

# 16 Jun 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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## A. GS 1 Related

### Category: ART AND CULTURE

#### 1. Amid pandemic, traditional art of 'talamaddale' goes digital

##### Context:

The traditional art of 'talamaddale' has gone virtual in times of COVID-19.

##### Details:

- Talamaddale is a variant and a derived form of Yakshagana theatre.
- "Tala" refers to a pair of small hand cymbals and a "Maddale" is a type of drum.
- Unlike the Yakshagana performance, in the conventional 'talamaddale,' the artists sit across in a place without any costumes and engage in testing their oratory skills based on the episode chosen.
- If music is common for both Yakshagana performance and 'talamaddale', the latter has only spoken word without any dance or costumes. Hence, it is an art form minus dance, costumes and stage conventions.

- ‘Arthadhari’ in a talamaddale performance is an artist who is an orator.
- Artha vaibhava or the grandeur of dialogues tends to be a highlight of these performances relished by the audience.

### **Yakshagana:**

- Yakshagana is a traditional Indian theatre form.
- It is believed to be developed in Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Uttara Kannada, Shimoga and western parts of Chikmagalur districts, in the state of Karnataka and in Kasaragod district in Kerala. This theatre style is mainly found in the coastal regions of Karnataka in various forms.
- Yakshagana combines dance, music, dialogue, costume, make-up, and stage techniques with a unique style and form.
- It is believed to have evolved from pre-classical music and theatre during the period of the Bhakti movement.
- Yakshagana is traditionally presented from dusk to dawn. Its stories are drawn from Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavata and other epics from both Hindu and Jain and other ancient Indic traditions.

## **B. GS 2 Related**

### **Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

#### **1. India, China military commanders hold talks**

##### **Context:**

In continuation of the ground-level dialogue to resolve the ongoing stand-off on the border, India and China held talks at the Brigade Commander and Commanding Officer-level in the Galwan area of eastern Ladakh.

This topic has been covered in 14<sup>th</sup> June 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.

#### **2. ‘India, China nuclear arsenals grow’**

##### **Context:**

The SIPRI Yearbook 2020 has been released by Swedish think tank, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

##### **Details:**

- According to SIPRI Yearbook 2020, all nations that have nuclear weapons continue to modernise their nuclear arsenals, while India and China increased their nuclear warheads in the last one year.
- The nuclear arsenals of the nuclear-armed states other than the United States and Russia were considerably smaller but all these states were either developing or deploying new weapon systems or had announced their intention to do so.
- Both China and Pakistan continue to have larger nuclear arsenals than India.
  - China’s nuclear arsenal had gone up from 290 warheads in 2019 to 320 in 2020.
  - India’s nuclear arsenal went up from 130-140 in 2019 to 150 in 2020.

- Pakistan's arsenal was estimated to be between 150-160 in 2019 and has reached 160 in 2020.
- Together, the nine nuclear-armed states — the U.S., Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea — possessed an estimated 13,400 nuclear weapons at the start of 2020, which marked a decrease from an estimated 13,865 nuclear weapons at the beginning of 2019.
- The decrease in the overall numbers was largely due to the dismantlement of old nuclear weapons by Russia and the U.S., which together possess over 90% of the global nuclear weapons.

#### **Issues:**

##### Low transparency:

- The report noted that the availability of reliable information on the status of the nuclear arsenals and capabilities of the nuclear-armed states varied considerably.
- The report said that the governments of India and Pakistan make statements about some of their missile tests but provide little information about the status or size of their arsenals.
- The U.S. had disclosed important information about its stockpile and nuclear capabilities, but in 2019, the administration ended the practice of publicly disclosing the size of its stockpile.

##### Bilateral nuclear arms control agreements:

- The U.S. and Russia have reduced their nuclear arsenals under the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) but it will lapse in February 2021 unless both parties agree to prolong it.
  - However, discussions to extend the New START or negotiate a new treaty made no progress with the U.S.'s insistence that China must join any future nuclear arms reduction talks, which China has categorically ruled out.
- The report opines that the deadlock over the New START and the collapse of the 1987 Soviet-U.S. Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) in 2019 suggest that the era of bilateral nuclear arms control agreements between Russia and the U.S. might be coming to an end.

##### Reversal of post-Cold War trend:

- Russia and the U.S. have already announced extensive plans to replace and modernise their nuclear warheads and delivery systems.
- Both countries have also given new or expanded roles to nuclear weapons in their military plans and doctrines, which marks a significant reversal of the post-Cold War trend towards the gradual marginalisation of nuclear weapons, the report observed.

