

20 Jul 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. China has crossed its 1960 claims along the LAC

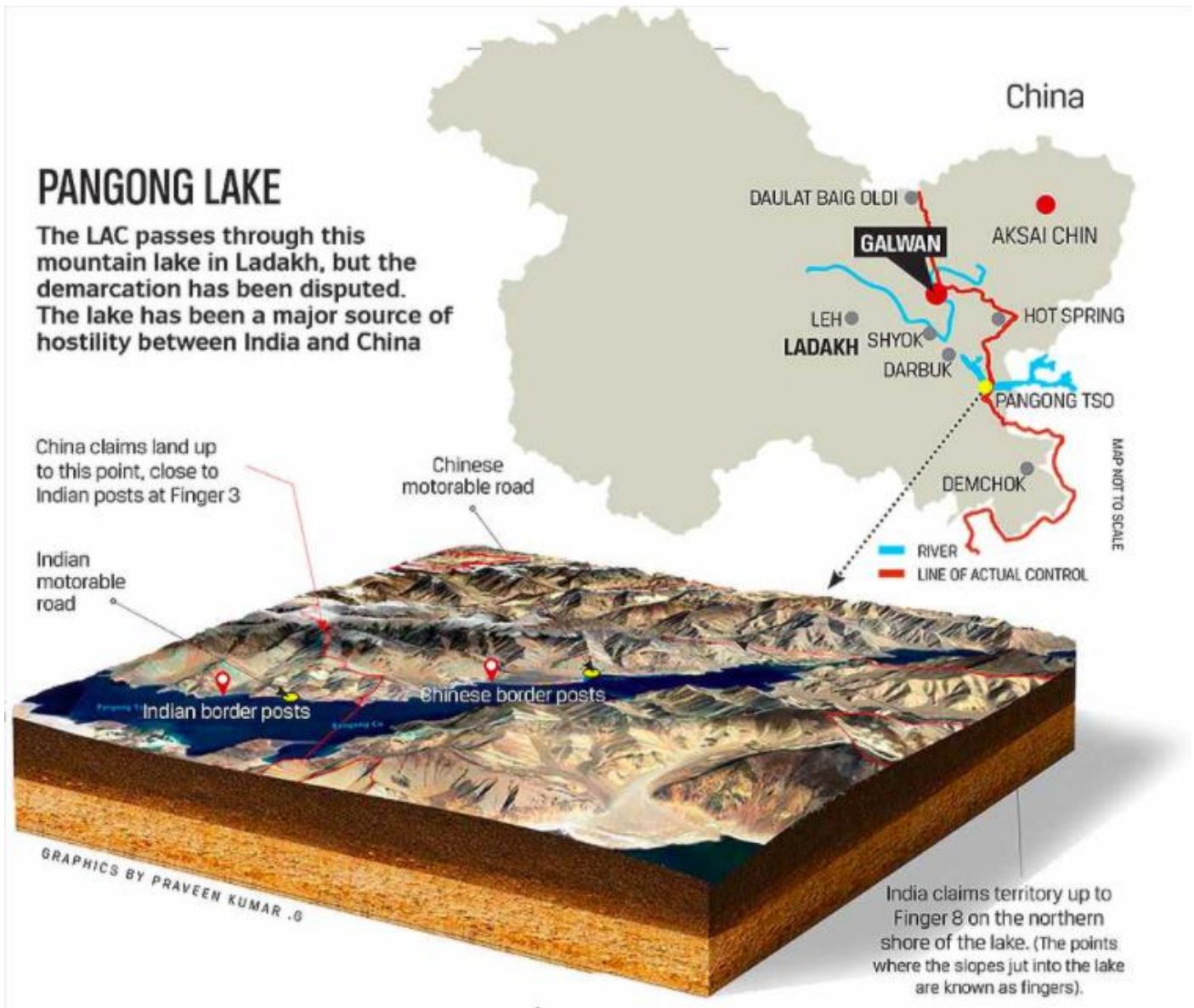
Background

- Chinese troops are currently present on the north bank of Pangong Lake in Ladakh in an area that is beyond what even China described as its official boundary during talks with India in 1960.

