

# 15 Jul 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### A. GS 1 Related

### B. GS 2 Related

#### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- [1. China making deep inroads into Iran](#)
- [2. EU, India to meet on resuming FTA negotiations](#)
- [3. U.S. rejects Beijing's claims in S. China Sea](#)
- [4. Britain bans Huawei from future role in 5G network](#)

### C. GS 3 Related

### D. GS 4 Related

### E. Editorials

#### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- [1. The stand-off and China's India policy dilemma](#)
- [2. Lost opportunity](#)

### F. Prelims Facts

### G. Tidbits

- [1. Centre limits duration of online school sessions](#)
- [2. Medical test not needed for trans ID certificate: draft rules](#)
- [3. 'Maldives can't grow without India'](#)
- [4. More Spike missiles to be ordered](#)

### H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

### I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

## A. GS 1 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## B. GS 2 Related

### Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### 1. China making deep inroads into Iran

##### Context:

At a time when the U.S. is targeting both China and Iran through a host of economic measures, both the countries are taking their partnership to a new level through a \$400-billion long-term agreement.

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

##### China-Iran Partnership:

- The partnership was first proposed by China's President Xi Jinping during a visit to Iran in 2016. The Iranian Government cleared it in June 2020.

- It is a long-term strategic partnership agreement with energy, economic, logistical and military aspects.
- China will also offer its GPS to Iran, build infrastructure for 5G rollout and develop free trade zones.
- Also, Iran has a very crucial place in China's [Belt and Road Initiative \(BRI\)](#).
- According to Iran's Ambassador, "A new multipolar world order is emerging in which China is playing a crucial role. China has already cemented ties with Russia in this emerging order. Iran has joined this bloc."

#### **The US Sanctions:**

- The U.S. State Department has already said it would target Chinese companies if they make investments in Iran defying American sanctions.
- But China, which is already in a trade and technological war with the U.S., seems determined to go ahead with its partnership.

#### **Concerns for India:**

- China continued to buy Iranian oil over the past year even after the U.S. sanctions waivers expired in May 2019, although in smaller volumes. In contrast, India stopped buying Iranian oil after U.S. waivers ended.
- At a time when Iran and China are finalising this partnership agreement, Iran has dropped India from a project to build a rail line from the Chabahar port to Zahedan, along the border with Afghanistan.
  - Iran has stated the absence of active Indian engagement, as the reason for its move.
  - China is now likely to play a role in the Chabahar port.

**Read more about this topic covered in the [14th July 2020 CNA](#).**

## **2. EU, India to meet on resuming FTA negotiations**

#### **Context:**

India and the [European Union \(EU\)](#) are set to agree on a high-level dialogue on trade and investment to restart negotiations, seven years after talks on a free trade agreement were suspended.

#### **Details:**

- During this summit, India and the EU are expected to conclude several agreements including:
  - A roadmap for cooperation.
  - An agreement on research sharing for civil nuclear cooperation.
  - Launch of a maritime security dialogue.
  - Negotiations between Europol and the [CBI](#) for cooperation in fighting organized crime and terrorism.
- EU is one of India's largest regional trading partners while India was the EU's 9th-largest trading partner in 2018-19.
- The EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is known as Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA).

#### **Concerns:**

- Trade with India formed under 3% of the EU's global trade, which is believed to be far below what was expected of the relationship.

- EU experts believe that negotiators are still quite far apart due to what Europe perceives as India's protectionist stance.
  - That the [Make in India](#) programme was accelerated by the COVID-19 crisis, and recent pronouncements that India wants to go self-reliant, are among the concerns.
  - EU sees India's "Atmanirbhar Bharat" as protectionist.
- EU has reservations about the model "Bilateral Investment Treaty" (BIT) that New Delhi has proposed, especially on dispute mechanisms in Indian courts.

### 3. U.S. rejects Beijing's claims in S. China Sea

#### **Context:**

The Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said that the United States would treat Beijing's pursuit of resources in the dispute-rife South China Sea as illegal.

#### **Details:**

- Pompeo said, "The world will not allow Beijing to treat the South China Sea as its maritime empire."
  - He issued this statement to mark the fourth anniversary of a tribunal decision that sided with the Philippines against the nine-dash line.
  - The statement goes further by explicitly siding with Southeast Asian nations, including the Philippines and Vietnam, after years of the U.S. saying it took no position on individual claims.
- The United States has long rejected Beijing's sweeping claims in the South China Sea.
- The South China Sea is both a home to valuable oil and gas deposits and a vital waterway for the world's commerce.