### **3. IAEA begins meet over Iran's n-programme**

#### **Context:**

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) began meeting over Iran's refusal to allow access to two sites where nuclear activity may have occurred in the past.

#### **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA):**

The IAEA is a Vienna-based, United Nations agency working in the field of nuclear cooperation.

Read more about [IAEA](https://byjus.com/iaea/).

**Details:**

- The IAEA has expressed serious concerns in a report stating that Iran has been blocking inspections at the sites.
- The Board of Governors (one of the agency's policy-making bodies) is expected to discuss the report during its meeting. If they pass a resolution critical of Iran, it would be the first of its kind since 2012.
  - In 2012, the IAEA Board of Governors adopted a resolution urging Iran to cooperate with the Agency.
- The latest row over access comes, as a landmark deal between Iran and world powers in 2015 – Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), continues to unravel.

Read more about [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action \(JCPOA\)](#).

#### 4. 'Nepal move on altering map is unilateral, talks difficult now'

**Context:**

- Nepal Prime Minister's move to bring a constitutional amendment that alters Nepal's map to include territory in India has prejudged any future discussions, said New Delhi, virtually ruling out talks with Kathmandu for the moment.
- With the vote on changing the map depicted in the Nepali national symbol to include Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura being passed unanimously in the Lower House of the Nepal Parliament, and another one expected to go through the Upper House, the Indian government appeared to take a tougher stand with Kathmandu.
- However, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Defence Minister have stated that India deeply values its civilisational, cultural and friendly relations with Nepal. India-Nepal multi-faceted bilateral partnership has expanded and diversified in recent years with increased focus and enhanced Government of India's assistance for humanitarian, development and connectivity projects in Nepal.

This topic has been covered in 14<sup>th</sup> June 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.

**Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

#### 1. Van Dhan Yojana helps tribals beat odds

**Context:**

- 1,205 tribal enterprises employing 3.6 lakh people through 18,000 [self-help groups](#) have been set up under the Van Dhan scheme.
- About ₹3.5 crore worth of sales have taken place through these platforms.

**Van Dhan Yojana:**

- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) launched the Van Dhan Yojana in 2018 with an intention to improve the tribal income through value addition of tribal products.

Read more about [Van Dhan Yojana](#).

**Details:**

- Van Dhan Yojana was launched nationwide to ensure that 'van dhan', or forest wealth, stays in the hands of forest dwellers, by providing local platforms for processing, value addition, marketing and sale of minor forest produce.
- The products range from hill brooms, wild honey, candles and ointments made of rock beeswax, bamboo bottles, aloe vera soaps and gooseberry wine in the north east, to hawan [incense] sticks, moha laddu and, amla murabba [preserved gooseberries] in Maharashtra and Rajasthan, and tamarind blocks, dried tendu leaves, processed mahua, lac bangles and eco-friendly leaf plates from Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh.
- The hill broom project is one of the biggest success stories of the Van Dhan Yojana.
  - A few years ago, tribal communities in Langleng, one of Nagaland's poorest districts, used to sell their unique hill broom grass for just ₹7 a kg.
  - Now, by making the brooms themselves with support from the Van Dhan Yojana, they earn ₹60 a broom, making four or five brooms from a kg of grass.
  - Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) enabled people to start making the brooms themselves.
- A digital procurement platform is expected to be in place soon.

## C. GS 3 Related

### Category: ECONOMY

#### 1. Review ordinances on farming sector, Amarinder urges PM

**Context:**

The Punjab Chief Minister has urged the Prime Minister to review the ordinances issued by the Central Government related to the farming sector.

**Details:**

- In a letter to the Prime Minister, the Punjab CM has sought reconsideration of the three ordinances — for permitting trade in agricultural produce outside the physical boundaries of the set-up of the agricultural market under APMC Act, easing of restrictions under the Essential Commodities Act and facilitating contract farming.

**Background:**

- Recently, the Union Cabinet approved an amendment to the 65-year-old Essential Commodities Act.
- The Cabinet also approved ordinances to remove restrictions on farmers selling their produce outside notified market yards, as well as to facilitate contract farming and allow farmers to engage in direct marketing.

This topic has been covered in [4th June 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

#### 2. Pipeline tariff policy coming, to raise share of gas in energy basket

**Context:**

In a bid to raise the share of natural gas in the energy basket, India will soon have a new tariff policy that will help bring down the cost of transporting it.