Also read: Indo-China Border Clash

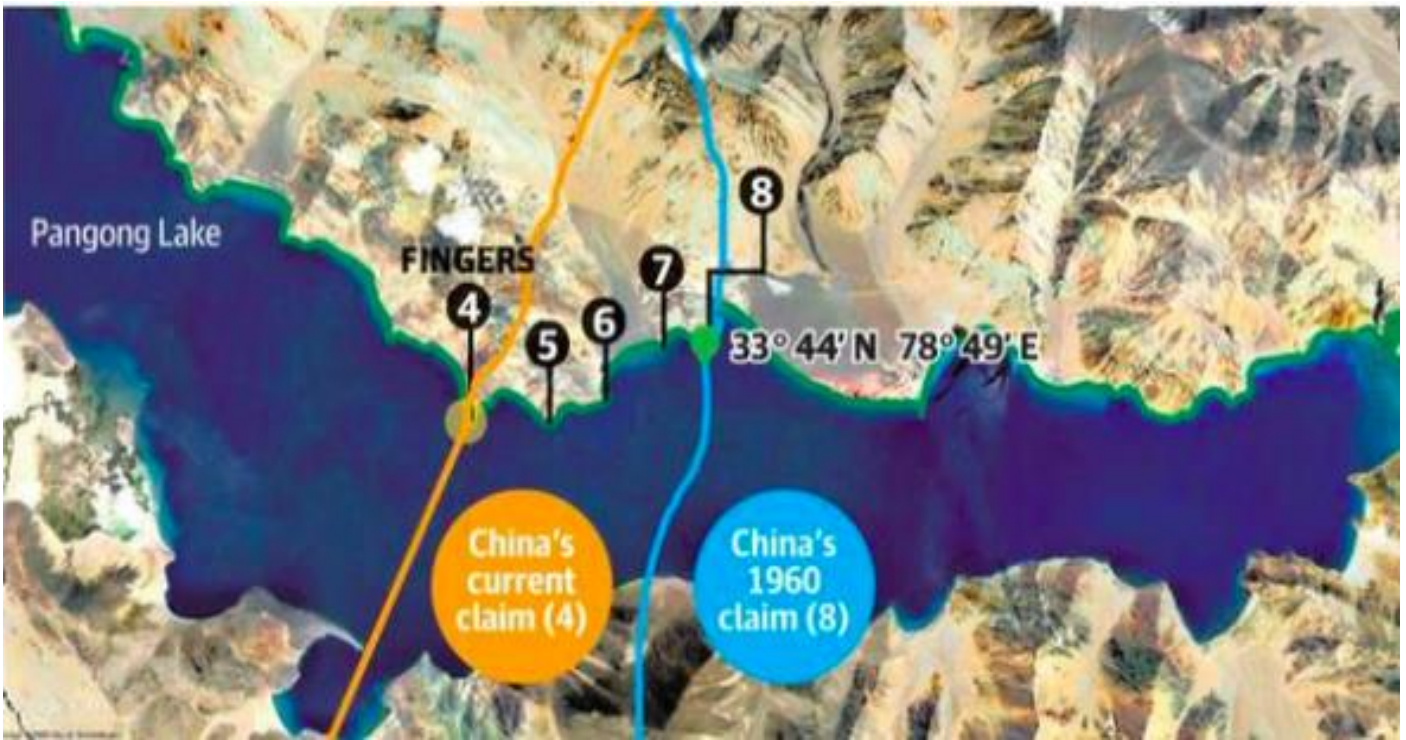
LAC

- The LAC doesn't just run through land, but also through the Pangong Tso — a 135 kilometre-long, narrow, deep and landlocked lake.
- The slopes of the barren mountains jut forward into the lake at eight different points, which are officially referred to as “fingers”.
 - The Fingers refer to mountain spurs on the bank, and run from 1 to 8, west to east.



