India and China on Wednesday agreed not to escalate matters along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), following a conversation between External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Stark differences, however, remained in how both sides described the unprecedented events of June 15, and the clash that claimed the lives of at least 20 Indian soldiers in the worst vic...
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*C – Chennai; B – Bengaluru; D – Delhi; H – Hyderabad; T – Thiruvananthapuram
North Korea vows to redeploy troops in Demilitarized Zone

It rejects South Korean offer to send special envoys to ease escalating tensions

North Korea said on Wednesday it had rejected a South Korean offer to send special envoys to ease escalating tension over defiance by North Korean defectors and stalled reconciliation efforts, and it vowed to redeploy troops to border areas.

The North Korean announcement came a day after it blew up a joint liaison office set up on its side of the border as part of a 2018 peace agreement between the two countries’ leaders.

Freezing border
In a dispatch of KCNA, North’s state news agency, on Wednesday, a spokesman for the General Staff of the (North) Korean People’s Army said it would deploy troops to Mount Kumgang and Kaesong near the border, where the two Koreas had carried out joint eco-

cism protests, to persuade North Korea to abandon its nuclear and missile programmes.

The solution to the present crisis between the two Koreas is to turn the South sending propaganda leaflets into North Korea, pro-U.S. funkeyism”.

South Korea’s president Blue House said the criticism of Mr. Moon was rude and senseless, and damaged the trust the leaders of the two countries’ had carried out joint eco-

Papers 1 - (200 marks)

• Current events of national and international importance.
• Indian and World Geography—Physical, Social, Economic Geography of India and the World.

Part B—Main Examination

General Studies—I: Indian Heritage and Culture, History and Geography of the World and Society.

• History of the world will include events from 18th century such as industrial revolution, world wars, redrawal of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization, political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc.—their forms and effect on the society.

General Studies—II: Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International relations.

• Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests.
• Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India’s interests, Indian diaspora.

Civilspedia Team - Powered by Shankar IAS Academy
News

- Escalating tension in the North Korea-South Korea border.

History of North and South Koreas

- Korea, under Japanese rule from 1910 to 1945.
- Two groups claiming Korea after WW2.
  - Group 1 – Communist revolutionaries supported by USSR and their leader was Kim Il-sung (founder of N Korea).
  - Group 2 – inspired by the western science and industrialism, and led by Syngman Rhee (first President of S Korea).
- In 1945, both US and USSR agreed for a temporary division of Korea at the 38th parallel or 38-degree N latitude.
- Republic of Korea (South Korea) was established under Syngman Rhee in 1948.

Korean War (1950-1953)

- North Korea supported by USSR vs South Korea supported by USA – a Cold War politics.
- 1953 Armistice Agreement – a demilitarized zone (DMZ) along the 38th parallel.
• Peace talks between the US President Donald Trump and Supreme Leader of N Korea Kim Jong-un in 2018 and 2019.

• Military Peace Agreement, 2018 between the two Koreas.
  ✓ Expected to defuse the tensions in Korean boundary.
  ✓ Make way for reconciliation, further demilitarization of buffer zones and cultural exchanges.
  ✓ Established an Inter-Korean Liaison Office with its HQ in N Korea for further communications.

Recent Events

• Escalating tensions over defiance by North Korean defectors.
  ✓ North Korea vowed to redeploy troops to border areas.
  ✓ Demolished the Liaison Office formed under 2018 agreement.

• Consequence – escalating tensions can hamper the ongoing US-North Korea talks on denuclearisation of Korean peninsula.

• Suggestion – United Nations and other stakeholders like the US and China must play a proactive role to resolve the looming crisis.
High Court directs SEC to reconsider decision to put off GP elections

Cong. MLC files petition in court

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Pointing out that there was no provision in the Constitution or in the Karnataka Grama Swaraj and Panchayat Raj (KGSPR) Act empowering the State Election Commission (SEC) to put off elections to panchayats, the High Court of Karnataka on Wednesday directed the SEC to reconsider its May 28 decision to temporarily postpone elections to gram panchayats.

"Prima facie, under Article 243K of the Constitution and Section 308 of the KGSPR Act, power is not vested in the SEC to postpone general elections to open in the State from June 8, and the Ministry of Home Affairs had issued new guidelines on May 30, subsequent to the May 28 decision of the SEC to put off the polls. The Bench said the SEC should reconsider its decision taking into consideration the observations made in court order and the MHA's new guidelines.