**Details:**

- The new pipeline tariff policy will replace the existing practice of seven different pipeline operators charging separate rates and customers farther from a gas source paying more than those nearer.
  - A single rate across pipelines is also hinted as a part of the policy, so as to make the price of fuel uniform for customers across the country.
- Oil regulator Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) is working on a new regime for authorisation of gas pipelines that will make it more investor friendly.
- PNGRB is also working on rationalisation of tariffs to make natural gas affordable in every part of the country. It will facilitate development of the gas market in eastern and north eastern parts of the country.
- Efforts are underway to complete the Gas Grid in a time-bound manner. PNGRB is in a process of bidding out the pipelines for missing sections to complete the national Gas Grid.

**India's maiden online gas trading platform:**

- India's maiden online gas trading platform has been launched by IGX.
- It is said that the country's first online gas trading platform will help discover price of the fuel and it is going to support the government's vision of a free gas market in the country.
- The gas trading platform is expected to play a vital role to discover our own price benchmark for gas, address demand supply gaps, and accelerate investments in the value chain. The transparency, reliability, flexibility, and competitiveness of the gas markets will contribute in reviving India's industrial and economic growth.
- With evolution of gas markets, future policies and regulatory framework are also going to be more market-friendly and would accommodate the market needs.

For more on the IGX, check [PIB dated 15 June 2020](#).

**Note:**

- The share of natural gas in India's energy basket is 6.2% and the Centre aims to raise this to 15% by 2030 to replace some of the polluting liquid fuel and coal with this cleaner alternative.
- Gas transportation through pipelines is the most economical means to transport in the country. At present, about 16,788 km long gas pipeline network is under operation in the country and around 14,500 km pipeline is approved/under construction.

## D. GS 4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

**Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**



## 1. Remaining non-aligned is good advice

### Context:

- The author of the article, M.K. Narayanan, a former National Security Adviser of India, analyzes the possible factors for the Chinese aggression along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

### Background:

- The India-China stand-off, along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Ladakh and Sikkim sectors, threatens to result in a major conflict.
- The author argues that despite **India and China agreeing to partial disengagement**, there is perceptible tension along the LAC.
  - Confirmed facts point towards Chinese incursions across the undemarcated LAC at quite a few points in the Ladakh and Sikkim sectors. The author argues that the Chinese actions indicate that the Chinese would not withdraw from Galwan Valley or Pangong Tso.
  - China has **mobilized sizeable military presence along the LAC**, comprising armoured vehicles, artillery units and infantry combat vehicles in large numbers.

### Possible factors for Chinese aggression:

#### India's border infrastructure:

- India has been strengthening its border infrastructure along the LAC.
- The strengthening of the **Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldi road** may have angered the Chinese. The Chinese demand in the ongoing negotiations is also premised on India stopping its infrastructure development.

#### Bilateral tensions:

- The relations between the two countries have been steadily deteriorating.
- India has been against **China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)**. China further views India's assertions regarding Gilgit-Baltistan as an implicit attack on the CPEC.
- India has put curbs and **restrictions on Chinese foreign direct investment**.

#### China's internal dynamics:

- The internal pressures that have been generated within China — in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic, are also influencing Chinese behaviour.
- COVID-19 pandemic is the most serious **health crisis** that China has faced since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The **Chinese economy has been on the downslide** which is also contributing to increasing political pressure on the country's leadership.
- The coupling of political and economic tensions has greatly aggravated pressures on Chinese leadership and the **rising tide of anti-China sentiment the world over** has further worsened matters.
- Chinese aggression has been observed not only along the LAC but also in the South China Sea. This might indicate a deliberate planning on the part of the Chinese leadership to divert attention from domestic issues.

#### India's alignment with the U.S.:

- While India professes to be non-aligned, it is increasingly **perceived as having aligned with the U.S.**

- India's United States tilt is perhaps most pronounced in the **domain of U.S.-China relations**. Recent instances are often highlighted to confirm the perception that India tends to side with the U.S. and against China whenever there is a conflict of interest between the two.
  - An evident degree of geopolitical convergence also exists between the U.S. and India in the **Indo-Pacific**, again directed against China.
  - India is a member of the **Quad (the U.S., Japan, Australia and India)** which has a definite anti-China connotation.
  - The U.S. President's proposal of redesigning the **G-7**, including countries such as India (India has conveyed its acceptance), but excluding China, provides China yet another instance of India and China being in opposite camps.
- India is being increasingly projected as an alternative model to China, and being co-opted into a wider anti-China alliance which China clearly perceives as provocation.
- The Chinese are wary about the growing proximity between India and the U.S. On the eve of the recent high-level border talks between top military leaders, China made an elliptical reference to the need for India to maintain equidistance between the U.S. and China.
  - Almost all India-China border agreements are premised on the presumed neutrality of both countries. The document, "Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the **Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question**" (2005), emphasizes the need for neutrality.

