

## Current Affairs of the Day

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## India coasts to win in Security Council polls

### Key Points:

- Terming India's winning of a non-permanent seat of the UN Security Council one of its "best performances" ever, the Union government said the majority of votes received in the General Assembly demonstrated the "goodwill" the country enjoyed.
- India will promote multilateral solutions for the COVID-19 crisis and enhance global action against terrorism, among its priorities, during the two-year term beginning January 2021.
- In the election decided overnight on Wednesday, India secured 184 of the 192 votes, far in excess of the 128, or two-thirds minimum, it needed to be confirmed.
- Others that won were Mexico with 187 votes, Norway 130 and Ireland 128, defeating Canada, which won 108.
- Several countries, including the permanent Security Council members, the U.S., the U.K., France, Russia and China, congratulated India.
- India's term on the 15-member Council will be its eighth.
- Significantly, in June 2019, both China and Pakistan had endorsed India as the Asia-Pacific grouping's nominee.
- Earlier in June, Mr. Jaishankar gave India's overall objective during its forthcoming UNSC tenure as an acronym 'NORMS' — New Orientation for a Reformed Multilateral System, making it clear that U.N. reforms, including the push for expanding the UNSC permanent membership, would be high on agenda when it assumes the UNSC seat.

## Nepal's new map now part of Constitution

### Second Constitution Amendment Bill 2077:

- The Upper House of Nepal's Parliament on Thursday passed the Second Constitution Amendment Bill 2077 (Vikram era), with all 57 members voting in favour of the new map that claims parts of Indian territory in Pithoragarh district. One post has fallen vacant and the Chairperson doesn't vote.



## Key Points:

- President Bidhya Devi Bhandari signed the Bill hours later in her official residence, Shital Niwas. The voting and the presidential assent completed the legislative procedure of the Bill that was taken up by the government of Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, after India inaugurated the Darchula-Lipulekh link road on May 8. Nepal immediately protested, saying the road violated the status quo of the region, which it described as “unresolved”.
- The new map will now be part of the national emblem of Nepal. It is likely to be featured prominently on the promotional tourism documents.
- The formal inclusion of the map gives a rare guarantee to the physical territory of the Nepalese state that makes negotiations with India on the Kalapani issue difficult. However, Nepal has maintained that it is open for dialogue.

## India's reaction:

- Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Anurag Srivastava had said the amendment amounts to “artificial enlargement of claims that are not based on historical fact or evidence and is not tenable”.

## Twitter launches search prompt for domestic violence

### Key Points:

- Twitter on Thursday launched a search prompt for users seeking information on domestic violence, which will lead users to the NCW and the Ministry of Women and Child Developments' pages. However, there is a lot left to be desired from the two government pages, which lacked user-friendly resources for survivors.
- The way the service works is that when users type keywords including #domesticviolence, #crimeagainstwomen, #dowry, #maritalrape etc, they will be directed to a page hosted on the official website of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) and the Twitter timeline of the National Commission for Women. The purpose is to direct users to information and updates from 'authoritative' sources.



## Suggestions:

- The Ministry's page fared better — it had a directory for One Stop Centres across the country, a text of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, emergency helplines and contact details for legal aid and mental health.
- It would be helpful if NCW and WCD have specific pages and helplines linked to these prompts on Twitter.

## ‘₹50,000 crore scheme for migrants’

### Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan on June 20 to offer immediate employment opportunities to migrant workers who have returned to their villages because of the COVID-19 lockdown.

### Details:

- Out of an estimated 1 crore migrant workers who have returned to their villages, 67 lakh workers are expected to benefit from this scheme.
- 116 districts across six States had been identified as those having the highest number of workers returning home after the lockdown.
- Public works worth ₹50,000 crore would be carried out in these districts to provide immediate relief to these workers.
- Workers will be employed in rural housing, rural connectivity including the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, national highways, railway works, community sanitation complex, gram panchayats, anganwadis, water conservation, digging of wells, plantation and horticulture.
- The scheme will see a coordination between 12 different Ministries/Departments, such as Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Road Transport and Highways, Mines, Drinking Water and Sanitation, Environment, Railways, Petroleum and Natural Gas, New and Renewable Energy, Border Roads, Telecom and Agriculture.



## Umifenovir to undergo clinical trial

### Key Points:

- The Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI), Lucknow, a constituent lab of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), has received permission for carrying out Phase III trials for the use of Umifenovir against COVID-19. The randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial will test the efficacy, safety and tolerability of the drug.
- This drug has a good safety profile and acts by preventing entry of virus into human cells and also by priming the immune system.
- **Umifenovir**, mainly used for the treatment of influenza, is available in China and Russia, and has recently come into prominence due to its potential use for COVID-19 patients.