During the hearing, the Bench asked what was the difficulty in holding elections when SSLC exams could be held. When people can go to places of worship and malls, why can't they go to polling stations, it asked.

Senior counsel Ravivarma Kumar, appearing for

Part A—Preliminary Examination

Paper I - (200 marks)  Duration: Two hours

- Current events of national and international importance.
- Indian Polity and Governance—Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

Part B—Main Examination

PAPER-III

General Studies-II: Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International relations.

- Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.
- Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

- Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.
News

• Direction issued by the high court of Karnataka to the state election commission of Karnataka to reconsider its decision to put off gram panchayat elections

Background

• May 28th, 2020 – SEC of Karnataka decided to postpone elections to gram panchayats

✓ Challenged in the high court of the Karnataka – questioned the constitutional validity.

• High court – SEC does not have any powers to postpone elections to panchayats

✓ Article 243K of the Constitution – no relevant provisions


Need for State Election Commissions

• Local self-government institutions is the responsibility of the states – elections were not conducted regularly Panchayat Raj institutions.

• Constitution was amended through 73rd amendment act of 1992 – gave powers to local rural bodies.
CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

243K. Elections to the Panchayats.—

(1) The superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls for, and the conduct of, all elections to the Panchayats shall be vested in a State Election Commission consisting of a State Election Commissioner to be appointed by the Governor.

(2) Subject to the provisions of any law made by the Legislature of a State, the conditions of service and tenure of office of the State Election Commissioner shall be such as the Governor may by rule determine: Provided that the State Election Commissioner shall not be removed from his office except in like manner and on the like grounds as a Judge of a High Court and the conditions of service of the State Election Commissioner shall not be varied to his disadvantage after his appointment.

(3) The Governor of a State shall, when so requested by the State Election Commission, make available to the State Election Commission such staff as may be necessary for the discharge of the functions conferred on the State Election Commission by clause (1).

(4) Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the Legislature of a State may, by law, make provision with respect to all matters relating to, or in connection with, elections to the Panchayats.
308. State Election Commission.-

(1) The superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls for, and the conduct of, all elections to the Grama Panchayat, Taluk Panchayat or Zilla Panchayat and the power of delimitation of territorial constituencies and enforcement of the code of conduct in respect such elections shall be vested in the State Election Commission consisting of a State Election Commissioner to be appointed by the Governor.

(2) The conditions of service and tenure of office of the State Election Commissioner shall be such as the Governor may by rule determine: Provided that the State Election Commissioner shall not be removed from his office except in like manner and on the like grounds as a judge of a High Court and conditions of service of the State Election Commissioner shall not be varied to his disadvantage after his appointment.

Provisions of (2A) to (2D).

(3) The Governor shall when so requested by the State Election Commission, make available to the State Election Commission such staff as may be necessary for the discharge of the functions conferred on the State Election Commission under sub-section. Provided that the State Election Commissioner may also draft employees of state undertakings in the public sector for conducting elections to panchayats and to exclude any class of public servants including the local police from being employed in election duties relating to panchayats.
History, the stand-off, and policy worth rereading

Even as India grapples with its next steps at the LAC, it must not lose sight of renewing its compact with the ‘five fingers’.

The deadly clashes at Galwan and the ongoing stand-off between India and China on the ridges or “fingers” around the Pangong Tso are a metaphor for the wider conflict between the two countries over all the areas that Chinese strategy refers to as the “five fingers of the Tibetan palm”. According to the construct, attributed to Mao and cited in the 1950s by Chinese officials, Xizang (Tibet) was China’s right palm, and it was its responsibility to “liberate” the fingers, defined as Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, and the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA, or Arunachal Pradesh). Sixty years ago, India began to set about ensuring that quite the reverse ensued, and all five fingers lowered Naga and Mizo dissidents into China for refuge and training. More importantly, school textbooks there began to depict the “five fingers” as a part of China, wrote Mr. Kaul, who was posted in Peking (Beijing) and then as Joint Secretary (East) overseeing the China relationship, in the 1950s. While Prime Minister Nehru’s military miscalculations and India’s defeat in the 1962 war have been studied in great detail, what is perhaps not so well understood is the three-pronged foreign policy New Delhi set into motion at the time, that provided an effective counter to Mao’s five finger policy over the course of the century.