#### *Historical precedence:*

- The circumstances that led to the **India-China war of 1962** offer an analysis of the Chinese approach.
- Faced with the **disaster of the Great Leap Forward and increasing isolation globally**, the Chinese chose to strike at India rather than confront Russia or the West.

#### **Conclusion:**

- A single misstep from either of the two countries could lead to a wider conflagration, which both sides must avoid.
- The author argues that this is not the time for India to be seen as the front end of a belligerent coalition of forces seeking to put China in its place.
- India has consistently followed a different policy in the past, and it is advisable that it **remains truly non-aligned** and not become part of any coalition that would not be in India's long-term interest.

## **2. In pandemic crisis, bridging the gulf with West Asia**

#### **Context:**

- India-West Asia ties.

#### **Background:**

##### India-West Asia ties:

- For India, the West Asia/Gulf region holds significance for strategic and economic reasons ranging from **diaspora to energy security**.
  - An estimated **nine million Indians work in West Asia**.
  - The West Asian countries are **major trading partners** for India.
    - The UAE is the third-largest trade partner of India after the United States and China.



- India gets around **60% of its hydrocarbon requirements from West Asia.**

#### **Details:**

- The COVID-19 pandemic has had a detrimental effect on lives and economies the world over.

#### **West Asia:**

- The **oil price crash**, triggered by expectations of oversupply following a dispute on output caps between Saudi Arabia and Russia, exacerbated by the crash **in demand due to COVID-19**, will carry massive costs to the West Asian economies which are largely oil dependent economies.
- According to a Dubai Chamber of Commerce & Industry survey, more than 70% of businesses classified as small and medium-sized enterprises in Dubai may not survive over the months to come as **labour critical industries such as tourism, conventions, hospitality and airlines bear the immediate brunt of the pandemic.**
  - UAE's hospitality sector itself contributes 4.6% of the country's GDP, generating nearly 600,000 jobs. Some reports suggest that up to 30% of these jobs could be lost.
- The major sovereign wealth funds and other financial institutions in West Asia have been hit hard by COVID-19 as well. Some have seen their real estate and retail portfolios shrink dramatically over the last three months.
- Beyond the immediate effects, the oil price crash is expected to have a **significant blow on the reform plans** initiated in Saudi Arabia, specifically mega-projects such as the envisioned \$500 billion futuristic mega-city of Neom planned on the coast of the Red Sea, and other more structural efforts to open up the Saudi economy and move the country's financial ecosystem away from its dependence on petro dollars.

#### **India:**

- An estimated nine million Indians work in West Asia, responsible for sending back more than **56% of India's annual infusion of \$80 billion in remittances.** The economic trouble in west Asia will have an adverse effect on remittances to India.
- The pandemic has initiated a **reverse migration of Indian blue-collar workers** as projects have stalled and infrastructure development has taken a hit amidst the contracting global economy.
  - The return of semi-skilled and skilled workers into India, which is already struggling with jobs, may become a point of worry.

#### **Steps being taken:**

- The softening oil prices have helped India cushion the impact of the national lockdown on the balance of payments. India has also taken advantage of the low prices to **build up its strategic reserves** and is looking at offshore storage options.
- The government has set up an **empowered group headed by the Cabinet Secretary** to take necessary **steps to attract FDI into India** from regions including the West Asian region.
- To mitigate the challenges posed by the reverse migration from West Asia, the Indian government has launched the **Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support (SWADES)**, which attempts to capture the skills profile of returning workers and house them in a central portal that can be accessed by Indian and foreign companies.

#### **Way forward:**

#### **Expedite existing projects:**

- As a starting point, there is a need to **expedite ongoing projects involving West Asian entities** like the proposed \$50 billion mega-refinery project, fast track resolution of litigation regarding the sale of a stake in Mumbai airport to the UAE sovereign fund and Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA). This will send out a positive signal to the markets.
- By creating a few immediate success stories, India has the opportunity to transform the landscape and attract the kind of **long-term capital** that the economy needs.

#### Ease and incentivize investment:

- The **economic reforms** announced recently by India bring much needed clarity to industrial and agricultural policy. There is a need for more policy measures to make India an attractive destination for capital from West Asia.
- A strong, positive message by India to the West Asian investors is crucial as both are well-placed to help each other during the current crisis.
  - **The Indian economy is in need of foreign investment.**
  - The **West Asian Economy, looking to diversify its economy**, can choose to invest in a growing economy like India.

