

# 20 Jun 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### A. GS 1 Related

#### *ART AND CULTURE*

1. [Skeletal remains of a child found at Tamil Nadu's Keeladi excavation site](#)

### B. GS 2 Related

#### *INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*

1. [Now, China embraces Bangladesh in trade](#)
2. [Russia begins discreet moves to defuse India-China tension](#)

#### *POLITY AND GOVERNANCE*

1. [Individual contributions to NDRF get green light from Finance Ministry](#)

### C. GS 3 Related

#### *ECONOMY*

1. [Gains from coal mine auction uncertain](#)

### D. GS 4 Related

### E. Editorials

#### *INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*

1. [Crisis in the peninsula](#)

#### *POLITY AND GOVERNANCE*

1. [The gross abuse of the Manipur mandate](#)

### F. Tidbits

1. [IAEA passes critical resolution against Iran](#)
2. [Power output declines steeply](#)
3. [U.S. marks end of slavery on Juneteenth](#)

### G. Prelims Facts

1. [NGT inspects football ground in Kerala](#)
2. [World Food Programme collaborates with IIT-Delhi](#)
3. [India attends FATF group meet online](#)

### H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

### I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

## A. GS 1 Related

### Category: ART AND CULTURE

#### 1. Skeletal remains of a child found at Tamil Nadu's Keeladi excavation site

##### Context:

- Recent excavation findings at Keeladi.

##### Background:

- Keeladi excavation site is a **Sangam period settlement** that is being excavated by the Archaeological Survey of India. This site is located southeast of Madurai, in Tamil Nadu, near the town of **Keeladi in Sivagangai district**.
- The settlement lies on the **bank of the Vaigai River** and reflects the ancient culture of Tamil people.

For more information on this topic refer: [CNA 20<sup>th</sup> Sept 2019](#)

##### Details:

- Skeletal remains of a child were excavated from Konthagai village, part of the sixth phase of ongoing excavations in the **ancient site of Keeladi**.
- Excavations are currently taking place at Keeladi, Konthagai, Manalur and Agaram villages in Sivaganga district. Konthagai village, located around 2 km from Keeladi, is believed to be a burial site.

## B. GS 2 Related

### Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### 1. Now, China embraces Bangladesh in trade

##### Context:

- Economic diplomacy by China in the South Asian region.

##### Background:

- Bangladesh imports around \$ 15 billion worth Chinese goods but its exports to China have been very low in comparison.
- The leaders of the two countries had discussed enhancing bilateral relation in the background of the **economic hardship triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic**.

##### Details:

- In a significant show of **economic diplomacy in South Asia**, China has announced **tariff exemption for 97 per cent of exports from Bangladesh** covering fisheries and leather products.
- Bangladesh already receives tariff-exemption under the [Asia Pacific Trade Agreement \(APTA\)](#). As a result of the latest announcement, more goods from Bangladesh will now be exempted of Chinese

tariffs.

### Consequences:

- This move is expected to help Bangladesh cushion the economic impact of the pandemic and also emerge as a possible beneficiary alongside Vietnam and Chile of the **U.S.-China trade war**.
- This move is expected to **strengthen the China-Bangladesh relationship** thus helping China expand its influence in the South Asian Region.

## 2. Russia begins discreet moves to defuse India-China tension

### Context:

- Russia's efforts to defuse **military tensions between India and China**.

### Background:

- The violent clash in the Galwan Valley between India and China has resulted in the death of 20 Indian soldiers and an undeclared number of Chinese troops.

### Details:

- Russia has launched an energetic behind-the-scenes effort to defuse military tensions between India and China, ahead of hosting a **trilateral Russia-India-China (RIC) video conference**.
- Russian diplomatic sources have stated that **Russia has high stakes at a global level** in the early resolution of tensions between India and China.
  - Good relations between India and China are central to the **rise of Eurasia and the emergence of a multipolar world order**.
  - The **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**, which includes India, Pakistan, Russia and China as well as most of the Central Asian Republics, can act as an anchor of a "post-west" global system. The persistence of tensions between India and China will have a huge negative impact on the SCO.
  - The tensions between India and China can have a detrimental impact on the rise of the emerging economies under the Brazil Russia India China South Africa (**BRICS**) grouping.

## Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

### 1. Individual contributions to NDRF get green light from Finance Ministry

#### Context:

- Contributions to the **National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF)**.