Managing the borders
The first was a push for building border infrastructure and governance. In the mid-1950s the government piloted a project to build the Indian Frontier Administrative Services (IFAS) for overseeing NEFA (Arunachal Pradesh) and other areas along the India-China frontier. The Foreign Secretary Organisation, but it is an idea worth revisiting, especially as areas along the frontier continue to complain of neglect and a lack of focus from the Centre (in 2019, the Chief Ministers of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram called for the resurrection of the IFAS).

Outreach and treaties
The second prong were a series of treaties that were signed around that time with neighbours such as Nepal and Bhutan, and the conso-

One of the reasons that China has been able to make inroads into Nepal and not with Bhutan, is that the government renegotiated its 1949 Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Friendship between the Government of India and the Government of Bhutan of 1949 with the India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty in 2007, dropping an article that had committed Bhutan “to beguiled” by India on its external affairs policy. This has held India and Bhutan ties in good stead thus far, even during the Doklam stand-off between India and China in 2017 in the face of severe pressure from China.

However, despite years of requests from Kathmandu, New Delhi has dragged its feet on reviewing its 1950 Treaty of Peace and friendship between the Government of India and the Government of Nepal, and on accepting a report the Eminent Persons’ Group (EPG) on Nepal-India relations has produced that recommends a new treaty. New treaties may not, in themselves reduce India’s security leadership of the community looms large. The Karmapa Lama, who lived in India after his flight from China in 2000, and was groomed as a possible political successor, has now taken the citizenship of another country and lives mostly in the United States. Meanwhile, China will not doubt try to force its own choice on the community as well. Given that it is home to so many Tibetans, India must chart a more prominent role in this discourse.

On J&K
Finally, it is necessary to introspect on how India’s own reorganisation in August 2019 has changed the security matrix and threat parameters for India, and its neighbours. While Pakistan’s extreme reaction to the move was expected, China’s reaction was perhaps not studied enough. Beijing issued a statement decrying the impact on Jammu and Kashmir, and another one specifically on Ladakh, calling it an at-
Five fingers of Tibetan palm - Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, and the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) or Arunachal Pradesh.

- 5 fingers/places stayed more closely to India than China.
- In the recent years, India is actively building infrastructure along these areas.
- China is committing incursions very frequently to renew its strategy of liberating the five fingers.
Panchsheel or Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence

- Panchsheel agreement signed in 1954 – between India and China.

1. Mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty,
2. Mutual non-aggression,
3. Mutual non-interference,
4. Equality and mutual benefit, and
5. Peaceful co-existence.

3-pronged strategy

- Initiated by India effectively countered China’s five finger policy

1. Border Infrastructure and Governance

- Indian Frontier Administrative Services (IFAS) to oversee NEFA (Arunachal Pradesh) and other areas along the India-China frontier.

- Creation of a special desk Base for existing infrastructure was made during the brief period the IFAS existed.

- IFAS was wound up in 1968.

- IFAS’s role, transferred to the Indian Army and the Border Roads Organisation.
2. Treaties with neighbouring countries.

- In 1950, India signed a treaty with Sikkim – as a “protectorate” state – By 1975 Sikkim became 22nd State of India.

- Treaty of peace and friendship, 1950 – signed between the Governments of India and Nepal.

- Treaty of perpetual peace and friendship, 1949 – signed between the Governments of India and Bhutan.

- These treaties built unique relationship between India, Nepal and Bhutan.

- Benefits of unique ties with Nepal and Bhutan – open borders and ease of movement, jobs and education for their youth as well as India’s influential support on the world stage, have waned in public memory.

- Renegotiation of Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Friendship in 1949 with Bhutan further enhanced India-Bhutan ties with changing realities.

- India long delayed the reviewing of 1950 treaty with Nepal.

3. India’s policy towards Tibet

- In 1959, India sheltered Dalai Lama and lakhs of his followers.
Other issues

- J&K Reorganisation and Home Ministers statement of taking back of POK and China occupied Aksai Chin made China worried of India's aggressive stance.

- Hence the frequent incursions by China – trying to change status quo to its advantage.

- China's billion-dollar investment in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

- Change in Nepal's policy towards India.
Maternal health matters

The lockdown period saw the state abdicating its responsibilities towards the welfare of pregnant women

In a shocking incident earlier this month, a pregnant woman died in an ambulance in Noida after being turned away from a number of private and government hospitals. This raises a chilling question for all of us: if this can happen somewhere so close to the nation’s capital, what is happening in the corners of the country? A second question that comes to mind is: when the lockdown was suddenly announced and then extended, what exactly was the plan for the millions of women who were/are due for childbirth?

