

# 23 Jun 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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## A. GS 1 Related

### Category: ART AND CULTURE

#### 1. For first time since 1565, a Kamakhya festival sans fair

##### Context:

The Ambubachi Mela began at the Kamakhya temple without mendicants, hermits and devotees for the first time in almost 500 years.

##### Details:

- The festival marks the annual menstruation of the presiding Goddess - Kamakhya.
- Owing to the pandemic situation, the rituals are being conducted behind locked gates.

This topic has been covered in 24<sup>th</sup> April 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.

## B. GS 2 Related

### Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### 1. India to attend trilateral meet with China

##### Context:

External Affairs Minister will take part in the Russia-India-China trilateral, in an indication that New Delhi is prepared to press on with diplomatic moves with Beijing despite the LAC face-off.

##### Details:

- The RIC meeting coincides with the Defence Minister's visit to Moscow to attend Russia's [Victory Day parade](#), and for high-level meetings.

This topic has been covered in 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.

#### 2. China to join UN arms trade treaty

##### Context:

China will join a global pact to regulate arms sales.

##### Details:

- The Communist Party leadership's top legislative body has voted to adopt a decision on joining the UN Arms Trade Treaty.
- It comes after U.S. President Donald Trump announced plans to pull the U.S. out of the agreement in 2019, which entered into force in 2014.
- Beijing has stated that it is committed to efforts to enhance peace and stability in the world.
- Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman told that joining the treaty was "another important measure for China to support multilateralism".

##### UN Arms Trade Treaty:

- The UN Arms Trade Treaty is a multilateral treaty aimed at regulating the global arms trade.
- It was envisioned as a tool to prevent conflict and human rights violations fuelled by poorly regulated trade in arms, which could not conceivably be controlled via national legislation alone.
- It is designed to control the flow of weapons into conflict zones.
  - The treaty calls for the international sale of weapons to be linked to the human rights records of buyers.
  - It requires countries to establish regulations for selling conventional weapons.

- It seeks to prevent conventional military weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists or organized criminal groups, and to stop deals that would violate UN arms embargoes.
- Conventional weapons covered by the UN Arms Trade Treaty include tanks and other armoured combat vehicles, artillery, attack helicopters, naval warships, missiles and missile launchers, and small arms.
- It establishes common international standards for the regulation of the international trade in ammunition, weapons parts, and arms components.
- It does not regulate the domestic sale or use of weapons in any country.
  - It recognizes the legitimacy of the arms trade to enable states to provide for their own security.

**Note:**

- India has not signed the treaty.
- One of the arguments made by India in 2013 against the treaty was that New Delhi had “strong and effective national export controls” on military hardware to ensure they don’t fall into the wrong hands.
- Also, one of India’s concerns is that the treaty does not include non-state actors in its purview, and therefore does not address the pressing concern of illicit trafficking and use of conventional arms by non-state actors. This is a major lacuna which may serve to make the treaty ineffective.

### 3. India can reduce trade deficit with China by \$8.4 bn: study

**Context:**

In a study, Acuité Ratings & Research has said that India can potentially reduce its trade deficit with China by \$8.4 billion (17.3% of the deficit with China) over FY21-22, and 0.3% of India’s GDP.

**Details:**

- India recorded a trade deficit of \$48.5 billion with China in FY20.
- While imports from China have moderately declined by 15% since FY18 due to imposition of anti-dumping duties on some products, the dependence of the domestic economy on Chinese imports remains high with direct contribution to over 30% of India’s aggregate trade deficit.
- Over the past 3 decades, India’s exports to China grew at a CAGR of 30% but its imports expanded at 47%, leading to lower capacity utilisation of domestic players in a few sectors.

**Findings of the study:**

- The study says that, trade deficit can be reduced by the rationalisation of just a quarter of India’s imports from China in select sectors where India has well-established manufacturing capabilities.
- It states that, without any significant additional investments, the Indian domestic manufacturing sector can substitute 25% of the total imports from specified sectors in the first phase.
- It is highlighted that nearly 40 sub-sectors of India have the potential to lower their import dependency on China.
- The sectors include chemicals, automotive components, bicycles parts, drug formulations, cosmetics, consumer electronics and leather-based goods.

### 4. Japan to rename islands disputed with China

**Context:**

A local council in southern Japan has voted to rename an area, including islands disputed with China and Taiwan.

**Details:**

- The local assembly of Ishigaki city in Japan approved a plan to change the name of the area covering the Tokyo-controlled Senkaku Islands, known by Taiwan and China as the Diaoyus, from “Tonoshiro” to “Tonoshiro Senkaku”.
- Local media said another part of Ishigaki is also known as Tonoshiro, and the name change was cast as a bid to avoid confusion.