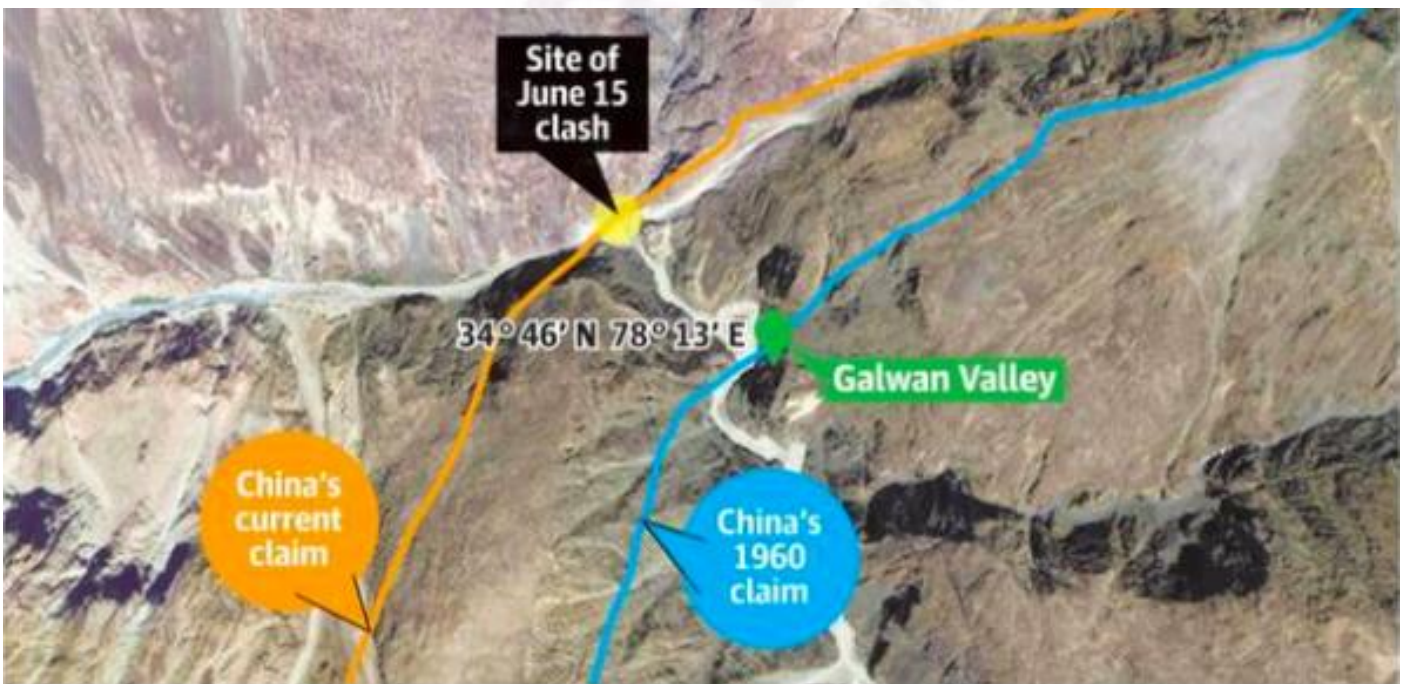
China's present claim

- At the north bank of Pangong Tso, the PLA moved up to Finger 4 and prevented India from crossing Finger 4.
- China now claims up to Finger 4, while India says the LAC is at Finger 8. China previously built a road to Finger 4 in 1999 and has dominated up to Finger 4, but since May, has for the first time, completely cut off India's access to its LAC at Finger 8, effectively shifting the line 8 km west.



Galwan Valley

- In the Galwan Valley, the 1960 line ran east of the bend of the Galwan river, called the Y-nallah, which was the site of the June 15 clash.



COORDINATES FROM 1960 OFFICIAL REPORT; LAC ALIGNMENT IS APPROXIMATE

China's Shifting Lines

- China's current moves to enforce its Line of Actual Control (LAC) claims, which sparked the recent border incidents, mark a shift from what Beijing told India in 1960 about where its boundaries were, both in the Galwan Valley and Pangong Lake.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Sacred groves

- Sacred groves refer to a piece of natural vegetation that is protected by a certain community due to religious reasons. The area is usually dedicated to a local deity.
- As a result, local communities tend to take responsibility to protect and nurture the area. The groves are also looked after by joint families who fear the wrath of the resident god.
- It could be only a few trees or an entire forest.