#### **South China Sea Dispute:**

- Beijing claims most of the South China Sea through a so-called nine-dash line, a vague delineation based on maps from the 1940s.
- It has spent years building military bases on artificial islands in the contested areas to cement its claims, while dragging out a diplomatic process to resolve the disputes for nearly two decades.
- According to the 2016 decision issued by a tribunal under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea ([UNCLOS](#)), China cannot make claims based on the Scarborough Reef or the Spratly Islands, a vast uninhabited archipelago.
  - The United States, as a result, now rejects Beijing's claims in the waters surrounding Vanguard Bank off Vietnam, Lucania Shoals off Malaysia, waters considered in Brunei's exclusive economic zone and Natuna Besar off Indonesia.
  - Beijing's southernmost claim of Malaysian-administered James Shoal, which is 1,800 km from the Chinese mainland, has also been rejected by the US.

Read more about [South China Sea Dispute](#).

### 4. Britain bans Huawei from future role in 5G network

Britain's government has backtracked on plans to give the Chinese telecommunications company Huawei, a limited role in the U.K.'s new high-speed mobile phone network.

#### **Background:**

- In January 2020, Britain sought to balance economic and security pressures by agreeing to give Huawei a limited role in Britain's so-called 5G network, excluding the company from core components of the system and restricting its involvement to 35% of the overall project.
- But the move set up a diplomatic clash with the Americans, who threatened to cut off security cooperation unless Britain dumped Huawei.

#### **Details:**

- The U.S. threatened to sever an intelligence-sharing arrangement with the U.K. because of concerns Huawei equipment could allow the Chinese Government to infiltrate U.K. networks.
- Britain said it imposed the ban after U.S. sanctions made it impossible to ensure the security of Huawei equipment, forcing it to start turning to other suppliers for components.
- The decision gives British telecom operators until 2027 to remove Huawei equipment already in Britain's 5G network. The operators must stop buying 5G equipment from Huawei by the end of 2020.
- This has broad implications for relations between London and Beijing.

### **C. GS 3 Related**

*Nothing here for today!!!*

### **D. GS 4 Related**

*Nothing here for today!!!*

### **E. Editorials**

#### **Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

##### **1. The stand-off and China's India policy dilemma**

#### **Context:**

- India China relations.

#### **Background:**

- The violent face-off between Chinese and Indian troops at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), causing casualties on both sides has dealt a severe blow to the bilateral relationship between the two countries.
- There have been growing calls domestically in India to reset its ties with China. The development has also led to intense debate and discussions in China.

#### **Details:**

- There have been **two dominant views in China post the Galwan Valley incident**. While one view argues that China's assertiveness attitude vis-a-vis India is the right way forward for China, another view notes the serious concerns associated with the present Chinese policy with respect to India.

#### **Apt Chinese policy:**

*Border issue:*

- One view is that the present conflict along the LAC is not unexpected given the strain in the relation between the two countries. There seems to be **no possibility of a negotiated settlement of the border dispute any time soon** and the earlier system of effective management of bilateral differences has been ineffective.
- This view blames India for its strategy on the China-India border based on its **unending infrastructure arms race at the LAC** and argues that China had to take a hard stand with India. Periodic violent conflicts along the LAC might be the “new normal” in China-India ties.

*Current international situation:*

- The key argument of this school of thought is that China-India relations hold no great prospect in the current international situation. **Opportunities for cooperation at the global level have been diminishing and regional competition has been intensifying.**

*Quasi ally of the U.S.:*

- The proponents of this view argue that China should reconsider its prevalent strategic thinking that India is not its main strategic challenge and that the U.S. is the main conundrum for China.
- They claim that through an assertive stand along the western frontier, China can effectively deter its adversaries on the eastern coast. **India is viewed as an ally of the U.S. and targeting India can send out a message to the U.S.**

*India as a competitor:*

- Chinese hardliners view **India as a competitor and challenger to China's rise to global dominance** and suggest a hard stand with respect to India.
- This view argues to keep India distracted by destabilizing the entire border region from the McMahon Line in the east to the Aksai Chin area in the west and to weaken India internally, by supporting the cause of Maoists, Naga separatists and Kashmiris.

*Keeping India under pressure:*

- The proponents of this view claim that a hard stand will not damage China-India relations but on the contrary, it will make it more stable. The constant pressure on India could help force on India a political settlement which will involve **India re-orienting its policies to suit the pattern of Chinese global policies.**
- They quote the 1962 China-India war example which helped China to maintain peace and stability on the western front for a long time and directly eliminate American and Soviet ambitions to use India to contain China.

**Wrong move by China:**

- Many Chinese political thinkers and professors in their analysis of the Galwan Valley incident have been critical about China's policies towards India, which they claim have **no clear strategic intent and actually harm China's interests.**

*India as a rising power:*

- This view recognizes India as a rising power and suggests maintaining cordial relations with India. This bilateral relation would become increasingly crucial in the future, with China-India relations evolving as the most important pair of relations after China-U.S. links.