#### Background:

#### **Plea in Supreme Court:**

- In the light of concerns about donations sent to the **PM CARES Fund** or the **Prime Minister's**

**National Relief Fund (PMNRF)**, as both claim they are **not public authorities subject to questions under the Right to Information Act** a plea was made in the SC asking it to order the transfer of contributions made to the PM CARES Fund to the NDRF.

- The Supreme Court has sought a response from the Centre to the plea.

#### **NDRF:**

- The National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) was set up in accordance with **Section 46 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005**. It is meant to “meet the expenses for emergency response, relief and rehabilitation” for any disaster situation.
- Although Section 46 includes a clause for grants made by any person or institution, provisions for such donations had not been made.

#### **Details:**

- The Finance Ministry has given approval to a proposal made by the Union Home Ministry to allow individuals and institutions to contribute directly to the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).

Click here to know more about [Disaster Management in India](#).

## **C. GS 3 Related**

### **Category: ECONOMY**

#### **1. Gains from coal mine auction uncertain**

#### **Context:**

- Coal Ministry’s proposal to auction 41 coal mines

#### **Background:**

- Recently the Prime Minister had announced the **opening up of the coal sector to private sector involvement**.
- It was argued that this would help realize ₹33,000 crore of capital investment in the next five years.

For more information on this issue refer: [PIB 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020](#)

#### **Concerns:**

- Energy sector experts have argued that the benefits of the Coal Ministry’s proposal to auction 41 coal mines are uncertain as **energy production and environmental compliance costs outweigh that of renewable power** thus questioning the very financial viability of coal mining.
  - The companies seeking coal blocks would have to **comply with existing environmental provisions**.
  - **Fly-ash processing** which involves managing the residue from burning coal, involves substantial costs.
  - There is diminishing demand for fossil fuel in the light of **climate action and increasing climate commitments**.
    - India has committed to ensuring that **fossil fuels contribute no more than 60% of its energy production by 2030 as per the 2015 Paris Agreement**.
  - Environmentalists have claimed that the opening up of coal mining to the private sector

would involve opening up pristine forests to **environmental degradation** which could result in multiple effects.

- Mining and transportation of coal would involve a heavy environmental cost; valuable forest cover would be lost and public health would suffer.

## D. GS 4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

**Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### 1. Crisis in the peninsula

#### Background:

Recently, **North Korea blew up an inter-Korean liaison office on its side of the border**. The liaison office was set up less than two years ago in September 2018. Officials from both sides were stationed at the office during subsequent months.

- Troubles began in the peninsula after a deadline the North dictated to the U.S. to achieve progress in the **denuclearisation talks expired** on December 31, 2019.
- **North Korea has conducted missile tests** in 2020, sending warning signals to Seoul and Washington.
- The latest crisis was **triggered by anti-North defector groups that sent out propaganda leaflets via balloons across the border**.
  - Angered by the South's refusal to crack down on them, North Korea has **severed hotlines, demolished the liaison office**, and is planning to **deploy troops along the border**.

This topic has been covered in **18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis**. [Click here](#) to read.

#### Details:

- Two years after U.S. President Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un met in Singapore to discuss denuclearisation, little has been achieved in that direction.
  - There were no high hopes of a quick solution to the U.S.-North Korean rivalry that goes back to the 1950-53 Korean war.
  - Still, the **summit was an opportunity to open a new direction in relations**.
- Kim had **in principle agreed to denuclearisation in return for the lifting of American sanctions**.
- Talks stalled as the **U.S. insisted on “complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization”** by North Korea in return for any concession.
- The North Koreans were wary, particularly because of the **U.S.'s history of going after dictators** such as Saddam Hussein of Iraq and Muammar Gaddafi of Libya or its **breaching of the Iran nuclear deal**.
- Kim's regime offered a **staged approach**.
  - It put a **freeze on nuclear tests**.
  - It offered to **shut its Yongbyon nuclear complex**.
- The U.S. and South Korea could have responded to these measures and kept the talks on track.
  - On less contentious issues, such as declaring a formal end to the Korean war — **both Koreas are still technically at war**.

- An agreement could have been achieved as a confidence-building measure. But that did not happen.
- Subsequently, the U.S. and South Korea **went ahead with their joint military exercise**.

#### Concerns:

- **North Korea is back to aggressive posturing** with the threat of war.
  - It has threatened to deploy troops along the demilitarised zone.
- Tensions risk **rolling back whatever little was achieved** through engagement over the past two years.