They are called by different names

- In India, there are over a lakh sacred groves across different states. They go by different names like koyil kaadu in Tamil, orans in Rajasthan, devara kaadu in Karnataka, and sernas in Madhya Pradesh.
- They are called kavu in Malayalam.
- In Himachal Pradesh, people dust their clothes off when they cross the groves to ensure that they leave everything behind.
- Such religious beliefs strengthen protection measures.

Significance

- The sacred groves shelter medicinal plants of great value not only for the primary health care of the village communities, but also for the modern pharmacopoeia.
- The groves harbour certain wild crop relatives and other endemic biotas.
- They act as micro-watersheds and meet the drinking and irrigation water needs of the local communities.

Threats

- Due to several socio-economic and cultural reasons, the traditional belief systems, which were fundamental to the concept of sacred grove conservation, are now considered mere superstitions. The traditional values appear to be gradually eroding with the advent of modernity and urbanization.
- Invasion of exotic weeds into sacred groves has become a serious problem in the ecological functioning of some sacred groves.
- Today, with the fast pace of industrialization, roads and highways are being widened for smooth vehicular movement. In the process, some sacred groves, which are on the edge of the village, near highway areas, have been reduced to less than half their size.
- The increase in the number of construction of new buildings in the place of ancestral homes, which used to house sacred groves in its premises, has virtually led to the destruction of this biodiversity system.
- In several areas, the land on which sacred groves are located is not declared as forestland and thus is not protected by the government. It is owned by individual persons, families, clans who would have converted them into agricultural land for the purpose of cultivation.

Way Forward

- Therefore, there is an urgent need to strengthen the traditional concepts of sacred grove conservation by identifying the key issues and providing solutions through appropriate rehabilitation packages.

Context

- An award-winning scientist at the Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding, Coimbatore, Kannan Warriar was conferred the National Award of excellence for outstanding research in forestry, including conservation of endangered sacred groves in the Alappuzha district of Kerala.
- The award also recognises his research on Casuarina (savukku) trees.

Casuarinas

- They are a versatile group of plants with wide-ranging adaptability to grow in different environments.
- They fix atmospheric nitrogen through a symbiotic association with the bacteria.

Uses:

- India is the largest planter of casuarina in the world.
- The tree pulp goes into the paper-making industry.
- Casuarina stems find use as fabrication material in scaffolding work, and are also used to safeguard banana plantations from the wind.
- Of late it is also a preferred choice for biomass-based power generation.

Category: DEFENCE

1. Domestic firms worried over small arms imports

Background

- Indian Army has decided to buy 72,000 Sig Sauer assault rifles for its troops from the United States.
- The new assault rifles will gradually replace the flaw-ridden 5.56 mm INSAS (Indian Small Arms System) rifles.
- The rifles are currently being used by US forces as well as several other European countries.

Context

- Domestic small arms manufacturers have expressed concern over continuing imports and they have written a letter to the Defence Minister asking for a level playing field to showcase their products.

Details

- Several Indian companies have invested in the small arms segment, given the large requirement and efforts by the government to open up ammunition to the private sector and have started production as well.

Concerns

- Companies would have invested crores of rupees with the hope of business and contract from the Government, but today they are staring at an uncertain future.
- If the domestic industries are not given a chance, it will only undermine the [Make in India](#) initiative and companies may shut their operations.

Category: DISASTER MANAGEMENT

1. Foreign experts seek to leave Baghjan site

Kindly refer to:

[CNA dated June 18, 2020](#)

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Make the right call on 'Malabar' going Quad

Context:

- There have been reports that India could soon invite Australia to join the Malabar naval exercises to be held later in 2020.