### *Avoiding isolation:*

- Strained China-India ties might lead to a situation where India alone or in association with other countries may cause trouble for China.
  - For instance, a hostile India will use every possible means to prevent China from reaching the Indian Ocean.
  - The decoupling of China-India relations will further **strengthen the “anti-China alliance” between the U.S., Japan, Australia, Vietnam, Indonesia** and other countries, who will actively take the initiative to reshape global industrial chains, use the Indo-Pacific Strategy to check and balance China’s military and economic power, and expand international organizations such as the G-7 to weaken China’s influence in international affairs.

### *Military strength:*

- The general view among some military analysts in China is that if China has an advantage in terms of psychology, equipment, and logistics mobilization, India too has advantages on various fronts such as deployment, supply line, practical war experience, topography, and climate among others. They view **India as a big country with comparable military strength**.
- They argue that if the conflict ends in a short period of time, it will benefit China. But if it is prolonged, China will be disadvantaged.
- Then there is the high possibility of the U.S. and its allies helping India militarily.

### *Timing of the move:*

- This view notes that strategically too, it would be unwise for China to get into a comprehensive military conflict with India at this point in time and notes that it is still not the time to ‘resolve’ the India problem. Instead, China, for now, should strive to maintain basic peace and stability at the borders.
- **China should focus on building its own strength and simultaneously carry out its strategy of weakening India** internally by leveraging its social and political differences, completing its strategic encirclement, improving troop deployment in the Tibet region to secure the [China-Pakistan Economic Corridor](#), and stationing Chinese troops in the Gwadar Port (Arabian Sea), so as to secure China’s Indian Ocean sea routes, among other interests.
- China should aim at **attaining a comprehensive and overwhelming advantage in geopolitics vis-à-vis India**, which cannot be altered by war.

### **Conclusion:**

- Despite all the jingoism and rhetoric propagated through its official media, China is actually in a serious dilemma over its India policy.
- As India seeks to reset ties with China in the post-Galwan era, India should take note of the many internal contradictions and perceived vulnerabilities vis-à-vis India, and leverage the same to India’s benefit.

## **2. Lost opportunity**

### **Context:**

- Chabahar port development project.

### **Background:**



- The Chabahar port project was signed between India and Iran in 2003.
- The current administration had fast-tracked plans for the project, and in 2016, the Indian Prime Minister was in Tehran to sign a **trilateral trade and transit agreement** with the Iranian President and the Afghanistan President.
- According to the MoUs, India would be granted a 10-year lease to develop and operate two terminals and five berths, access to the Chabahar free trade zone, and the opportunity to build the 628 km **rail line from Chabahar to Zahedan**, just across the border from Afghanistan.
- India has acted quickly to develop Chabahar port facilities and has used the facilities to export to Afghanistan.

#### Details:

- The proposed rail line from Chabahar to Zahedan has not taken off for a number of reasons.
  - Iran has made many changes to the contract, which is deemed against India's interest.
  - There has been a delay from India's side despite a commitment from state-owned IRCON.
    - Ircon International Limited, formerly Indian Railway Construction Limited, is an engineering and construction organization, specialized in transport infrastructure.
  - There has been a **fear of American penalties on transactions with Iran**. Even though India was able to negotiate a **sanctions waiver for the Chabahar port and the rail line from the U.S.**, very few international construction and equipment partners were willing to sign on to the project.
- Recently, Iran has begun laying tracks for the line connecting Chabahar to Afghanistan and Turkmenistan.

For more information on this issue, refer to:

[CNA dated July 14, 2020](#)

#### Concerns:

##### Loss for India:

- Regardless of the reasons for India's inability to join the railway project, the current development would amount to an opportunity lost for India.

##### Significance of Chabahar port:

- Chabahar port has been a symbol of traditionally important **India-Iran ties**.
- Chabahar port is connected by sea lanes to ports on India's west coast and this would allow Chabahar to form the fulcrum of India's outreach to Russia and Central Asia, **enhancing connectivity**, energy supplies and trade.
- As Pakistan had blocked Indian aid to Afghanistan and all trade over land, **Chabahar provided India an alternative to connect with Afghanistan**.
- Given Chabahar's proximity to the Gwadar port in Pakistan, the Chabahar port project had **geostrategic importance for India**.

##### Questions on autonomy:

- The impression that India withdrew due to U.S. pressure, especially after India cancelled oil imports from Iran, also questions India's commitment to **strategic autonomy**.