## U.S. Bill to sanction China over Uighur rights

### Key Points:

- U.S. President Donald Trump signed legislation on Wednesday calling for sanctions over the repression of China's Uighurs, as excerpts from a book by his former National security adviser John Bolton alleged he had approved of their mass detention.
- The Bill was intended to send China a strong message on human rights by mandating sanctions against those responsible for oppression of Muslim minority.
- The UN estimates that more than a million Muslims have been detained in camps in the Xinjiang region.





## Value Added Information

### Who are Uighur Muslims?

- Xinjiang is the far west of China, and is the country's biggest region and rich in minerals.
- It is bordered by several countries, including India, Afghanistan and Mongolia.
- For centuries, the economy of Xinjiang has centered on agriculture and trade, and towns thrived because they were on the Silk Road.
- Like Tibet, it is an autonomous region, and it has a degree of self-governance away from Beijing.
- The Uighurs are mostly Muslims, and number about 11 million in northwestern part of China's Xinjiang region.
- They see themselves as culturally and ethnically close to Central Asian nations, and their language is similar to Turkish.

### What are the issues faced by Uighurs in China?

- In recent decades, there are mass migration of Han Chinese (China's ethnic majority) to Xinjiang, and the Uighurs feel their culture and livelihoods are under threat.
- Around a million Uighurs, Kazakhs and other Muslims have been bundled into internment camps, where they are allegedly being schooled into giving up their identity, and assimilate better in the communist country dominated by the Han Chinese.
- Children have been separated from their parents, families torn apart, an entire population kept under surveillance and cut off from the rest of the world.
- The few survivors who have managed to escape the country have been reported to speak of physical, mental and sexual torture at these camps.



## Why is China targeting the Uighurs?

- The Uighurs are Muslim, they don't speak Mandarin as their native language, and have ethnicity and culture that is different from that of mainland China.
- Over the past few decades, as economic prosperity has come to Xinjiang, it has brought with it in large numbers the majority Han Chinese, who have cornered the better jobs, and left the Uighurs feeling their livelihoods and identity were under threat.
- This led to sporadic violence, in 2009 culminating in a riot that killed 200 people, mostly Han Chinese, in the region's capital Urumqi.
- The government had anyway been cracking down on the Uighurs. After this spell of violence, retaliation hardened.
- With terror attacks in other parts of the world and the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, a local militancy was viewed as something that could grow into a terrorist-secessionist force, determined to break away from China to form an independent "East Turkestan".
- The Chinese policy from here on seems to have been one of treating the entire community as suspect, and launching a systematic project to chip away at every marker of a distinct Uighur identity.

## What does the documents leaked in NYT contain?

- According to The New York Times, the leaked papers consist of 24 documents, which "include nearly 200 pages of internal speeches by Xi and other leaders and more than 150 pages of directives and reports on the surveillance and control of the Uighur population in Xinjiang.
- There are also references to plans to extend restrictions on Islam to other parts of China.
- People could be sent to the government's "deradicalisation camps" for showing any signs of extremism, with the government deciding what was "extremism" - sporting beards, fasting during Ramzan, dressing differently



from the majority, sending Eid greetings, praying “too often”, giving up smoking and drinking, or not knowing Mandarin.

- Contacting people outside China is one of the surest ways to be sent to a camp.
- In three years, the government is estimated to have put one million people in the “re-education” camps, making them leave behind their jobs, property and their children.
- Because the inmates have not been charged for any crime, there is no question of a legal fight against their detention.
- The government has put in place a surveillance system that includes face recognition cameras, software to monitor Uighurs’ phone activities, QR codes on homes that tell authorities how many members are inside the house, QR codes on any domestic tool that can be used as a weapon, such as a knife.
- The government claims it is providing the inmates vocational skills, but many of those detained are professors, doctors, skilled professionals, so it is not clear what are these “skills” are supposed to achieve.

### What is China’s stand on the issue?

- China resolutely denies all such allegations, claiming the camps to be ‘educational centres’ where the Uighurs are being cured of “extremist thoughts” and radicalisation, and learning vocational skills.
- Over the past year, Turkey has spoken up for the Uighurs, and the United Nations and the United States have made some noise.
- China has maintained it is only de-radicalising some of its errant citizenry, and has asked the world to “respect its sovereignty” in dealing with its internal matters.
- According statements of Chinese officials, Xinjiang has seen dramatic changes: Peace, prosperity and tourism are back.
- Xinjiang borders Pakistan and Afghanistan, China’s de-radicalization efforts have made Xinjiang different from them.