#### Way Forward:

- **South Korea's Unification Minister has resigned** and **Seoul has also moved to charge the defector group**. But these moves are unlikely to ease tensions as the **real problem is the stall in the talks**.
- The USA needs to realize that intimidation will not work as **North Korea is a nuclear power** (and that too with long-range ballistic missile capabilities) and has the **capability to inflict considerable damage on the US, South Korea**.
- North Korea is pressuring South Korea to demand the U.S. to ease sanctions.
- The U.S. is showing a cold response. President Trump completely ignored the North's actions. **The North will escalate the crisis until the U.S. shows interest**.
- The international community and the concerned parties cannot afford another failure. There is a pressing need for peace building in the Korean peninsula.
- **The U.S should take measures to revive talks with North Korea** and push the peninsula back to normalcy.

### Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

#### 1. The gross abuse of the Manipur mandate

##### Issue:

- Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, a parallel **crisis of democracy is unfolding in Manipur**.
- It reflects the state of Indian democracy in general, where the **mandate of the people** decided at periodic elections **is increasingly being allowed to be twisted by turncoat-elected representatives** to serve the end of their unique and distorted power game.
- To keep a check on such defections, a law — the **10th Schedule** — was introduced in 1985 by the 52nd amendment of the Constitution.
- However, loopholes in the law were being exploited to make it irrelevant.
- As a result, it was toughened in **2003 by the 91st amendment of the Constitution**.
- In recent times, it is no longer a question of dodging the law, but of overturning the very idea of the rule of law by those in power. The Manipur cases illustrate this very well.

##### Details:

1. In the March **2017** Assembly election, Manipur saw a **hung verdict**.
  - Even though **a party did not have a majority in the Assembly**, and wasn't the single-largest party either.
  - But it still **returned to power after the post-poll alliance**.

2. Now, nearly three-and-a-half years down the line, three of the ruling party (BJP) MLAs decided to quit the party and Assembly membership to align with the other (Congress).
  - The crisis has the potential of spiralling out of control and more could join the deserters in the days ahead.
  - The adjudication function of the law has been totally smothered, and instead its provisions are now being used with impunity to promote partisan politics.
  - The resultant loss of esteem for the law in the eyes of the public is predicted to have very long term and grave social consequences in this sensitive, insurgency-torn border State.
3. Another development after the party (BJP) assumed power in 2017 was **that seven more** (Congress) **MLAs defected to the ruling side**, bringing up the total number of defectors (Congress) to eight.
  - They were also obviously hoping for some official position to share the spoils of power, but nothing has been forthcoming for them.
  - Hence, other than the first defector who was absorbed as a cabinet minister, the latter seven continued to sit in the Opposition benches but voted all along with the ruling.
  - **Petitions for the disqualification of the eight were left unheeded by the Speaker for more than three years**, but on the intervention of the Supreme Court of India, the **first defector was disqualified on March 28, 2020**.
  - When the seven other defectors remained unpenalised, **Manipur High Court** took the cue from the earlier Supreme Court ruling to **direct the Speaker to dispose of the case at the soonest but after the election to the State's lone Rajya Sabha seat**. Till this was done, the High Court placed a ban on the seven MLAs from entering the Assembly.

This topic has been covered in [23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020](#) and [9<sup>th</sup> June 2020](#) Comprehensive News Analysis.

## F. Tidbits

### 1. IAEA passes critical resolution against Iran

- The board of governors of the [International Atomic Energy Agency \(IAEA\)](#) have passed a resolution critical of Iran, the first of its kind since 2012, as tension mounts over **Iran's nuclear programme**.
  - The International Atomic Energy Agency is an international organization that seeks to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and to inhibit its use for any military purpose, including nuclear weapons.
  - Though established independently of the United Nations, the IAEA reports to both the United Nations General Assembly and [Security Council](#). It acts as the **UN's nuclear watchdog**.
- The resolution urges Iran to provide inspectors from IAEA with access to two sites in Iran to clarify whether undeclared nuclear activity took place there in the early 2000s. Iran has been blocking access to the sites for months.
- The resolution calls on Iran to fully cooperate with the IAEA.

### 2. Power output declines steeply

- An analysis of the daily load despatch data from the **grid operator Power System Operation Corporation (POSOCO)** has shown that India's electricity generation during the first half of June 2020 has fallen at a slightly faster rate than in May, driven by **lower consumption in western States, hit hardest by the COVID-19 outbreak**.