##### Strategic advantage to China:

- This development comes at a time when an imminent deal with China for a 25-year, \$400 billion strategic partnership on infrastructure, connectivity and energy projects is on the tables. India's loss could well become **China's gain of strategic influence in Iran and the larger West Asian region.**

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

[CNA dated July 14, 2020](#)

## F. Prelims Facts

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## G. Tidbits

### 1. Centre limits duration of online school sessions

Pragyata guidelines for digital education have been released by the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

- “Children exposed to digital technologies or gadgets for a longer time are prone to severe health issues,” the guidelines said.
- These guidelines are prepared by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).
- The guidelines are only advisory in nature, and State governments have been asked to build on them and formulate their own rules, based on local needs.



# Restricting screen time

The following guidelines were prescribed by the MHRD for school heads and teachers for implementing digital education

- For pre-primary students, not more than **30 minutes** a day to be spent by teachers in interacting with parents

- For classes 1 to 8, not more than **two sessions** of online classes of **30-45 minutes each** can be held

- For classes 9 to 12, not more than **four sessions** of online classes of **30-45 minutes each** can be held

- Teachers are recommended to adopt the academic calendar of NCERT at <http://ncert.nic.in/aac.html>

- Instant messaging groups/ emails involving parents to be used for sharing important information and resources

- Teachers are instructed to make students aware of **cyber bullying**

Breaks of **10-15** minutes between two consecutive classes are recommended

## 2. Medical test not needed for trans ID certificate: draft rules

### What's in News?

The Union Government has done away with the requirement of a medical examination for trans persons applying for a certificate of identity in its latest draft rules framed under the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.

- An earlier draft of the rules mandated a report from a psychologist along with the affidavit for the application. The trans rights movement had opposed this, as it was seen as going against a trans person's right to self-identification.
- The draft of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020, published in the gazette, stated that a District Magistrate would issue a transgender identity certificate and card based on an affidavit by the applicant, but without any medical examination.

- In case of change of gender, the application for a new identification certificate would require a certificate from the medical superintendent or chief medical officer of the medical institution where the applicant underwent the intervention.

### 3. 'Maldives can't grow without India'

- Speaker and former President of Maldives Mohamed Nashid has said that the Maldives cannot grow or develop further if the country abandons its ties with India.
- The bilateral relationship between the Maldives and India has been strengthened and deepened since November 2018.
- As a part of India's initiative, where nearly 200 million MVR-worth cash grant and development projects are being executed with Male, apart from the \$800 million line of credit, India recently handed over outdoor fitness equipment for 61 islands across the Maldives.

### 4. More Spike missiles to be ordered

- The Army is set to place a repeat order for Spike-LR (long-range) Anti-Tank Guided Missiles from Israel as part of emergency procurement.
  - The emergency procurements come in the backdrop of continuing tensions on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China.
- The decision comes days after the Army's decision to place a repeat order for 72,400 Sig Sauer assault rifles from the U.S.

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Cytokine storm is an overproduction of immune cells and their activating compounds.
2. Cytokines can be pro-inflammatory or anti-inflammatory.

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

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

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

Cytokines are small proteins secreted by immune cells to communicate and alter the actions of other immune cells. They can be pro-inflammatory or anti-inflammatory, thus promoting or inhibiting the proliferation and functions of other immune cells. Cytokine storm is an overproduction of immune cells and their activating compounds.

**Q2. Consider the following statements:**

1. The lake is located in the Zabarwan mountain valley.
2. It is surrounded by Shankaracharya hills on three sides.

**The lake being talked about is:**

- a. Tso Moriri Lake
- b. Dal Lake
- c. Loktak Lake
- d. Chilika Lake

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

Self-explanatory.

**Q3. Which of the following statement/s is/are incorrect about Kaziranga National Park:**

1. It is a "Mixed World Heritage Site" on the UNESCO World Heritage List.
2. It is recognized as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International for the conservation of avifaunal species.
3. It has been declared a tiger reserve.

**Choose the correct option:**

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

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- Khangchendzonga National Park in Sikkim is the only "Mixed World Heritage Site" in India to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.
- Kaziranga National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage site (Natural site).
- It is recognized as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International for the conservation of avifaunal species.
- It was declared a tiger reserve in 2006.

**Q4. "PRAGYATA Guidelines" refer to the recently released:**

- a. Guidelines for obtaining collateral-free MSME loans, as a part of Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- b. Guidelines on digital education.
- c. Set of procedural guidelines for use in India in cases of sexual harassment.
- d. Guidelines regarding the preparation of coal blocks before bidding.

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- The PRAGYATA guidelines include eight steps of online/digital education that is, Plan- Review- Arrange- Guide- Yak(talk)- Assign- Track- Appreciate.
- The guidelines on Digital/Online Education provide a roadmap or pointers for carrying forward online education to enhance the quality of education.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Apart from the economic dimension, India-Iran relation holds immense significance for the political and strategic interests of both countries. Comment. (10 marks, 150 words)
2. Despite the immense potential of a free trade agreement between India and the EU, there has been minimal progress on this front. Comment. (10 marks, 150 words)