**Issue:**

- The uninhabited islands are at the centre of a festering row between Tokyo and Beijing and the move sparked anger in both Taiwan and mainland China.
- Beijing has denounced the move as illegal and a serious provocation.
- Taiwan says the islands are part of its territory, and also protested the move.

## C. GS 3 Related

### Category: ECONOMY

#### 1. SBI mobilises 13,212 kg gold through GMS

**Context:**

The State Bank of India (SBI) has mobilised 13,212 kg of household and institutional gold through the Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS), according to the bank’s annual report.

**Details:**

- Gold Monetisation Scheme was introduced to replace the Gold Deposit Scheme (GDS), 1999.
- The government unveiled GMS in 2015 to mobilise idle gold held by households and institutions.

Read more about the [Gold Monetisation Scheme](#).

### Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

#### 1. Pollution board may revoke OIL well closure order

**Context:**

The Pollution Control Board Assam (PCBA) is likely to revoke its order to Oil India Limited (OIL) to close down all its crude oil and natural gas wells around the blowout-affected one in the Baghjan area of eastern Assam’s Tinsukia district.

**Background:**

- Following a blowout at the natural gas well, PCBA had asked OIL to immediately cease all drilling and production operations in its Baghjan oilfield.

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

**Details:**

- The order would have meant shutting down 17 crude oil and four natural gas wells that together produce a sizeable quantity of OIL's total output.
- After receiving the notice, OIL said shutting down the wells was not an option, as it could lead to an ecological disaster besides hampering the operations to cap the blowout well that burst into flames later.

## D. GS 4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

**Category: INTERNAL SECURITY**

### 1. The lone wolf threat

**Context:**

- The lone wolf knife attack in the U.K.

**Background:**

- In November 2019, the British government reduced the official threat level from “severe” to “substantial”, which means attacks could happen but there was no intelligence of an immediate terror strike.
- Though the U.K.'s intelligence wings have foiled dozens of terror attacks since the devastating 2005 London bombings, U.K., especially London, has continued to see low-tech lone attacks, where the attacker either used vehicles to run over people or launched knife attacks.

**For more information on this, refer to:**

[CNA dated Dec 3, 2019](#)

**Details:**

- The knife attack at a park in Reading, a town west of London, has killed three people and injured three others. This incident indicates the threat of lone wolf attacks the U.K. is facing.
  - A lone wolf or lone-actor terrorist is someone who prepares and commits violent acts alone, outside of any command structure and without material assistance from any terrorist group. They may be influenced or motivated by the ideology and beliefs of a group and may act in support of such a group.
- The Reading attack has been declared a terror incident.

### **Concerns:**

- Terrorist organisations have embraced the lone wolf attack strategy to spread violence in countries where coordinated big attacks are impossible.
  - When the territories it controlled in Iraq and Syria started shrinking in the wake of counter-attacks, in 2015 and 2016, the Islamic State urged its supporters first to launch attacks in western cities and then declare allegiance to the 'Caliph'.
- Unlike in coordinated terror attacks, where the chances of intelligence agencies detecting the perpetrators are much higher, the lone wolf attacks are hard to detect and prevent. There is no sure way of preventing isolated terror attacks that require little planning.

### **Way forward:**

- Lone wolf attacks pose a security challenge to the public and the government.
- The government and the security agencies need to adopt a multi-pronged approach towards radicalisation, which is anchored in human intelligence, strong ties with communities and community leaders and deradicalisation programmes.

**For more related information, refer to:**

[CNA dated Jan 8, 2020](#)

**Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

## **1. A way out of undelineated borders**

### **Context:**

- India Nepal boundary dispute.

### **Background:**

#### **India-Nepal boundary dispute:**

- The root of the misunderstanding between India and Nepal lies in the **Treaty of Sugauli** signed at the end of the **Anglo-Nepalese War** in 1815-16.
- The Treaty of Sugauli stipulated that the **Kali River** would mark Nepal's western border with the British East India Company.
- The treaty had no map attached and the negotiators had no idea of the geography of the area which has added to the differing perceptions of the border on the two sides.

### **Details:**

- The author argues in favour of India's boundary claims based on the following reasons.

#### **Agreed tri-junction:**

- The **1954 Trade Agreement between India and China** mentions Lipulekh as one of the passes that could be used for trade and pilgrimage traffic; a police post was established by India at Kalapani in 1956.
- The **China-Nepal Boundary Treaty of 1961** is also in line with the current position.



- The tri-junction, though not delineated, corresponds to the border claimed by India and shown on the British map of 1879, and in subsequent ones.