- Electricity use by the industrial western States of **Maharashtra and Gujarat** — **the top electricity consuming States in the country** — along with Delhi have witnessed marked declines in electricity consumption.
- Maharashtra, Gujarat and Delhi — which are among the most industrialised regions in the country — account for nearly three-fourths of all COVID-19 deaths in India, according to government data.
- **Industries and offices together account for over half of annual power consumption.**
- Power generation from coal, India's primary electricity fuel has continued to fall in June. **Coal's contribution to overall electricity generation fell** to 61.9%, compared with 64.2% in May. Hydropower supply grew at coal's expense.

### 3. U.S. marks end of slavery on Juneteenth

- Juneteenth, an annual holiday commemorating the end of slavery in the United States, has been celebrated by African-Americans since the late 1800s.
- On June 19, 1865, enslaved African-Americans in Galveston, Texas, were told they were free.

## G. Prelims Facts

### 1. NGT inspects football ground in Kerala

- A committee appointed by the **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** recently inspected an area in the **Periyar Tiger Reserve (PTR)**, where a playground was allegedly built without permission.
  - Periyar National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary (PNP) is a protected area located in the districts of Idukki and Pathanamthitta in **Kerala**. It is notable as an **elephant reserve and a tiger reserve**. The Periyar National Park forms the major watershed of two important rivers of Kerala, the Periyar and the Pamba.
  - The park is located high in the **Cardamom Hills and Pandalam Hills of the south Western Ghats** along the border with Tamil Nadu.
- The inspection was ordered by the NGT under the **Forest Conservation Rules, 1980**.

### 2. World Food Programme collaborates with IIT-Delhi

- The United Nations World Food Programme India and IIT-Delhi have announced a collaboration to develop solutions for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the government's food safety nets through **operations research**.
  - The World Food Programme (WFP) is the **food-assistance branch of the United Nations** and the world's largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and promoting food security.
  - It is a **member of the United Nations Development Group** and part of its executive committee.
  - It is **headquartered in Rome**.

### 3. India attends FATF group meet online

- Indian officials, including representatives from enforcement agencies, attended the 32nd special **Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism (EAG)** plenary



meeting, under the aegis of the [Financial Action Task Force \(FATF\)](#).

- The EAG is a **regional body comprising nine countries**: India, Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Belarus. It is an **associate member of the FATF**.

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

**Q1. Which of the following statement/s is/are correct?**

1. The Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA), previously known as the Bangkok Agreement was signed in 2015.
2. India and China are the founding members of the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA).

**Options:**

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

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- The Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA), previously known as the Bangkok Agreement was signed in 1975. It is the oldest preferential trade agreement between countries in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Seven Participating States- Bangladesh, China, India, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, and Sri Lanka are the parties to the APTA. APTA is open to all members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, which serves as the APTA Secretariat.
- India is a founding member. China acceded to APTA in 2001.
- APTA's key objective is to promote economic development and cooperation through the adoption of trade liberalization measures.

**Q2. The Keeladi Excavation site is situated in which of the following states?**

- a. Karnataka
- b. Tamil Nadu
- c. Kerala
- d. Telangana

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- Keeladi excavation site is a Sangam period settlement that is being excavated by the Archaeological Survey of India. This site is located southeast of Madurai, in Tamil Nadu, near the town of Keeladi in Sivagangai district.
- The settlement lies on the bank of the Vaigai River and it reflects the ancient culture of Tamil people.

**Q3. Which of the following statement/s is/are correct with respect to the World Food Programme**

(WFP)?

1. It is a member of the United Nations Development Group.
2. It is headquartered in Rome.

**Options:**

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

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- The World Food Programme (WFP) is the food-assistance branch of the United Nations and the world's largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and promoting food security.
- It is a member of the United Nations Development Group and a part of its executive committee.
- It is headquartered in Rome.

**Q4. Which of the following statement/s is/are incorrect with respect to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)?**

1. It was established by the UN General Assembly in 1957.
2. It reports to both the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council.

**Options:**

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

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- The International Atomic Energy Agency is an international organization that seeks to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and to inhibit its use for any military purpose, including nuclear weapons.
- Though established independently of the United Nations, the IAEA reports to both the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council. It acts as the UN's nuclear watchdog.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Examples from the recent past point to the failure of anti-defection law in curbing the subversion of electoral mandates by legislators, raising questions over the relevance of anti-defection law in current times. Discuss. (15 Marks, 250 Words)
2. Can Russia play a constructive role in the de-escalation of tension between India and China? Suggest mechanisms to reduce tensions between the two countries along the Line of Actual Control. (15