## F. Prelims Facts

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## G. Tidbits

### 1. Dilution of labour laws puts children at risk: activists

#### What's in News?

Activists and labour law experts have warned that the relaxation of labour laws across 11 States combined with closure of schools and reverse migration to rural areas due to the nationwide lockdown will force lakhs of children into child labour, while those already employed will be forced to work longer hours for meagre wages and under hazardous conditions.

Also read: [Child Labour \(Prohibition and Regulation\) Act - Facts for UPSC](#)

- The changes made to labour laws by various State governments can be broadly divided into two categories:
  - Allowing longer working hours.
  - Suspending labour rights resulting in lax enforcement.
- It is opined that easing of norms will lead to an overall increase in insecurity and informalisation of labour, loss of bargaining power among labourers and deterioration in working conditions, and that the impact on children and adolescents will be more severe.
- India contributes to nearly 15% of the global child and adolescent labourers.
  - There are over 10 million working children in the age group of 5 to 14 years and 22.87 million adolescents.
- Even in the absence of these relaxations, children were extremely vulnerable as witnesses of food and livelihood insecurity, resulting in them falling out of the safety net.
- It is highlighted that in the days to come, it is imperative that governments work on a vulnerability analysis and reach out to those children who have not returned to schools.

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to "Talamaddale":

1. It is a variant of the traditional Indian theatre form, Yakshagana.
2. Major highlights of this art form are dance, costumes and stage conventions.
3. The chief narrator in the Talamaddale performance is known as Arthadhari.

Which of the given statement/s is/are incorrect?

- a. 2 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 2 only
- d. None of the above

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Talamaddale is a variant of the traditional Indian theatre form, Yakshagana.
- Unlike the Yakshagana performance, in the conventional 'talamaddale,' the artists sit across in a place without any costumes and engage in testing their oratory skills based on the episode chosen.
- If music is common for both Yakshagana performance and 'talamaddale', the latter **has only spoken word without any dance or costumes. Hence, it is an art form minus dance, costumes and stage conventions.**
- The chief narrator is known as Bhagavata and his associates are called as Arthadharis.
- 'Arthadhari' in a talamaddale performance is an artist who is an orator.

Q2. Under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961:

1. A diplomat enjoys immunity from the criminal jurisdiction of the receiving State.
2. The diplomat is exempt from the jurisdiction of the sending State.
3. The private residence of a diplomatic agent shall enjoy the same inviolability and protection as the premises of the mission.

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

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- A diplomatic agent shall enjoy immunity from the criminal jurisdiction of the receiving State.
- The immunity of a diplomat from the jurisdiction of the receiving State **does not exempt him from the jurisdiction of the sending State.**
- The private residence of a diplomatic agent shall enjoy the same inviolability and protection as the premises of the mission.

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. Russia and the USA together possess over 90 per cent of the global nuclear weapons.
2. Both China and Pakistan have larger nuclear arsenals than India.
3. The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, to which India, Russia, USA and China are party, would lapse in 2021.

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

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Russia and the USA together possess over 90 per cent of the global nuclear weapons.
- Both China and Pakistan have larger nuclear arsenals than India.
- The U.S. and Russia have reduced their nuclear arsenals under the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) – a bilateral agreement, but it is set to lapse in February 2021.

Q4. Consider the following statements with respect to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) :

1. IAEA is one of the specialised agencies of the United Nations.
2. India is a founding member of the IAEA.
3. Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT) is a programme created by IAEA.

Which of the given statement/s is/are incorrect?

- a. 1 only
- b. 3 only
- c. 1 and 2 only
- d. None of the above

Answer: a

Explanation:

- International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is a Vienna-based, United Nations agency working in the field of nuclear cooperation. However, **it is not a specialised agency of the UN.**
- It was set up as the world's "Atoms for Peace" organization in 1957 within the United Nations family.
- **India is a founding member** of the IAEA.
- **Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT) is a programme created by the IAEA in 2004** to build upon the Agency's experience in radiation medicine and technology, and enable developing countries to improve their cancer care capacity and services in a sustainable manner by integrating radiotherapy into a comprehensive cancer control programme that maximizes its therapeutic effectiveness and impact.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The COVID-19 pandemic poses serious challenges to the India - West Asia dynamic, but there is scope for India and West Asia to help each other out of this crisis. Comment. (10 marks, 150 words)
2. The recent India - Chinese border stand-off is an indication of not just local differences along the border or strained bilateral relations, but also have a larger geopolitical angle. Comment. (10 marks, 150 words)