Details:

- According to reports, a key meeting of India's Ministry of Defence discussed the issue of adding Australia to the trilateral Malabar naval exercise with Japan and the United States in the Bay of Bengal.

For more information, refer to:

[CNA dated July 19, 2020](#)

- The move to include Australia would mark a **major shift for India's Indo-Pacific plans**.
- Inclusion of Australia would make it the first time since 2007 that all members of Quad will participate in a joint military drill, aimed apparently at China.

Concerns:

- The article argues that the benefits or gains for India in the strategic-operational realm would be limited as compared to the cost of participating in the quadrilateral engagement.

New conflict point:

- China has long opposed QUAD coalition and the Chinese leadership sees the **maritime quadrilateral as an Asian-NATO that seeks only to contain China's rise**.
- At a time of strained bilateral ties with China, India's intention to involve Australia in the Malabar drill could only be construed as a move directed against China. At a time when India and China are negotiating a truce on the border in Eastern Ladakh, India's invitation to Australia to participate in the Malabar exercise sends contrary signals to China.

- China would view the move by India as a pressure tactic on China and a move aimed at expanding India's sphere of influence into the entire Indian Ocean and the South Pacific.
- This move **could invite retaliatory moves by China**. China could respond through **aggressive posturing in the Eastern Indian Ocean**, which could lead to the opening up of a new front in the India-China conflict.

Modest gains:

- India's priority for the Indian Ocean region is to acquire strategic capabilities to counter a Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean.
 - Though India possesses airborne surveillance capabilities, the Indian Navy is yet to develop the undersea capability to deter Chinese submarines in the eastern Indian Ocean.
- U.S. defence companies have been hesitant to part with proprietary technology related to vital anti-submarine warfare technology. Cooperation with the U.S. and Japan **without attendant benefits of strategic technology transfers** will not improve the Indian Navy's deterrence potential in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- Notably, neither the U.S. nor Japan believes China's threats in the Indian Ocean equal the challenges China poses in the Pacific. While they may engage in the occasional naval exercise in the Bay of Bengal, **the U.S. and Japanese navies have little spare capacity for sustained surveillance and deterrence operations in the IOR**. Australia, ironically, is the only one ready and able to partner India in securing the Eastern Indian Ocean.
- **Naval coalition-building alone may not credibly deter Chinese naval power in the Indian Ocean.**
- Upgrading the trilateral Malabar to a quadrilateral, without acquiring the requisite combat and deterrence capability, could yield gains for India in the short term, but would prove ineffective in the long run.

Strategic autonomy:

- The strategic contest between the U.S. and China in East Asia and Southeast Asia has been increasing.
 - In recent days, China has stepped up its naval presence in the South China Sea, even as the U.S. has directed three aircraft carrier groups — USS Theodore Roosevelt, USS Nimitz and USS Ronald Reagan — to the region, in a seeming bid to counter the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN).
- In such a scenario, there is every possibility that the military-Quad will be used to draw India into the security dynamics of the Asia-Pacific. The U.S. would expect its Indo-Pacific partners, including India, to assist the U.S. Navy in its South China Sea endeavour.

Premature move:

- There are concerns that it might be premature for Delhi to initiate multilateral engagement with Quad partners.
 - A balancing coalition must come together when the nature and magnitude of the threat are wholly manifest.
- The article argues that despite a growing presence in the Indian Ocean, the PLAN is **yet to physically threaten Indian interests at sea**.
 - Chinese warships have not challenged Indian sovereignty. Nor have PLAN assets impeded the passage of Indian merchantmen in the regional sea lanes and chokepoints.
- The article argues that choosing to up the ante would only **precipitate a crisis in the Eastern Indian Ocean** and would have retaliatory moves from China.

Counter-arguments:

- Many Indian defence and strategic issues experts have welcomed the development, hailing it as a long-overdue move. Some experts have argued that the **rationale for a quartet and perhaps the inclusion of more nations in future Malabar exercises has never been stronger.**

Chinese presence in IOR:

- China has also been involved in **deployments, exercises and military hardware relationships with an increasing number of nations in the “Indo-Afro-Pacific”** which can neither be ignored nor left bereft of counter-measures.
- Chinese research and **intelligence ship presence close to the Andaman Islands** has relatively expanded.