#### **International law:**

- **Principles of international law** support the British and India's claim.
- Borders are established through political agreements and delimitation gives specific meaning to the verbal description and is considered part of the negotiations, and demarcation is the setting up of boundary markers.
- In the case of Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura, the political agreement has been acted upon and is not open to challenge now. A treaty has to be interpreted with reference to the circumstances prevailing at the time the treaty was concluded.
- Nepal's ploy of selective reference to certain maps of the British East India Company does not hold ground given the fact that its claim value is reduced by the delimitation done at that time.

#### **Way forward:**

- It is imperative for India to come up with a **white paper on the boundary**. A white paper can help in **clearing misapprehensions over the boundary**.
- The ensuing efforts should **focus on resolving, not managing, different perceptions of the boundary**.
- The two countries should rely on the power of persuasion to settle misapprehensions left over by colonialism based on historical facts and **summit diplomacy**.
- The same approach can be used to resolve the boundary dispute along the Line of Actual Control which is also not delineated.

**For more information on this issue, refer to:**

[CNA dated June 14, 2020](#)

**Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

### **1. Transparency during a crisis**

#### **Context:**

- Right to Information (RTI) applications seeking information pertaining to the **PM CARES Fund** have been rejected based on the grounds of the fund not being a public authority.

**For more information on this, refer to:**

[CNA dated May 31, 2020](#)

#### **Background:**

- The **Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005**, empowers citizens to access information from public authorities and hold them accountable.

#### **PM CARES Fund:**

- No information exists on the official website of the Fund regarding the amount collected, names of donors, expenditure incurred, or details of beneficiaries. The trust deed of the fund is not also available for public scrutiny.
- Reports suggest that donations of over \$1 billion have been made, including contributions from foreign sources.

#### **Details:**

- The author argues in favour of **more transparency and access to information in these crucial times**.
- During the [COVID-19](#) crisis, proper implementation of the law has assumed greater significance than ever before. **Relief and welfare programmes funded through public money** are the sole lifeline of millions who suddenly lost income-earning opportunities during the lockdown. If the poor and marginalised affected by the public health emergency are to have any hope of obtaining the benefits of government schemes, they must have access to relevant information.
  - Ground reports have revealed that in the absence of information, it is impossible for intended beneficiaries to get their due from the various relief measures announced by the governments.

#### **Concerns:**

##### **Corrosive narrative:**

- The author strongly argues against the **narrative that public scrutiny of government actions is undesirable during the crisis** and citizens must unquestioningly trust the state.
- Such a narrative undermines the basic democratic tenet that **citizens' participation and oversight** is necessary to ensure they are able to access their rights. Without information, oversight of government's action is absent and corruption thrives.

##### **Critical times:**

- Under the current circumstances, the incentives for secrecy are great, and the scope for discretionary actions wide. It is behind such cloak of secrecy that the rights of individuals are most frequently abrogated, **corruption thrives and public trust in institutions is eroded**.

##### **Way forward:**

- It is critical to create a culture of openness to empower people to participate meaningfully in the decisions that have profound effects on their lives and livelihoods. **Proper implementation of the [Right to Information Act](#)** is more crucial now than ever before.
- To ensure easy accessibility, **relevant information must be made available in local languages** and widely disseminated in line with the statutory obligation of public authorities under Section 4 of the RTI Act.
- In the current scenario the role of information commissions is crucial. While in the midst of a pandemic it is reasonable to expect delays in processing information requests, public authorities must not be allowed to interpret the crisis as a justification for not complying with the RTI Act.

## **F. Prelims Facts**

### **1. Rath Yatra**

#### **What's in News?**



The [Supreme Court](#) has lifted the ban on the conduct of Puri Jagannath Rath Yatra after ensuring a complete lack of public attendance for the festival to avoid spread of infection amid the pandemic.

This topic has been covered in **5th May 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis**. [Click here](#) to read.

## 2. 1921 Malabar Rebellion

- The Moplah Rebellion is also well known as the Malabar Rebellion of 1921.
- It was the culmination of a series of riots by Moplahs (Muslims of Malabar) in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries against the British and the Hindu landlords in Malabar (Northern Kerala).

Read more about [Malabar/Moplah Rebellion 1921](#).

## 3. ITC Agri rolls out more collaborative e-Choupal 4.0

### What's in News?

- In its 20<sup>th</sup> year of launch, ITC Agri has rolled e-Choupal 4.0.
- e-Choupal is a two-decade old initiative from ITC, aimed to web-enable farmers to overcome the challenges related to information access and procurement.

