic wildlife trade in India.
- These regulations will act as deterrents for both buyers and sellers.

3. Stations to be classified on waste water output

Context

- The [Central Pollution Control Board \(CPCB\)](#) will classify railway stations under the red, orange and green categories based on the quantity of waste water generated.

Classification

- Railway stations generating waste water equal to or more than 100 Kilo Litres per Day (KLD) would be categorised as red.
- Those greater than 10 KLD but less than 100 KLD would come under the orange category.
- Railway stations with less than 10 KLD waste water generation would be branded green.

They would be classified into red, orange and green based on the quantity of waste water generation and the disposal of untreated water into the municipal drain systems.

Action Plan

- The Chairman, CPCB, by invoking powers under the provisions of the Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, **had issued a direction to all State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)** to categorise railway stations and send an action taken report.
- In a note to all Zonal Railways, the **Railway Board** said it had become imminent to reduce the waste water generation at railway stations and urged the need to identify quantity of sewage/non-sewage waste water separately to plan installation of water recycling plants accordingly.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: HEALTH

1. Needed, a transfusion for public health care

Context

- Excessive charges being levied by the private hospitals amidst COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Stats

- India has many private hospitals. We have more hospital beds in the private sector than in the public sector.
- It is estimated that there are 19 lakh hospital beds, 95,000 ICU beds and 48,000 ventilators in India.
- Most of these are concentrated in seven States, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana and West Bengal.
- Except for Tamil Nadu, Delhi and West Bengal, there are far more beds and ventilators in the private sector than in the public, according to the Center for Disease Dynamics, Economics & Policy.

Reasons for increase in private hospitals

It is due to lack of adequate public health care.

- First, India after independence paid its attention towards primary care at the peripheral level, preventive measures, immunisation, maternity and paediatric care as well as dealing with common infections such as [tuberculosis](#). These improvements have given India improved results in many healthcare indices.
 - However, not **enough hospital beds and specialised facilities** were provided by the public sector during this time.
 - This was capitalized by the private hospitals as the middle class and the wealthy wanted quality health care.
- The second reason for the dominance of private medicine in India is the lack of adequate investment in public health.
 - The Indian Government spends an abysmally low 1.3% of GDP on public health care, which is woefully inadequate.

Rural Urban Divide

Private medicine in India is by no means uniform.

- **Rural India:** It is estimated that there are more than one million unqualified medical practitioners, mostly in the rural areas.
 - Most of them provide basic health care, charging a modest fee.
 - Some may have claims of expertise (often unproven) in alternative systems of medicine such as Ayurveda and homoeopathy.
 - Some even venture into minor surgery.
- **Urban India:** At the other end of the spectrum are state-of-the-art corporate hospitals, that are well-equipped and well-staffed and which provide excellent service at high cost.
 - These are often set up in metro cities at huge cost and have successfully engineered a reverse brain drain of many specialists from pursuing lucrative jobs abroad and staying back in or returning to India.

Hospitals run by charitable organisations

- Between the two extremes are a large number of private practitioners and institutions providing a wide range of services of varying quality.
- Some are run by trusts, charitable organisations and religious missions, often providing excellent quality at modest costs.

Concerns

- The wealthy demand, pay for, and often get, world-class health care.
 - The middle class is beginning to demand similar care at affordable cost.

- The poorer 70% are left to the vagaries and mercy of an unpredictable public health-care system and low cost frauds.

What needs to be done?

- Budget allocation has to be increased to address some of our pressing needs.
 - The public health-care system desperately needs higher government spending. Health care cannot be left to private medicine in a developing country, or indeed, in any country.
- Greater transparency and tighter administration are necessary to ensure that our resources are utilised appropriately.
- Training of doctors and health-care workers also needs to be the responsibility of the government mainly.
 - Specialists should be adequately compensated to obviate their need for private practice.
- Private hospitals and institutions will need to be regulated. Costing and auditing of care and procedures need to be done by independent bodies. This will not only ensure appropriate care at the right cost but also prevent unreasonable demands of suspicious patients and family.

Conclusion

- No hospital, business, institution or individual should profiteer from a national calamity such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Hospitals, like any other institution, have a social responsibility to provide care in times of need.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. An unravelling of the Group of Seven

Background

[Please check article in CNA dated June 4, 2020](#)

The limitations of G7

- The success or otherwise of multilateral institutions are judged by the standard of whether or not they have successfully addressed the core global or regional challenges of the time. The [G7](#) failed to head off the economic downturn of 2007-08, which led to the rise of the [G20](#).
 - In the short span of its existence, the [G20](#) has provided a degree of confidence, by promoting open markets, and stimulus, preventing a collapse of the global financial system.
- The G7 has not covered some of the striking issues haunting the global community such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, the challenge of the Daesh, and the crisis of state collapse in West Asia.
- It had announced its members would phase out all fossil fuels and subsidies, but has not so far announced any plan of action to do so.
- The G7 countries account for 59% of the historic global CO₂ emissions (“from 1850 to 2010”), and their coal fired plants emit “twice more CO₂ than those of the entire African continent” and they continue to use them.