Chinese assertiveness:

- **Appeasing China has been counter-productive.** In fact, China has been accused of increasing assertiveness in its actions.
- Following the stand-off in Ladakh, many Indian analysts believe the **time is right for India to shed its traditional defensiveness in the maritime domain.** An alliance with the U.S., Japan and Australia to counter Chinese moves in the Indian Ocean could help in this direction.
- Expanded Malabar participation points to the emergence of a structured maritime coalition in the Indo-Pacific, amounting to an **emergent defence maritime architecture vis-à-vis a revisionist China.** It is an indication of resistance to any aggressive posturing and change in status quo in the region.
- The quadrilateral dialogue that includes Australia can have meaning only when it is ready to take robust steps that include military-operational potential.

Deepening alliances:

- The move will allow India to bolster its security and defence mechanisms by synergizing ties with countries that have a **converging Indo-Pacific outlook**, namely its Quad partners.
- Considering that **Australia also shares similar security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region** as India in the present context, its inclusion would be a pragmatic decision.

Australia's role:

- Australia's inclusion in the Malabar naval exercises would strengthen not only the maritime perspectives shared by India and Australia but also their **cooperative vision in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).**
- Involving **Australia, a two-ocean maritime power with** competence in the South Pacific, will strengthen the interoperability of the Quad navies and **allow maritime domain awareness** to emerge as a major point of cooperation between India and Australia.

Maritime security:

- **The IOR is fast becoming one of the most crucial geopolitical and economic areas of the world** and there has been a rise in security concerns. The Indo-Pacific region holds immense **geo-political and geo-strategic significance** for navies around the world.
- Expanded participation in Malabar will help strengthen regional maritime security arrangement in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The primary aim of the exercise is to increase interoperability amongst the navies as well as develop a common understanding and procedures for maritime security operations. The exercise is a demonstration of the joint commitment of the nations to address common maritime challenges across the spectrum of operations and will go a long way in enhancing maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region for the **benefit of the global maritime community.**

Conclusion:

- There is the need for careful thought on India's moves with respect to the quadrilateral engagement. India should **reflect on the strategic rationale of the military-Quad**.
- There should be a **cost-benefit exercise** and any move should lead to commensurate gains in the strategic-operational realm for India.

Also read: [Exercise Malabar](#)

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Why a separate anti-torture law?

Context:

- The alleged torture of a father-son duo in Sattankulam town in Tamil Nadu has given rise to the **demand for a separate law against torture**.

Background:

- In 2017, the Central Government admitted in the Supreme Court that it was seriously considering the 273rd Report of the Law Commission that recommended ratification of the **UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment (CAT)**.
- CAT was **signed by India but is yet to be ratified**.

Details:

Existing laws:

- Torture is not defined in the **Indian Penal Code**, but the definitions of 'hurt' and 'grievous hurt' are clearly laid down. Voluntarily causing hurt and grievous hurt to extort confession are dealt with in the Indian Penal Code.
- Under the **Code of Criminal Procedure**, a judicial magistrate inquires into every custodial death.
- The [National Human Rights Commission](#) has laid down specific guidelines for conducting autopsy under the eyes of the camera.

Judicial contributions:

- Though the definition of 'hurt' does not include mental torture, Indian courts through their judgments have included psychic torture, environmental coercion, tiring interrogative prolixity, and overbearing and intimidatory methods, among others, in the ambit of torture.
- The Supreme Court judgment in **DK Basu v. State of West Bengal** was a turning point in the evolving **jurisprudence on custodial torture**.
- The Court's decision in **Nilabati Behera v. State of Orissa** compels the state to pay compensation in case of custodial torture.