Over the last 15 years, the state has been promising maternal well-being to pregnant women provided they turn up at public hospitals during labour, and has been providing a cash incentive to those that have institutional birth. Consequently, it has become almost routine for all pregnant women to indicate that in these 12 weeks, the approximately 9,00,000 pregnant women (15% of the six million women giving birth) who needed critical care had to face enormous hurdles to actually obtain treatment at an appropriate hospital. Added to this were the women who have had miscarriages or sought abortions: that would be another 45,000 women every single day.

The government rather belatedly issued a set of guidelines a month after lockdown started, but that only compounded the confusion. Pregnant women had to be ‘recently’ tested and certified COVID-19-negative to enter a ‘general hospital’ but it was not clear how this can happen once they are in labour, as the test results need a day’s turnaround at the very least. The fundamental question here is: when the state compels people to modify their behaviour through an inducement like a cash incentive, doesn’t that put the onus on the state for ensuring effective systems for maternal care?

Need to scrutinise private sector
The health policymakers need to acknowledge the shortcoming of an overstretched and under-resourced system in responding

Maternal health during lockdown

• Schemes - Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana and Janani Suraksha Yojana aims at the welfare of pregnant women and lactating mothers.
  ✓ Promote institutional delivery by giving cash incentives.

• Pregnant women suffer a lot during nationwide lockdown.
  ✓ Example: Deaths of pregnant women in Noida and Telangana after they were turned away from a number of hospitals.
**Reasons for suffering**

- Frontline workers who usually assisted pregnant women are now doing community surveillance, monitoring and awareness building for COVID-19.
- Public health system is overburdened due to the Covid-19 pandemic as most secondary and tertiary hospitals are designated as COVID-19 facilities.
- News Norms – pregnant women had to be recently tested negative for Covid-19 to enter a general hospital.
- Several private hospitals and clinics have already closed down fearing infections.

**Loss of gains:**

- India’s Maternal Mortality Ratio has reduced to 122 deaths per 1,00,000 live births during 2015-2017 from 167 in 2011-2013.

**Conclusion**

- Time for the policymakers to acknowledge the shortcoming of an overstretched and under-resourced health system in India and spend more in public health sector.
- Need for a longer-term management strategy while handling a disaster.
Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) is the number of maternal deaths per 1 lakh live births due to cases related to pregnancy, that is death while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, regardless of the site or duration of pregnancy.

2. In 2020, India became the first Asian country to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal on MMR.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
Q2. With reference to National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) and PM-CARES, consider the following statements:

1. PM-CARES is constituted under Disaster Management Act of 2005.
2. The National Calamity Contingency Fund is merged into NDRF.
3. Both the funds consist entirely of public contributions and do not get any budgetary support.

Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
PM - CARES

- Prime Minister’s Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund.
- Prime Minister is the ex-officio Chairman
- Union Minister of Defence, Union Minister of Home Affairs and Union Minister of Finance are ex-officio Trustees
- Consists entirely of voluntary contributions from individuals/organizations and does not get any budgetary support.
- Donations are exempted from the Income Tax Act and will also qualify to be counted as Corporate Social Responsibility.

National Disaster Response Fund

- Constituted under Section 46 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005.
- Erstwhile National Calamity Contingency Fund is merged into NDRF and it ceased to exist.
- DMA, 2005 also provides for the constitution of SDRF.
- Disasters covered under this SDRF are Cyclone, drought, earthquake, fire, flood, tsunami, hailstorm, landslide, avalanche, cloudburst, pest attack, frost and cold waves.
- Mainly funded from budgetary sources.
PRACTICE QUESTIONS
DISCUSSION
Practice Question – Prelims

Q3. The ‘38th parallel north’, often seen in news is a latitude which roughly demarcates:

(a) Israel and Palestine
(b) USA and Canada
(c) North Korea and South Korea
(d) China and Hong Kong
Practice Question – Prelims

Q4. Consider the following statements with reference to Constitution of India.

1. The State Election Commission is responsible for superintendence, direction and the conduct of all elections to the Panchayats.

2. The State Election Commissioner is appointed by the President of India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
Answers

1. Option ‘a’ – 1 only
2. Option ‘c’ – 1 and 3 only
3. Option ‘c’ – North Korea and South Korea
4. Option ‘a’ – 1 only
Practice Question – Mains
GS I/GS III/GS III

Q. For centuries, India’s territorial integrity is threatened by its neighbours. Discuss.

(250 words, 15 marks)
LIKE, COMMENT & SHARE

SUBSCRIBE