Need for a new institution

The world is in a state of disorder. The global economy has been stalled and COVID-19 will inevitably create widespread distress. Some nations have solutions and many don't. There is a need for countries to cooperate

than ever before. Existing international institutions have proven themselves unequal to these tasks. Thus, there is a need to invigorate multilateralism.

A new international mechanism will have value only if it focuses on key global issues.

- It should support international law and prevent the retreat from liberal values on which public goods are centred.
- It should promote global public health and revive growth and trade in a sustainable way (that also reduces the inequalities among and within nations).
- On regional issues:
 - Iran should be prevented from acquiring nuclear weapons and,
 - They should be able to contribute to peace and stability in Afghanistan, the Gulf and West Asia.

F. Prelims Facts

1. Border Adjustment Tax (BAT)

- Border Adjustment Tax means that a tax is levied on imports (goods made overseas) and exports are not taxed.
- It is imposed on imported goods in addition to the customs levy that gets charged at the port of entry.

Context

- NITI Aayog member V.K. Saraswat has favoured imposing a Border Adjustment Tax (BAT) on imports to provide a level-playing field to domestic industries.

2. UN Global Climate Action Awards

- They are organised by the **Momentum for Change initiative** of the UN Climate Change Secretariat.
 - It is an initiative spearheaded by the United Nations Climate Change Convention (UNFCCC) Secretariat to shine a light on the enormous groundswell of activities underway across the globe that are moving the world toward a highly resilient, low-carbon future.
- The award winning projects are recognized for their innovative solutions that address climate change, and help drive progress on many other sustainable development goals like poverty alleviation, gender equality and economic opportunity.

Background

- Infosys received the 2019 UN Global Climate Action Awards under the category of ‘Climate Neutral Now’; thus becoming the only Indian company ever to win a UN climate award.

Climate Neutral Now

- Climate Neutral Now is an initiative launched by UN Climate Change, aiming at encouraging all stakeholders in society to take climate action to achieve a climate neutral world.
- It aims to contribute to limiting the rise of temperature.

Context

- Infosys misses carbon neutral target for 2020.

Details

- Infosys began its action to combat climate change in 2008 with an assessment of its carbon footprint. In 2011, it made a voluntary commitment to the United Nations to become carbon neutral.
- The company has been on an accelerated plan focusing on energy efficiency, renewable energy, and offsetting emissions.

G. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India:

1. It was created on the recommendations of the Malhotra Committee report.
2. It is headquartered in Mumbai.
3. Insurance is a subject listed in the Union List in the Seventh Schedule.

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Ans: c

- It has its headquarters in Hyderabad.

Q2. With reference to Dibru Saikhowa National Park, which of the following statement/s is/are correct?

1. It is a National Park as well as a Biosphere Reserve situated in the state of Assam.
2. It is the largest salix swamp forest in north-eastern India.

Options:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: c

- Dibru-Saikhowa is a National Park as well as a Biosphere Reserve situated in the state of Assam.
- It is the largest salix swamp forest in north-eastern India.

- The park is bounded by the Brahmaputra and Lohit Rivers in the north and Dibru River in the south.
- The forest type of Dibru-Saikhowa comprises of semi-evergreen forests, deciduous forests, littoral and swamp forests and patches of wet evergreen forests.

Q3. Which of the following statement/s is incorrect about Teesta River?

1. It originates from the Pahunri (or Teesta Kangse) glacier.
2. It flows through the states of Sikkim and Assam.

Options:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: b

- Teesta River originates from the Pahunri (or Teesta Kangse) glacier
- It flows through the Indian states of Sikkim and West Bengal through Bangladesh and enters the Bay of Bengal.

Q4. India is party to which of the following conventions?

1. Biological Weapons Convention
2. Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)
3. Convention on Cluster Munitions

Options:

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Ans: a

- In 2008, the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) was adopted by 107 countries at a diplomatic conference in Dublin, Ireland. However, India was not a party to this Convention.
 - Both India and Pakistan are non-signatories of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.
- It bans the use, production, stockpiling, and transfer of cluster munitions, and places obligations on countries to clear affected areas, assist victims, and destroy stockpiles.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Government spending on Healthcare has stagnated, which has led to a boom in the private healthcare sector. What possible measures can be taken to improve healthcare services going forward? (15 Marks, 250 Words)
2. Failure to address global issues and absence of emerging global powers have rendered the G7 irrelevant. Discuss the need for an energized multilateral body to promote economic reforms and collective action. (15 Marks, 250 Words)