For more information, refer to:

[CNA dated July 2, 2020](#)

Concerns:

- The article argues that there being no deficiency in the existing law, the **demand for a new law may be counter-productive.**

Prevention of Torture Bill:

- A fresh draft of the Prevention of Torture Bill was released in 2017.
- The article argues that this bill, apart from being vague, was also very harsh for the police to discharge its responsibilities without fear of prosecution and persecution.
 - By proposing for the death penalty for custodial death accused, the proposed quantum of punishment seems too harsh.
 - The 262nd Law Commission Report recommended that the death penalty be abolished except in cases of ‘terrorism-related offences’.
 - In the Bill, the proposed registration of every complaint of torture as an FIR and blanket denial of anticipatory bail to an accused public servant was not reasonable.
- As opposed to the intention of having a reformatory law, the **proposed Bill was not a reformatory one. It was vague, harsh and retributive in nature.**

Way forward:

- Except for minor discrepancies, the prevalent law in India is adequate and well in tune with the provisions of CAT and there is a need to further improve on its implementation. There is a need to **improve the implementation of the existing laws** instead of bringing in a new law.
 - The investigations and the prosecution process are prone to concerns and these aspects need to be reformed.
- The **police need to be trained better.** The temptation to use third-degree methods must be replaced with scientific skills.
- The need of the hour is to strike at the root cause of the problem and implement **recommendations of various commissions** to bring in necessary reforms.

For information on the National Police Commission (NPC) Recommendations, refer to:

[CNA dated July 4, 2020](#)

For more related information, refer to:

[CNA dated Feb 7, 2020](#)

F. Prelims Facts

1. Nehru Memorial Museum & Library (NMML)

- It was established in memory of Jawaharlal Nehru.
- It is an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.
- It is located in the majestic Teen Murti House, the official residence of the first Prime Minister of India.
- It has four major constituents namely:
 - A Memorial Museum,
 - A Library on Modern India,

- A Centre for Contemporary Studies and
- Nehru Planetarium.

2. Kayapo Tribe

- They live alongside the Xingu River in the eastern part of the Amazon rainforest, in several scattered villages ranging in population from one hundred to one thousand in Brazil.
- The Kayapo use intricate black body paint covering their entire bodies. They believe that their ancestors learned their social skills from insects, so they paint their bodies to mimic them and to better communicate with the Spirit that exists everywhere.
- Older generations of Kayapo men wear disks in their lower lips.

G. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. India has ratified which of the following conventions?

1. Convention against Torture
2. Convention on Cluster Munitions
3. Chemical Weapons Convention

Options:

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

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: b

- In 2017, the Central Government admitted in the Supreme Court that it was seriously considering the 273rd Report of the Law Commission that recommended ratification of the U.N. Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment (CAT). CAT was signed by India but is yet to be ratified.
- India became one of the original signatories of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in 1993 and ratified it on 02 September 1996.

Q2. With reference to the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, which of the following statement/s is/are correct?

1. The provisions of this Act apply to citizens of India outside India.
2. Under the UAPA, the investigating agency can file a charge sheet in a maximum of 90 days after the arrests.

Options:

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

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: a

Under the UAPA, the investigating agency can file a charge sheet in maximum 180 days after the arrests:

[More on UAPA.](#)

Q3. Consider the following pairs:

1. Jim Corbett National Park: Uttarakhand
2. Gumti Wildlife Sanctuary: Sikkim
3. Silent Valley National Park: Kerala

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

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

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: c

Gumti Wildlife Sanctuary is a Wildlife Sanctuary in Tripura.

Q4. Congress had decided to demand "Purna Swaraj" (complete independence) at its

- a. Lahore Session
- b. Bombay session
- c. Benaras Session
- d. Madras Session

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: a

The Indian National Congress, on 19 December 1929, passed the historic 'Purna Swaraj' – (total independence) resolution – at its Lahore session.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Discuss the existing laws and mechanisms dealing with the issue of custodial deaths in India. Analyze the concerns associated with the draft Prevention of Torture Bill. (10 marks, 150 words) (GS paper 2/Polity and Governance)

2. The benefits or gains for India in the strategic realm would be higher as compared to the cost of participating in the quadrilateral engagement involving the U.S., Japan and Australia. Examine. (15 marks, 250 words) (GS paper 2/International Relations)