### e-Choupal 4.0:

- e-Choupal 4.0 is a more collaborative and integrated platform that leverages new digital technologies to provide end-to-end and personalised services to farmers on weather and markets on a real-time basis.
- The new platform delivers information on crop monitoring, crop advisory and electronic marketing place for farm inputs, helps in remote sensing for addressing crop stress and with the help of start-ups, does rapid quality testing.

## 4. DRI busts syndicate smuggling exotic macaws from Bangladesh

### What's in News?

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has busted a wildlife smuggling syndicate with the seizure of a consignment of exotic macaws which had been smuggled from Bangladesh to Kolkata.

### Details:

- The exotic birds were identified as Hyacinth macaw, Pesquet's parrot, Severe macaw and Hahn's macaw.
- The seized macaws are protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora ([CITES](#)), with Hyacinth macaw being accorded the highest protection.

### Concerns:

- West Bengal and northeast India are vulnerable to cross-border wildlife smuggling because of their proximity to the Bangladesh and Myanmar borders, and to Thailand.
- The possibility of spread of [zoonotic diseases](#) on account of smuggling in such exotic species is increasingly becoming a global concern against the backdrop of COVID-19.

## G. Tidbits

### 1. 'Border tensions may deflect India from reforms'

#### What's in News?

According to Fitch Ratings, the ongoing border tension with China does not immediately impact India's credit profile, but may distract the government from implementing reforms.

- Fitch Ratings director (Sovereign Ratings) said that the Government of India has announced reforms to improve growth going forward and a strong GDP growth is important to cut down public debt.
- While he stated that the announcement of reforms could lift growth in the medium term and that the recent situation at the border with China, would not necessarily impact the credit profile immediately, he opined that the geo-politics could distract the government while delivering reforms.

### 2. Sukarno's success and failure

- Sukarno was the **leader of the Indonesian struggle for independence from the Dutch Empire**. He was a prominent leader of Indonesia's nationalist movement during the Dutch colonial period.
- Post World War II, the independence movement, strongly supported by India, was launched to force the Dutch to transfer power to the Indonesian people. This was achieved in 1950 and Sukarno was unanimously chosen as President.

### 3. Bolshevism in Russia

- Bolshevism is the communist form of government adopted in Russia following the **Bolshevik Revolution of 1917**.
- The Bolsheviks were a radical far-left Marxist faction founded by Vladimir Lenin post the split from the Menshevik faction of the Marxist Russian Social Democratic Labour Party.
- The Bolsheviks took over power in Russia in November 1917, overthrowing the liberal Provisional Government of Alexander Kerensky. Their beliefs and practices were often referred to as Bolshevism.

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with Respect to UN Arms Trade Treaty:

1. The treaty regulates global arms trade as well as the domestic sale or use of weapons in the member states.
2. It establishes common international standards for the regulation of the international trade in ammunition, weapons parts, and arms components.
3. India has not signed the treaty.

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

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

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- The UN Arms Trade Treaty is a multilateral treaty aimed at regulating the global arms trade.
- It establishes common international standards for the regulation of the international trade in ammunition, weapons parts, and arms components.
- It does not regulate the domestic sale or use of weapons in any country.
- India has not signed the treaty.

**Q2. Senkaku Islands - a disputed territory, is located in which sea?**

- a. Sea of Japan
- b. East China Sea
- c. Yellow Sea
- d. South China Sea

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

The Senkaku Islands are located in the East China Sea between Japan, the People's Republic of China, and Taiwan.

**Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to the Malabar Rebellion of 1921:**

- 1. It was the riots by Moplahs, directed against the British and also the Hindu landlords.
- 2. The British viceroy in India during the rebellion was Lord Reading.

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

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

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- Moplah Rebellion or the Malabar Rebellion of 1921 was the culmination of a series of riots by Moplahs (Muslims of Malabar) against the British as well as the Hindu landlords.
- Lord Chelmsford was succeeded by Lord Reading in 1921 as Governor-General and Viceroy of India.

**Q4. Consider the following statements with respect to CITES:**

1. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.
2. It classifies plants and animals according to five categories based on how threatened they are.
3. It is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
4. CITES is legally binding on state parties to the convention.

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

- a. 1, 2 and 3 only
- b. 1, 3 and 4 only
- c. 1, 2, 3 and 4
- d. 1 and 2 only

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- CITES: Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora is an international agreement between governments.
- Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.
- It classifies plants and animals according to three categories/appendices based on how threatened they are.
- It is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- CITES is legally binding on state parties to the convention.
- India is a party to the convention.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Analyze the anti-colonial struggle in Southeast Asia and bring out their similarities and differences with the Indian Independence movement. (10 marks, 150 words)
2. Discuss the causes that contributed to the Russian Revolution and the impact of the revolution on Russia and the world. (15 marks, 250 words)

